The Christmas Rebels

A Welsh Celebration of

THE WINTER SOLSTICE

DIRECTED BY PATRICK SWANSON ★ GEORGE EMLEN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

DECEMBER 11-27, 2015

HARVARD UNIVERSITY, CAMBRIDGE, MA

SANDERS THEATRE
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**The Christmas Revels**

*A Welsh Celebration of the Winter Solstice*

Directed by Patrick Swanson & George Emlen, Music Director

17 Performances: Matinees & Evenings

December 11-27, 2015

Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

Sanders Theatre

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David Coffin
Cristi Catt • Emma Crane Jaster
Noni Lewis • Billy Meleady • The Cardigan Chorus
The Caerphilly Children • The Castell Emlyn Band
The Towyn Teens • The Pinewoods Morris Men
Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble • The Mari Lwyd
The Abbots Bromley Horn Dance
The Lord of the Dance

Lynda A. Johnson, production manager • Jeremy Barnett, set design
Jeff Adelberg, lighting design • Heidi A. Hermiller, costume design
Bill Winn, sound design • Gillian Stewart, choreography

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Thank You for bringing us the music of the seasons for Forty Years! May the years ahead bring you (and us all...) more music, more joy!

IRVING HOUSE

93 Harvard

24 Irving Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
P 617 547 4600
Welcome to the 45th annual Christmas Revels!

It’s a wonder that it has taken so long for Revels to get to Wales. After all, our music director is an Emlyn and I grew up a few miles away from the border of this magical country. Magical at many levels, with medieval castles still standing sentry on the borderland. With landscapes of slate, towering black mountains, and lush green valleys running down to the sea. It’s a musical nation where poetry and dancing are held in high esteem and everybody sings. But this is also the ancient Celtic nation that, in the very first examples of transcribed British prose, introduced us to real magicians like Merlin and Taliesin, and acquainted us with King Arthur and his round table and a treasure trove of legend and history.

Our good friend Susan Cooper, author of the much-loved Revels poem “The Shortest Day” and world-acclaimed novelist, used to play as a child around the sea towns of North Wales. This is where she found inspiration for her The Dark is Rising series for young adults. Susan generously helped us write a script that conjures a Wales of humor, warmth, and harmony, all set against a background of ghostly horses, shape-changers, and dragons.

And George Emlen, in his musical farewell to The Christmas Revels, has created a rich collection of carols, tunes, and resonant songs that seems to be interwoven with his Emlyn family DNA; some of these beautiful melodies familiar and some foreign and mysterious.

The poet Dylan Thomas memorably brought Christmas to life in an avalanche of imagery evoking his childhood, and we have used A Child’s Christmas in Wales here as one of the entry points for this year’s show. The miners are coming home on Christmas Eve. Where better to start our Revels adventure than here among the uncles and the postmen and the carol-singers?

“To begin at the beginning...”

Paddy Swanson, Artistic Director
1. OVERTURE
Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble
Composed by George Emlen on familiar Welsh melodies.

2. AR HYD Y NOS (ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT)
Cristi Catt, solo • The Cardigan Chorus • The Castell Emlyn Band
Perhaps the most famous and beloved of all Welsh tunes, this one has its roots in the mid-18th century. Known at one time as “Poor Mary Ann,” it appeared in John Gay’s The Beggar’s Opera and has been set to a multitude of Welsh and English texts. Our Welsh text by John Ceiriog Hughes is the most commonly heard today; the English translation in verse 3, also well known, is by Harold Boulton.

3. COME YOU HOME AGAIN (CWM RHONDDA)
The Cardigan Chorus • The Caerphilly Children • Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble
This iconic hymn is named for the Rhondda Valley (or cwm), the most famous of the coal mining valleys of South Wales. The original Welsh text dates from 1745 (and the tune from 1907), but it is the English version beginning with “Guide me, O thou great Jehovah” that is sung lustily at rugby matches today. Our new verses, written by Susan Cooper, capture the spirit of the valley’s current generation and speak to the mass emigration that resulted from the economic decline of mining.

