



# SURROUNDED BY ANGELS

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A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION WITH  
ENSEMBLE GALILEI



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BY  
ANGELS

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A  
CHRISTMAS  
CELEBRATION  
WITH

ENSEMBLE  
GALILEI

1. - 5:01 - **Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence** — Picardy, French Medieval  
**Konvulsionslåten** — Anders Norudde  
**The Celt** — Sue Richards
2. - 3:37 - **Divinum Mysterium** — 13th century Plainsong  
**Táladh ar Síánaigheir (Christ Child Lullabye)** — Scottish Gaelic Carol
3. - 5:05 - **Away in the Manger (Flow Gently, Sweet Afton)** — Traditional Scottish  
**Polonessa Spooft** — (taught to Hanneke Cassel by Antti Järvelä)
4. - 2:41 - **Es ist ein Ros entsprungen (I Know a Rose Tree)** — Michael Praetorius (arr. by Kathryn Montoya)
5. - 3:35 - **I Wonder as I Wander** — collected by John Jacob Niles
6. - 3:21 - **Greensleeves** — 16th Century English
7. - 3:49 - **Quelle est cette odeur agréable (Whence is that Goodly Fragrance)** — 17th Century French  
**Jesu Kreuz, Leiden und Pein** — Melchior Vulpus (1609)
8. - 3:28 - **The Surround** — Traditional Irish from "O'Neill's Music of Ireland"  
**Snowy Path** — Mark Kelly  
**Half C** — Jackie Moran
9. - 3:05 - **Une Vierge Pucelle** — Nicolas le Bègue/Traditional French  
**Joseph est bien Marié** — Michel Corrette/Traditional French
10. - 3:41 - **God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen** — 16th Century English  
**Good King Wenceslas** — from Piaie Cantiones, pub. 1582
11. - 3:22 - **At Midnight Hour** — Traditional Irish from "O'Neill's Music of Ireland"  
**Joy Be With You** — Traditional Irish from "O'Neill's Music of Ireland"
12. - 3:26 - **Carol of the Birds** — Traditional Catalan
13. - 3:06 - **Winter's Falling Light** — Carolyn Surrick
14. - 2:35 - **The Wexford Carol** — Traditional Irish Carol  
**Shetland Reel** — Traditional Shetland
15. - 4:04 - **Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning** — James Proctor Harding (1892)  
**Farewell to Goirtin** — Willie Coleman
16. - 3:46 - **Silent Night** — Franz Grüber (1818)

Total Time — 57:33



You might say that this all began in Jacksonville when Isaac, Jackie, Ryan, and Sue ignited a crazy musical synergy around the idea of Christmas music. It started out as a gig like many others, but by the time that particular concert had made its way from Florida to Annapolis, Maryland, and then to the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. something inexplicable had happened. A line was crossed, taking the music from the tuneful world onto sacred ground.

Then in December of 2012, a different assortment of musicians came together to assemble a Winter Solstice program—and again, the music that we have known and loved for our whole lives took on a different meaning, imbued with grace and soulfulness.

Is it the long musical relationships within these seven musicians that lead to infinite faith in the silence between the notes, that allows for daringly slow tempos, and brings with it a desire for heartbreaking beauty? Is it a willingness to embrace another musician's seemingly insane idea with gusto? Think banjo, harp, and viola da gamba.

It is true that some of us share decades of speaking with each other, and to the world, through our instruments. But more than common ground, more than concerts and cities and airplanes and rental cars, we stand beside each other as the milestones tick by, as we turn thirty, forty, fifty, or sixty, and our children and grandchildren are born, and parents die.

So when we came together to record this CD, staying in a beautiful, peaceful house in Upperville, Virginia, eating breakfast in the high-ceilinged kitchen, readying ourselves to record in a converted church down the road, we brought more than our instruments.

Ryan and Hanneke's inner musical communication, fueled by twenty-some years of playing together is everything. It is tuning and timing, rhythm and harmony, it is the dream that musicians yearn for when looking for the experience of pure music making. They brought that intensity of focus to renew a vision of **I Wonder as I Wander** and **Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence**.

