



CHRISTMAS with  
**clwre**  
CHAMBER CHOIR

CONDUCTOR AMY RYAN

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2024  
St. Mary's, Haddington Rd., Dublin

**Christmas With Cuore**  
**Cuore Chamber Choir | Amy Ryan**

*Make We Merry* – Rhona Clarke

~

*Virga Jesse Floruit* – Anton Bruckner

*As Dew in Aprylle* – Peter Warlock

*Maranatha 2: Maranatha* – Georg Grün

~

*Hodie Christus Natus Est* – Giovanni Gabrieli

*Maranatha 1: Puer Natus Est* – Georg Grün

~

*Good-will to Men* – Dobrinka Tabakova

*Iz̧ar Ederrak* – Josu Elberdin

*Réalt na hOíche* – Colm Ó Foghlú

~

*The First Nowell* – Ola Gjeilo

*Away in a Manger* – Kirkpatrick arr. David Willcocks

*The Holly and the Ivy* – Ola Gjeilo

~

*Deck the Hall* – trad. Welsh arr. David Willcocks

*Convidando Está la Noche* – Juan García de Céspedes

Please **hold your applause** until the end of each section.

There will be no interval. When the concert finishes, please vacate the church promptly.

As this concert is being recorded, please **turn off your phone now**  
or **switch to airplane mode** if viewing this on your phone.

**Welcome** to Cuore's first Christmas Concert in the beautiful surroundings of St. Mary's Church. We hope you enjoy our performance, which features a range of classic and contemporary music from around the world that we are sure will get you in the holiday spirit. Nollaig Shona daoibh go léir!

**Cuore Chamber Choir** is an award-winning mixed-voice choir based in Dublin, founded by Amy Ryan and Patricia O'Neill in 2014. The choir consists of singers from a range of nationalities and ages, committed to high-level performances of rewarding music, from early polyphony to contemporary premieres.

The choir has consistently achieved high standards, including Gold at the International Choir Competition Ave Verum, Austria in May, and two second prizes at the Tallinn International Choir Festival last year. Closer to home, Cuore achieved first places at the Feis Ceoil (2023), Cork (2018), Mayo (2016), Sligo (2016) and New Ross (2015). Cuore was awarded special prizes for contemporary music in Tallinn (2023), the Feis Ceoil (2023) and Cork (2022 and 2018).

Beyond competitions, the choir engages in charitable performances, collaborations with orchestra and its own regular concerts. Cuore has performed in the National Concert Hall on a number of occasions, including a charity concert last October.

**Amy Ryan** is a conductor and educator from Killarney. She lectures in music at RIAM and previously at TCD. Amy founded the award-winning Cuore Chamber Choir and is Artistic Director of UCD Philharmonic Choir. She also conducts the Irish-language ladies choir, Cór Duibhlinne, and the professional choir of St. Stephen's Church, Mount St.

Amy has guested with the UCD Symphony Orchestra conducting concerts including works by Sibelius, Brahms and Richard Strauss. She has prepared choruses for Irish National Opera, Blackwater Valley and Lyric Opera, and has also performed as a cellist and flautist across Europe and the U.S.A.

Amy studied under renowned conductors and holds advanced qualifications in choral conducting and pedagogy from the Kodály Institute of the Liszt Academy of Music, Hungary. She was Chairperson of Kodály Ireland from 2018-2022 and was appointed to the board of Sing Ireland in December 2022.

## Cuoresters Performing This Evening

**Sopranos:** Helen Blackmore<sup>†\*3</sup>, Sarah Cunningham, Monica Donlon<sup>††</sup>, Sibéal Farrell<sup>†</sup>, Emma Harrington<sup>†</sup>, Muireann Lynch<sup>†</sup>, Aisling O'Carroll<sup>†1</sup>, Mary Nugent, Kata Szita<sup>††</sup>.

**Altos:** Davina Baker<sup>\*</sup>, Alison Clince<sup>†</sup>, Clare Dixon<sup>\*†</sup>, Meghan Killalea<sup>†</sup>, Caoilin O'Meara, Molly O'Shea, Suzanne Mahon, Lorraine O'Connell, Margaret Samahita<sup>5</sup>.