4. MEN OF HARLECH
The Cardigan Male Chorus • Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble
The imposing castle of Harlech stands on the west coast of Wales, a symbol of the country’s long resistance to English domination. The song’s stirring militaristic words date back to the War of the Roses. Nowadays battles between the Welsh and the English are mostly fought on the rugby field and supporters sing lustily. In this setting we have ordered up new words from Wales supporter Susan Cooper.

5. A CHILD’S CHRISTMAS IN WALES
Billy Meleady • Noni Lewis
Dylan Thomas (b. 1914), who famously led a life that burned the candle at both ends, died in New York City in 1953. He left behind some of the most celebrated poetry of the 20th century. Heard here and throughout the dialogue are fragments of the original work.

6. BORDER MORRIS DANCE
The Pinewoods Morris Men • The Castell Emlyn Band
Border morris hails from the villages on the border between England and Wales. It features simple footwork, elaborate disguises, and general rowdiness. This dance is an adaptation of “Worcester Hey” from the Oxford women’s team Rogue Morris. The tune is “Childgrove.”

7. SOSPAN FACH (LITTLE SAUCEPAN)
The Cardigan Chorus • The Caerphilly Children • Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble
This nonsense song enjoys enormous popularity with all ages in Wales.

8. DRYW BACH (LITTLE WREN)
The Caerphilly Children • Emerald Rae, violin
The blessing ritual of parading an effigy of a wren through the streets of the town, while making music and passing the hat, takes place in Ireland on St. Stephen’s Day (December 26) and in Pembrokeshire, Wales, on Twelfth Day (January 6). This version of the tune comes to us through the singing of Richard Driver.
9. PLEASE TO SEE THE KING
The Cardigan Chorus
This traditional carol from Pembrokeshire in South Wales is clearly related to “Dryw Bach.” The “wren boys” take the caged “king of birds” from door to door as a token of good luck. Arranged by Jerome Epstein.

10. COUNTRY DANCE: HOFFED AP HYWELL (POWELL’S FANCY)
The Cardigan Chorus Dancers • The Castell Emlyn Band
This dance features the playful and lively stepping typical of up-tempo Welsh social dances. Found in both the English and Welsh repertoires, it was reconstructed from an 18th century manuscript and introduced to the Welsh National Folk Dance Society by Pat Shaw, aka Padrig Farfog.

11. CALON LÂN (PURE HEART)
David Coffin, solo • The Cardigan Chorus • Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble
“Calon Lân” is one of the most famous and well-loved hymns in Wales. The words were written around 1891 by Daniel James and the tune was composed around 1900 by his friend John Hughes (not the John Hughes of “Cwm Rhondda” fame). Here we add an English verse by Susan Cooper to the original James Welsh verses.

12. THE BIRTH OF TALIESIN
Emma Crane Jaster, Gwion • Noni Lewis, Ceridwen • Billy Meleady, narrator • Emerald Rae, crwth
The Book of Taliesin is one of the most famous of Middle Welsh manuscripts, dating from the first half of the 14th century. Taliesen was a Dark Ages poet from around the 6th century who is sometimes conflated with Merlin as King Arthur’s bard. The shape-shifter theme recurs in many cultures.

13. SUO GÂN (LULLABY)
Cristi Catt, solo • The Cardigan Chorus Women • The Castell Emlyn Band
A beloved traditional Welsh tune with words dating from around 1800.

14. AR LAN Y MÔR (BY THE SHORE)
Jamie Jaffe, solo • The Cardigan Chorus Women • The Castell Emlyn Band
This traditional love song’s wistful tune and lyrics evoke sweet—or perhaps bitter-sweet—memories of seaside trysting.

15. DAFYDD Y GARREG WEN (DAVID OF THE WHITE ROCK)
Haley Hewitt, harp • David Coffin, solo • The Cardigan Chorus
This tune was composed by an actual harpist named David (Dafydd) Owen of Garreg Wen Farm (White Rock Farm) in North Wales on his deathbed in the early 18th century at the age of 29. It was first published in 1784 in a collection of bardic works; the words were added a century later by John Ceiriog Hughes. The English verses are by Susan Cooper.