When Jackie came to play with Ensemble Galilei many years ago, he came as a percussionist with a bodhran and wide assortment of drums, chimes and miscellaneous percussion instruments. But every afternoon, after the sound-check, he sat backstage in a dressing room playing the Irish tenor banjo. Constantly playing the banjo. Then he started teaching us tunes on the banjo. Then he started bringing fewer and fewer drums and the banjo became part of the arrangements, and the unthinkable happened. We came to adore the sound of banjo and harp, banjo and fiddle, and indeed, the banjo and viola da gamba.

First Jackie brought the banjo, then he brought Isaac. With the uilleann pipes. Isaac bought a new set of pipes this spring. Perhaps expressed more accurately, Isaac fell in love with a new set of pipes this spring. Their tuning was somewhere between B and something else (making them perfect for a duet with Jackie on Bodhrán) and their sweet, complex sound filled the **Wexford Carol** and **Shetland Reel**.

Isaac and Kathryn had never before shared the stage and their musical collaboration created a wholly unusual opportunity to combine the uilleann pipes with shawm, a sound not heard every day. And what music they made, turning the traditional French carols **Une Vierge Pucelle** and **Joseph est bien Marié** into a joyous celebration. And on an afternoon in the church, Kathryn sat alone and magnificently recorded an extraordinary arrangement of **Es ist ein Ros entsprungen**. Earlier in the year, when asked what solo she wanted to play, she casually replied, "Maybe I'll do variations on **Es ist ein Ros**," which I assumed meant that some 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century composer had written a fantastic set of variations. But no, they did not exist, so Kathryn wrote her own.

The idea of variations on familiar melodies drove many of the arrangements on this recording – from passing the melody around the circle of musicians in **Greensleeves** and **Christ Child Lullabye** to Ryan's virtuoso turn on **Good King Wenceslas**.

It is impossible to imagine an Ensemble Galilei CD without original tunes - Jackie's **Half C** brings rollicking joy, Sue's **The Celt** with its ferocious energy and **Winter's Falling Light**, so beautifully set for viola, harp and viola da gamba.

Last April, Sue and I traveled to Cambridge, Massachusetts to rehearse for this CD and perform with Hanneke at Club Passim. It was two days after the Boston Marathon bombing. We sat playing through **Quelle est cette odeur agréable**, and arranging **Silent Night**, looking for peace in our hearts and finding it in the quiet of the strings. That night as we walked home from the show, we watched people laughing and talking in the square, through the streets. We could not know what the next day would bring.

Shortly after six in the morning Sue received a message from Hanneke, letting us know that the residents of Boston had been asked to “shelter in place,” and that we were to stay inside, doors locked.

On that desperate day in Cambridge, Sue and I tried to put aside all that was happening outside our door. She played **At Midnight Hour** and **Joy Be With You** for me, music that reminded us both of those better, more joyous times. And then we traded tunes – she taught me **Brightest and Best** and I taught her Renaissance dances. As the day wore on, I learned **Carol of the Birds** by listening to a recording by Pablo Casals.

Casals' playing was so full of emotion, full of passion. For him, the music had a personal and powerful meaning. He once said that it spoke of the sorrow and homesickness of the Catalans, and had inscribed on the bells near his cottage, “May this be for them tomorrow - a song of peace and hope.”

Let us send this music out in these troubled and tumultuous times, our prayer for peace and hope.

—Carolyn Surrick



## ISAAC ALDERSON

Isaac Alderson (flute and uilleann pipes) was born in Chicago and lived there until the age of 18. When he was about 12 years old, he discovered Irish traditional music, and says, “There was no turning back. In particular, the sound of the uilleann pipes had me completely enthralled. During my teenage years I spent countless hours practicing, listening, and learning about traditional music.” At 14, Isaac met Laurence Nugent, the great flute and whistle player from County Fermanagh. Isaac studied primarily with Nugent for the next four years, as well as with pipers Al Purcell, Patrick Cannady, Kieran O’Hare, and many others, whenever he could pin them down for a lesson. In 2002, Isaac became the first non-Irish person to win three All-Ireland Senior Championships titles on the same day, which helped him gain recognition and the confidence to pursue music as a full-time career. After finishing college, he did a two-year stint touring with Eileen Ivers and Immigrant Soul, and he thanks Eileen and “the boys” for teaching him about what it is to be a stage performer. Since leaving them, Isaac has played with many groups and individual musicians across the United States, Canada, Ireland, and Europe, most extensively with Comas, the show **Celtic Crossroads**, Jameson’s Revenge, The Bronx Boys, and his newest project, The Yanks.