**Tenors:** Warwick Harte<sup>††</sup>, Richard McCullough<sup>†\*</sup>, Garrath Patterson<sup>\*</sup>, Kieran Tully<sup>†</sup>, Glenn White<sup>\*4</sup>.

**Basses:** Harry Boland, Brian Kelly<sup>\*</sup>, Karl Leavy, Manus Mac Gearailt<sup>†</sup>, Cathal McGuinness, Brían Merriman, Peter Ogden<sup>†</sup>, Kevin Sheedy, Joost Slingerland<sup>\*2</sup>.

† *soloist for 'The First Nowell'*  
\* *instrumentalist*

†† *soloist for 'Convidando Está la Noche'*  
1,2,3,4,5 *section announcers*



### Support Cuore!

The support of our audience is crucial to bring you events such as tonight's concert. We invite individuals and corporate bodies to **join our Friends and Patrons** programme, to receive benefits such as free guest tickets and reserved seating. Visit [cuore.ie/support](https://cuore.ie/support) or scan our QR code above.

## Programme Notes

### ***Make We Merry*, Rhona Clarke (b. 1958)**

Born in Dublin, composer Rhona Clarke's output includes choral, chamber, orchestral and electronic works. She has received commissions from the NSO, The Sydney Philharmonia Chorus, Chamber Choir Ireland, the Choir of the Chapels Royal, the Cork International Choral Festival, Hard Rain Soloists, Concorde, Music Network and the National Concert Hall, among others. Her work has been performed and broadcast throughout Ireland and worldwide.

Clarke gets us into the Christmas spirit with this wonderfully festive setting of a medieval Cornish carol. Bouncing articulations, exciting shifts in stress and metre, and effervescent interplay between the parts, all make for a piece full of joy and celebration! You can hear our recording of this piece on the RTÉ Lyric FM website, as part of 'Choirs for Christmas'.

### ***Virga Jesse Floruit*, Anton Bruckner (1824-1896)**

The text of this motet is based on Isaiah: 11 and establishes Jesus' place in the lineage of King David. Austrian composer Anton Bruckner was a strong supporter of the 'Cecilian Movement' which aimed to restore Renaissance polyphony to Austrian choral music. First performed on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1885, *Virga Jesse Floruit* illustrates this return to the past while also exploring modern rich chromatic harmonies. There is a magnificent climax that builds in intensity through imitative sequences on the phrase *pacem Deus reddidit*, ('God restores peace') and resolves to a final gentle E major chord.

*Virga Jesse floruit:*

*Virgo Deum et hominem genuit:*

*pacem Deus reddidit, in se*

*reconcilians ima summis.*

*Alleluja.*

The rod of Jesse hath blossomed:

a Virgin hath brought forth God and man:

God hath restored peace,

reconciling in Himself the lowest with the highest.

Alleluia.

### ***As Dew in Aprylle*, Peter Warlock (1894-1930)**

Peter Warlock, born Philip Arnold Heseltine, was a British composer and music critic. The Warlock name, which reflects Heseltine's interest in occult practices, was used for all his published musical works. Setting a text from the fifteenth century Sloane Manuscript, Warlock's pint-sized, gossamer-weighted *As dew in Aprylle* deserves to be much better known than it is. First published in 1924, much of its charm comes from the delicate chromaticism of the harmonisations, and the constantly changing metre—flitting mostly

between five and four beats to a bar—which creates a smoothly flowing feel. It is said that after a period of inactivity around 1916, Warlock gained creative impetus from a year spent in Ireland, studying Celtic culture and language.

## **2. *Maranatha*, 1. *Puer Natus Est* from ‘*Maranatha*’, Georg Grün (b. 1960)**

German composer Georg Grün studied church music, conducting, Catholic theology and Musicology in Saarbrücken, and organ improvisation under Jean-Pierre Leguay in Paris. He is renowned internationally as a choral conductor and choral sound specialist.

Grün’s *Maranatha* (‘Come, Lord!’) is a three-movement work setting familiar plainchant melodies polyphonically against jazzy homophonic harmonies. The word *Maranatha* is Aramaic in origin and was used as a prayer or as a kind of mantra by the early Christians. We performed the more well known third movement (*Veni*) in Ireland and Austria earlier this year. We are proud to present the Irish premiere of the first and second movements this evening, but in the reverse order more appropriate to the Christmas narrative.