16. THE OLD YEAR IS DYING
The Cardigan Chorus • The Caerphilly Children • The Castell Emlyn Band
Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble
This rousing carol is from the 1879 collection The Songs of Wales and is also known by the opening Welsh text “Mae’r Flwyddyn yn Marw.” The English words are by John Oxenford. All sing the third verse!

17. THE LORD OF THE DANCE
David Coffin, solo • The Company • The Pinewoods Morris Men
Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble
Sydney Carter’s modern lyrics to the Shaker song “Simple Gifts” are translated into dance using a compilation of traditional English morris dance steps by Carol Langstaff, Martin Graetz, and Jonathan Morse.

Intermission

There will be no teaching before Part 2, so please return to your seats promptly.
24. THE LITTLE FROG (Y BROGA BACH)
The Caerphilly Children • Emerald Rae, violin
This Welsh version of the ubiquitous English “Frog Went A-Courting” tells of a gallant frog who tries to win the hand (in this case unsuccessfully) of a mouse with simpler tastes. We learned this from the singing of Catherine Ayers on In the Language of Heaven, as well as from Meredydd Evans’ 1954 recording Welsh Folk Songs.

25. LISA LÂN (FAIR LISA)
David Coffin, solo & concertina • Cristi Catt, solo
This simple and exquisite traditional Welsh tune is probably the best known of the several versions of this poignant love song. The English verses are translated from the Welsh by H.I. Bell.

26. THE MARI LWYD (THE GREY MARE)
Mari Lwyd Troupe:
Alexandra Upton, Leader • James Mailhot, Punch • Jamie Jaffe, Judy
Gary Beckmann, Merryman • Sasho Emlen, Mari Lwyd
A challenge of wits lies at the center of this Welsh wassailing tradition. As long as the householders could rhyme clever answers to the improvised verses put by the Grey Mare and her troupe, they did not have to open their doors. But once they were outwitted, the door was opened and refreshment provided. Susan Cooper wrote this dramatized version for Revels using riddles from traditional British sources.

27. SING WE NOW (HYFRYDOL)
Cristi Catt & Jennie O’Brien • The Cardigan Chorus • The Castell Emlyn Band
Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble
This classic Welsh hymn, whose melody was composed around 1830 by Rowland Hugh Prichard, is given new words by Susan Cooper to celebrate the return of light and warmth after a long winter. The third verse is an adaptation of one of Ralph Vaughan Williams’ Three Preludes Founded on Welsh Hymn Tunes.

All Sing —

Continued on the next page
28. DONA NOBIS PACEM (GIVE US PEACE)
Our traditional round for peace.

All Sing—

29. MUMMERS’ PLAY
The Towyn Teens
The Welshcake Boys:
Noni Lewis, Room • Tom Arena, Tad Christmas • Emma Crane Jaster, Shoni Jack
Joshua Mackay Smith, Fool Minister • Billy Meleady, Irish Knight • Steve Vaughan, White Dragon
Daniel Sheldon, Saint David • Alexander Hall, Red Dragon
In this Welsh version of the traditional mummers’ play Susan Cooper highlights the ongoing rivalry between England and Wales, played out here by the white and red dragons. Mummers’ plays are common to many European traditions and draw attention to the death of the old year and the rebirth of the new. The sword dance is “Papa Stour,” named for a promontory on one of the Shetland Islands. The introductory part of the dance features the Celtic champions, including Saint David of Wales.

30. THE SHORTEST DAY
David Coffin
This poem, written for Revels by Susan Cooper in 1977, has become a traditional part of The Christmas Revels performances throughout the country.

All Shout—

WELCOME YULE!

31. THE SUSSEX MUMMERS’ CAROL
The Company • Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble
This traditional carol is sung as an ending to the folk play in Horsham, Sussex. In all American cities where Revels is produced annually, audiences join in at the conclusion of each performance. The brass arrangement is by Brian Holmes, with descant and third-verse harmonization by Ralph Vaughan Williams.