## HANNEKE CASSEL

Hanneke Cassel (fiddle) “Exuberant and rhythmic, somehow both wild and innocent, delivered with captivating melodic clarity and an irresistible playfulness,” says *The Boston Globe* about Hanneke Cassel’s playing. Such charismatic fiddling has brought the native Oregonian many honors and awards. She is the 1997 U.S. National Scottish Fiddle Champion, she holds a Bachelors of Music in Violin Performance from Berklee College of Music, and she has performed and taught across North America, Europe, New Zealand, Australia, Korea, China, and Kenya. She creates sounds on the cutting edge of acoustic music, while retaining the integrity and soul of the Scottish tradition.





## RYAN MCKASSON

Ryan McKasson has gained a reputation as a performer, composer, collaborator, and teacher. In 1996 he was the youngest to win the National Scottish Fiddle Championship. In 1997 he was awarded a Merit Scholarship for Viola Performance from the University of Southern California where he studied classical viola with Donald McInnes until 2002.

In 2003 Ryan and his sister, Cali, formed a band, The McKassons, that eventually included Ryan's wife, Brooke, and her brother, Matt Jerrell. The McKassons released two critically acclaimed albums, *Tall Tales* and *Tripping Maggie*. Since 2002 he has also been fiddler for renowned contra dance band, The Syncopaths. They have released two recordings, *Rough Around The Edges* and *Five*

*Gears*. Ryan has also recorded with Alasdair Fraser and Natalie Haas on their album *Highlander's Farewell*. Ryan teaches at fiddle camps around the US and New Zealand, most notably: Boston Harbor Scottish Fiddling School, Southern Hemisphere International School of Scottish Fiddle, Valley of the Moon Scottish Fiddling School, Festival of American Fiddle Tunes, Rocky Mountain Fiddle Camp, and Swannanoa Gathering.



## KATHRYN MONTOYA

Kathryn Montoya (pennywhistles, shawm & recorders) teaches baroque oboe and recorder at Oberlin Conservatory and the University of North Texas. She appears with a variety of orchestral and chamber music ensembles including the internationally acclaimed Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra, Tafelmusik, the Wiener Akademie, Portland Baroque Orchestra, Chicago Opera Theatre, Musica Angelica, and the Washington Bach Consort among others. Her interests extend to medieval and renaissance repertoire where she has performed on recorders, shawms, and sordune with Hesperus and the Newberry Consort. Kathryn received her degrees at Oberlin Conservatory and Indiana University School of Music, Bloomington. While at IU she

was the recipient of the prestigious Performer's Certificate and was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to study in Germany. Kathryn very much enjoys the various thrills of recording and has been broadcast on NPR's *Performance Today*.



## JACKIE MORAN

Jackie Moran, (Bodhrán, banjo) was born in Tipperary, the son of an accordion player. Ten-year-old Jackie and his family immigrated to Chicago where he quickly began drumming with the best players in the Irish music scene. The young boy became the man who is preeminent in Chicago Irish music. No less than famed fiddler, Liz Carroll says that's true. "I just think he's the best of the best in our area of the country - and all over. I don't want to give him a swelled head but he's a really terrific drummer." A founding and driving force of such influential bands as The Drovers, Wilding, Comas, Bua, and The Otters, Jackie is a fixture in the studio and in concert settings, sympathetically accompanying such great artists as Daire Bracken, Kevin Burke, Dennis Cahill, Liz Carroll, John Doyle, Alain Genty,

Martin Hayes, Paddy Keenan, Philip Masure, David Munnely, Aidan Burke, Daithi Rua, and Jimmy Keane. Jackie's talents have also led him to appear on stage with **Riverdance**, and to help form and perform with the Trinity Irish Dance Company. And when Hollywood needs a musician to play the part, and look it as well, you'll see Jackie. **Backdraft** (1991), **Blink** (1993), **Traveler** (1997) and **The Road to Perdition** (2002) all saw fit to feature Jackie and his Bodhrán. Living just outside of Chicago with his wife, Amy, and their daughters, Caroline and Sophie, Jackie also teaches the Bodhrán – and makes them, too!