The second movement (performed first tonight), also called *Maranatha*, sets the Advent carol *Veni Emmanuel* (‘O come Emmanuel’) in the key of E-flat minor. The lower voices repeat the word *Maranatha* throughout the piece, like a mantra, over which is heard the chant sung in canon by the upper voices. The mantra is heightened by the addition of tuned percussion, originally scored for the composer’s own Tibetan singing bowls, but tonight played on glockenspiel. The close harmonies and tuned percussion combine with tonight’s reverberant acoustic to create a meditative atmosphere which we hope will help listeners to set aside their daily worries and reflect on the wonder, mystery and joy of Christmas.

*Veni, veni Emmanuel;*  
*Captivum solve Israel,*  
*Qui gemit in exilio,*  
*Privatus Dei Filio.*

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
Ransom the captive Israel,  
Who in this exile is mourning  
Deprived of the Son of God.

*Gaude! Gaude! Emmanuel,*  
*Nascetur pro te, Israel!*

Rejoice! Rejoice! The Emmanuel  
Shall be born for thee, O Israel.

*Veni, veni Adonai!*  
*Qui populo in Sinai,*  
*Legem dedisti vertice,*  
*In maiestate gloriae.*

O come, O come, Adonai,  
Who to the people on Sinai's  
Heights, did give the law  
In the glory of Thy majesty.



The first movement sets the Introit for the Mass on Christmas Day, *Puer natus est*. A rocking lullaby in 6/4 time and the key of E Mixolydian, it is marked *quasi siciliano*.

*Puer natus est pro nobis,  
et filius datus est nobis:  
cuius imperium super humerum eius:  
et vocabitur nomen eius,  
magni consilii angelus.*

A child is born to us,  
and a Son is given to us:  
Whose government is upon His shoulder:  
and His Name shall be called,  
the Angel of Great Counsel.

*Cantate Domino canticum novum  
quia mirabilia fecit.*

Sing ye to the Lord a new song:  
because He hath done wonderful things.

### ***Hodie Christus Natus Est, Giovanni Gabrieli (1557-1612)***

Giovanni Gabrieli was born in Venice and was taught music by his uncle, Andrea Gabrieli, whom he later succeeded as organist at St. Mark's Cathedral. As a composer, he is considered the greatest of the Venetian Masters. The use of *cori spezzati* ("divided choirs") singing antiphonally was frequent at St. Mark's, with the possibility of separate choirs and organs in opposing galleries. This motet for double choir features a mixture of duple and triple rhythms, the text being an antiphon for the Magnificat at Vespers for the Nativity of our Lord.

*Hodie Christus natus est.  
Hodie salvator apparuit.  
Hodie in terra canunt angeli,  
laetantur Archangeli.  
Hodie exsultant iusti, dicentes:  
Gloria in excelsis deo, Et in terra  
pax, hominibus bonae voluntatis.*

Today Christ is born;  
Today the saviour appears;  
Today angels sing on earth  
Archangels rejoice.  
Today the just people rejoice, saying:  
Glory to God in the highest, and on earth,  
peace to people of goodwill.

### ***Good-will to Men, and Peace on Earth, Dobrinka Tabakova (b. 1980)***

Bulgarian born and UK educated, Dobrinka Tabakova is a composer of music with "glowing tonal harmonies and grand, sweeping gestures [which] convey a huge emotional depth" (*The Strad*). Her music has been commissioned and performed by leading musicians and ensembles and her debut album, *String Paths*, was nominated for a Grammy in 2014. Commissioned by BBC Music Magazine in 2018, this playful work recalls the medieval conviviality associated with carols through its exciting rhythmic vitality. Tabakova's desire to "retain some liturgical mystery but add another, more playful element" is achieved with the addition of a percussive line.

## ***Izar Ederrak*, Josu Elberdin (b. 1976)**

Elberdin was born in Pasaia, a coastal city in the Basque region. Having graduated from the Conservatory of Pasaia, he continues to work in his native city as a composer, conductor, teacher and performer. *Izar Ederrak*, sung in the Basque language, tells the story of a beautiful, shining star, surrounded by eight angels, one of whom is 'lovesick' for the star. The story is brought to life through Elberdin's beautifully flowing and memorable melody and rich, interesting harmonies.