All Sing—

The End
The PLAYERS

The Caerphilly Children
Liz Brand
Natalie-Susan Frank
Ian Horsburgh
Liaw King
Skyler Marks
Madeleine McLaughlin
Celia Molla
Eva Molla
Nora O’Brien
Anson Holtz Richman
Joss Holtz Richman
Ewan P. Swanson
Connor Thomas Upton
Anna Wendelin
Jane Orianna Yannis
Kira Young

The Towny Teens
Grace Curtis
Lauren Curtis
Ben Horsburgh
Hayden Latimer-Ireland
Adlin Loud
John Recroft
Hamish Swanson
Emilia Van Dussen
Claire Wilson

The Castell Emlyn Band
Emily McLaughlin
Davide Fahn
Catherine Tait
Rob Bethel
Cello

The Pinewoods Morris Men (rotating)
Jamie Beaton
Jenny Callen
Michael Chase
Andrew Conant
David Conant
Samuel Conant
Jan Elliot
Michael Friedman
Fred Gerhard
Shag Graetz
Dan Groher
Tom Kruskal
Peter Kruskal
Joe Kynoch
Ian McGuillam
Chris O’Brien
Dave Overbeck
Sam Overbeck
Tyler Parrott
Greg Skidmore
Nathaniel Smith

Cambridge Symphonic Brass Ensemble
Ken Pullig, trumpet
Greg Hopkins, trumpet
Richard Hudson, horn
Phil Swanson, trombone
Ken Amis, tuba
Abe Finch, timpani & percussion

Artistic Staff
Stage Director: Patrick Swanson
Music Director: George Emlen
Set Design: Jeremy Barnett
Costume Design: Heidi A. Hermiller
Lighting Design: Jeff Adelberg
Sound Design: Bill Winn
Choreography: Gillian Stewart
Children’s Music Director: George Emlen
Assistant Music Director: Lakshmi Nayak

Assistant to the Director: Grace Kennedy Woodford

Program Notes: George Emlen, Patrick Swanson, Edward Kerslake, Susan Cooper

All musical arrangements by George Emlen except where noted.

Lines from Dylan Thomas’ ‘A Child’s Christmas in Wales’, and the dramatization of the story by Jeremy Brooks and Adrian Mitchell, are quoted by permission of the copyright-holders.

Production Staff
Production Manager: Lynda A. Johnson
Assistant to the Production Manager: Sarah Morrisette
Children’s Stage Manager: L. Arkansas Light

Stage Manager: Elizabeth Locke
Children’s Stage Manager: Lynda A. Johnson
Assistants to Children’s Stage Manager: Grace Curtis, Lauren Curtis, and Claire Wilson
Children’s Dressing Room Manager: Cieal Hills
Assistant Stage Manager: Ben Horsburgh and Gillian Stewart
Production Assistant: Linda Martin
Technical Director and Master Carpenter: Andrew Barnett
Assistant Technical Director & Crew Chief: Andrew Hebert-Johnson
Builder: Louis Schoenthal, Ben Soule
Master Electrician & Light Board Operator: Julie Streeter
Props Coordinator: Elizabeth Locke
Costume Production: Costume Works
Costume Manager: Lynne Jeffery
Wardrobe Manager: Michaela Beckmann
Scenic Painter: Gina Smothers
Production Volunteer Coordinator: Jeanne Kelly
Backstage Volunteer Coordinator: Susan Only

ASL Interpreters: Joan Wattman, Kathleen Burns
RAP—Revels Apprentice Program: Nica Hawthorne, Adlin Loud, John Recroft, Hamish Swanson, Emilia Van Dussen
Revels Records Sales Coordinators: Jen Sur, John Newhall
Cast Party: Michelle Roderick
Photography: Roger Ide
Video Production: Michael Kolowich & Shawn Whisker, DigiNovations
Graphic Design: Cieal Hills
Illustration: PJ Lynch