## SUE RICHARDS

Sue Richards (harp) is a traditional musician and collector of tunes. As a child she studied classical harp in Ohio with Lucy Lewis and Jean Harriman, and then turned to the Irish and Scottish music of her heritage. She won the American National Scottish Harp Championship four times and is a Scottish Harp Society of America (SHSA) Distinguished Judge. She has played for Presidents Clinton and Bush, Queen Elizabeth of England, and sat in with the Chieftains Irish band. She has served as president of SHSA and the Washington, D.C., Folk Harp Society. She currently teaches and directs the harp program at the Ohio Scottish Arts School (OSAS) at Oberlin, and has taught and performed at most of the major harp festivals in the US. She has written a book of her original tunes,

**Morning to Midnight**, and several books of arrangements, and has a long list of recordings to her credit. <http://www.suerichards.net>



## CAROLYN SURRICK

Carolyn Anderson Surrick (viola da gamba) received a BA in music from UCSC and an MA in musicology from George Washington University. She founded Ensemble Galilei in 1990 and in this extraordinarily democratic organization her official title has always been “Navigatrix” – which refers to her uncanny ability to keep the group on the road and bring new projects to fruition. She has worked with The Hubble Space Telescope Institute to create **A Universe of Dreams**, partnered with The National Geographic Society on **First Person: Stories from the Edge of the World**, and now oversees Ensemble Galilei’s collaboration with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, **First Person: Seeing America**. She was in the film **The Pelican Brief**, she has recorded multiple projects for Dorian/Sono Luminus,

and it’s possible that one of the high points of her celebrity was a trip that she took with Sue Richards to the Sundance Film Festival to see the premiere of **Letters from the Big Man**, a beautifully directed Indy film that uses Ensemble Galilei’s music for its soundtrack. Her playing takes her, with Sue Richards and Ginger Hildebrand, to The Walter Reed Army Medical Center to play for wounded warriors every Friday afternoon when they are not out on tour. The warriors and their families are the inspiration for her book of poetry, **Between War and Here**, published by Upper Green Books.



## DSL-92210 — SURROUNDED BY ANGELS — ENSEMBLE GALILEI

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**Session Photography (pp. 3 & 5):** Strider Jordan  
**Photo of Isaac Alderson (p. 6):** Sasha Hsuczyk  
**Photo of Hanneke Cassel (p. 6):** Cathy Mar  
**Photo of Ryan McKasson (p. 7):** Doug Plummer  
**Photo of Kathryn Montoya (p. 7):** provided by Kathryn Montoya  
**Photo of Jackie Moran (p. 8):** provided by Jackie Moran  
**Photo of Sue Richards (p. 8):** provided by Sue Richards  
**Photo of Carolyn A. Surrick (p. 9):** Burgess Blevins

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# THE GIFTS

NESTLED AT THE EDGE  
OF A VILLAGE  
STANDS A CHAPEL

ON THIS NIGHT  
SO COLD, SO CLEAR  
STARS GLITTERING IN THE DARKNESS

WITH A THIN-ARCHED MOON  
SHINING WHITE AS SNOW  
SUSPENDED IN THE SKY  
AS IF DEFYING GRAVITY

THE AIR FILLS WITH THE SOUND  
OF FIDDLES AND HARP  
FLUTE AND DRUM

THE MUSIC  
FINE AND TRUE

ANGELS GATHER  
CARRYING ON THEIR WINGS  
IN THEIR HEARTS  
THE GIFTS OF CHRISTMAS

JOY, CLARITY  
WONDER  
GRACE  
AND LOVE

CAROLYN SURRECK