Cuore sadly lost one of our own beautiful shining stars earlier this year, when our former member Marianne Hogan passed away. The choir would like to dedicate this performance to her memory.

*Izar ederrak  
argi egiten dau zeru altuan bakarrik,  
ez da bakarrik,  
lagunak ditu, Jaun zerukoak emanik.*

The beautiful star  
that shines alone in the high heavens,  
she's not alone,  
she has friends that God gives her.

*Zazpi aingeru alboan ditu,  
zortzigarrena gaixorik.  
Zazpi mediku ekarri deutsez  
India Madriletatik. Indian*

She has seven angels,  
the eighth is sick.  
They brought seven  
Indian doctors from Madrid.

*Izar ederrak  
argi egiten dau zeru altuan bakarrik,  
ez da bakarrik,  
lagunak ditu, Jaun zerukoak emanik.*

The beautiful star  
that shines alone in the high heavens,  
she's not alone,  
she has friends that God gives her.

*Arek igarri nundik dagoan gaixorik:  
Amore minak badituz onek erraietan  
sarturik.*

One doctor says about the angel:  
"This is the heartbreak in her soul".

## ***Réalt na hOíche*, Colm Ó Foghlú**

Composer, director, writer and producer, Colm Ó Foghlú has toured extensively throughout Australia, Europe, Asia and North America. A former Musical Director for Riverdance, he has composed, arranged and produced numerous award-winning shows and albums. He is also a former member of Cuore. Máirtín Ó Direáin heralded a new age in Irish poetry when his first poem *Réalt na hOíche* (*Night Star*) was published on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1938 in *The Irish Press*. What makes this poem remarkable is the abandonment of traditional Gaelic meter in favour of a free verse form based on the natural speech rhythms of the poet's local dialect.



*A Réalt na hOíche ós mo chionn go hárd  
Meall mé chun siúil i do dhiaidh gan staon  
Ag lorg an Ríogh a bhí is atá  
Ar thuras fada tuirsiúil dian.*

Star of the Night soaring above, Guide  
me to walk in your wake without hesitation,  
Seeking the King who was and who is,  
On a long, weary, arduous journey.

*Sa stábla is eol dom  
É a bheith 'na luí  
Rí geal ghléi gheal ag a bhfuil gach grást  
Meall mé chun siúil mé chuige gan mhoill.*

Low in the stable, I know,  
He lies at rest,  
A radiant King who bares every grace.  
Draws me to walk to Him without delay.

### ***The First Nowell, Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978)***

Ola Gjeilo was born and grew up in Norway. He began playing piano and composing at the age of five. Gjeilo studied at The Norwegian Academy of Music, transferred to The Juilliard and then to The Royal Academy of Music to receive a bachelor's degree in composition. He is currently composer-in-residence with DCINY and Albany Pro Musica in New York.

Cuore will perform two of his arrangements of beloved and well known Christmas carols, all of which are presented in a fresh, and sophisticated *a capella* setting. The first of these, *The First Nowell* dates back to the fifteenth century in its oral form. It was first published in the revised edition of *Some Ancient Christmas Carols* (1823). Though the angels' appearance to the shepherds (Luke 2:1–20) is the subject of the first stanza, most of the carol focuses on the journey of the Magi (Matthew 2:1–12).

### ***Away in a Manger, Kirkpatrick (1838-1921) arr. Willcocks (1919-2015)***

It was originally thought that this popular children's carol had been composed by Martin Luther. However, it is now believed that the carol is American in origin. Two settings exist, the more common one composed by William J. Kirkpatrick in 1895. This is the version we are singing tonight in a gentle arrangement by the English composer, David Willcocks.

### ***The Holly and the Ivy, Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978)***

This popular carol first appeared in print in the early nineteenth century in William Hone's book *Ancient Mysteries Described*, however its origins lie much further back. Holly and ivy have been described in decorations since medieval times, and have long since been associated with the celebration of the Winter solstice and Christmas. In Christian culture, it is thought that the holly represents Christ, and the ivy is said to represent the Virgin Mary. Others have described the evergreen leaves as symbolic of the promise of eternal life. Gjeilo brings a fresh setting with accessible ranges and divisi.

## ***Deck the Hall*, trad. Welsh arr. David Willcocks (1919–2015)**

Dating from the sixteenth century, this lively Christmas carol started life as a Welsh carol for New Year's Eve (*Nos Galan*). The English lyrics, which describe preparation for Christmas, were added by Thomas Oliphant in the nineteenth century.

## ***Convidando Está la Noche*, Juan García de Zéspedes (1619-1678)**

This seventeenth century Mexican Christmas villancico merges European Baroque sections with the cross-rhythms of the 'guaracha' style. Moving between its lyrical beginning and a rhythmic dance in 6/8, this is a short yet fun work, traditionally performed with improvised accompaniment (see \* in list of singers) and soloists (†).

*Convidando está la noche  
Aquí de músicas varias  
Al recién nacido infante  
Canten tiernas alabanzas.*

*¡Ay, que me abraso, divino dueño ¡Ay!  
en la hermosura, de tus ojuelos, ¡Ay!*

*¡Ay, cómo llueven, ciento luceros ¡Ay!  
rayos de gloria, rayos de fuego,*

*¡Ay, que la gloria, del portaliño ¡Ay!  
ya viste rayos, si arroja hielos,*

*¡Ay, que su madre, como en su espero ¡Ay!  
mira en su lucencia, sus crecimientos,*

*Alegres quando festivas  
unas hermosas zagales  
Con novedad entonaron  
juguetes por la guaracha.*

*En la guaracha, le festinemos ¡Ay!  
mientras el niño, se rinde al sueño ¡Ay!*

*Toquen y bailen, porque tenemos ¡Ay!  
fuego en la nieve, nieve en el fuego ¡Ay!*

*Pero el chicote, a un mismo tiempo ¡Ay!  
llora y se ríe, qué dos extremos ¡Ay!*

*Paz a los hombres, dan de los cielos ¡Ay!  
a Dios las gracias, porque callemos ¡Ay!*

The night is inviting us  
With all kinds of music  
To the newborn infant  
Let tender praises be sung.

Oh, how I burn, Divine Lord, oh!  
In the beauty of your little eyes, oh!

Oh, how they rain a hundred little stars, oh!  
Rays of glory, rays of fire, oh!

What glory in the stable  
Already the rays casts off the frost

His mother as in a mirror  
Sees his brilliance, his growth

Joyful festive  
Beautiful shepherds  
Chant with the new arrival  
And play in the guaracha style.

In the guaracha let's celebrate, oh!  
While the child falls asleep, oh!

Play and dance, for we have, oh!  
Fire in the snow, snow in the fire, oh!

But the little one right then, oh!  
Cries and laughs, what two extremes, oh!

Peace to men is given from the skies, oh!  
Thanks be to God, so we may be quiet, oh!

## Acknowledgements

Cuore would like to thank all those who have continued to support us in our activities during the past year. We extend particular thanks to all at St. Finian's Church in Adelaide Road, and here at St. Mary's, Haddington Road.

Programme notes and layout by Lorraine O' Connell, Sibéal Farrell, Laura Slattery and Kieran Tully. Poster and cover art by Colm Ó Foghlú.

## Coming Soon for Cuore

We will be holding **auditions in January**. Prospective members should have strong sight-reading ability and recent choral experience. For further details, please visit [cuore.ie/join](https://cuore.ie/join) or scan our QR code:



Our 2024/2025 season marks the 10th anniversary of Cuore Chamber Choir, and we're thrilled to celebrate this milestone with you. Highlights include an **anniversary concert next April** featuring the world premiere of a specially commissioned piece. To stay up to date with all our exciting plans, **sign up for our newsletter** at [cuore.ie/list](https://cuore.ie/list) or **follow @CuoreChoir** on your favorite social media channels. You can also find these links via the QR code above.

If you're inspired by what we do and would like to **support our anniversary celebrations**, we'd love to hear from you! Reach out to us at [info@cuore.ie](mailto:info@cuore.ie) to learn more about how you can get involved.