Volunteers
Barbara Akiba
Hazel Askew
Sue Barry
Henry Bassett
Kate Beals
Framy Bester
Theo Bester
Dora Blake-McLaughlin
John Blanchard
Lani Blanchard
Jeffrey Boudreau
Chrisie Brown
Jim Brown
Elizabeth Burke
Karen Burke
Jean Cain
Adin Carey
Paula Clough
Harvey Cohen
Joanne Crowell
Karen Daniels
Christine Denise Day
Tamsen Evans
Sheila Fair
Cathie Ghorbani
Beate Gottschlich
Jim Greaney
Carol Anne Grotrian
David Grotrian
Bonnie Hall
Corinna Hall
Ross Hall
Peter Hamlin
Ruth Heepselin
Rebecca Horne
Susan Hunziker
Rebecca Jenness
Jim Karg
Ed Keith
Glenn Ketterle
Karen Kosko
Bob Loomis
Hannah Loomis
Barbara Mackay
Duncan Mackay
John Magnani
Maria Mannix
Linda Martin
Susan Maycock
Jennifer McSweeney
Julia McSweeney
Kevin Montague
Ben Moss
Michele Nathan
Susan Only
Beth Pendery
Jan Pope
Jim Pope
Bonnie Power
Christine Reynolds
Larissa Richman
Susan Rieff
Erika Roderick
Karen Russo
Bill Sano
Linda Schneider
Michael Schuttenberg
Mayhew Seavey
Ken Shermman
Natty Smith
Ben Soule
Charity Stafford
Phyllis Stefanov-Wagner
Meryl Stowellbridge
Joyce Sullivan
David Summersby
Jack Summersby
Elizabeth Taylor
David Torrey
Jude Travers
Nancy Twomey
Julia Vail
Monika Van Dussen
David Walsh
Norma Wassert
Gabrielle Weiler
Peter Weiler
Deborah Weiner Soule
Lauren Yaffee
Mari Young
and all the volunteers who make Christmas Revels happen!

Listings as of November 26, 2015.
‘Tis the season for reveling.

Happy Holidays from Life’s Bank.

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SECOND PRIZE: VIP Tickets for 8 to The Christmas Revels 2016.

HOW TO ENTER: Fill out the enclosed ticket stub with your name and email address. Return the stub with your payment to our red apron volunteers or to our table in the lobby. Pencils and additional tickets are available from volunteers.

Raffle tickets are $10 per chance. Enter as many times as you wish. All proceeds benefit Revels, a 501c3 charitable organization.

Drawing will be held January 11, 2016. Winners will be notified by email. Prize package retail value estimated at $6,000.

Prizes are offered as is. Travel package valid for departure on December 2, 2016. Winner assumes responsibility for any tax liability. Employees of Grand Circle Corporation and Revels, Inc. and affiliates are not eligible to win.
PATRICK SWANSON began his career in London as an actor at the Arts Theatre in the West End. In 1969, he toured Europe with La MaMa Plexus and subsequently got his world theater education from Ellen Stewart at La MaMa E.T.C. in New York. His numerous directing projects include opera, ensemble, music theater, and circus. He was a founding stage director of Circus Flora.

Paddy taught acting and improvisation at the London Academy of Dramatic Art (L.A.M.D.A.), the London Drama Centre, and the Yisch School of the Arts at New York University. He served as artistic director of the Castle Hill Festival in Ipswich, MA, directing and co-producing opera and theater works, including the premieres of Julie Taymor’s Liberty’s Taken and Peter Sellars’ production of Cost eff Ton Tutte. Other directing credits include Tristan and Isoult with the Boston Camerata at the Spoleto USA festival; Shirley Valentine by Willy Russell at Houston’s Alley Theatre and Boston’s Charles Playhouse; Happy Days by Samuel Beckett; The Caretaker by Harold Pinter; and two stage premieres at Gloucester Stage Company: Talking Heads by Alan Bennett and Fighting Over Beverley by Israel Horowitz. His Actors’ Shakespeare Project production of Shakespeare’s King Lear with Alvin Epstein was nominated for three 2006 Elliot Norton awards. For A.S.P. he subsequently directed The Tempest and The Coved Crown (Henry IV parts one and two). His most recent acting performance was for Gloucester Stage’s 20th anniversary production of Fighting over Beverley.

For Revels, Paddy has directed a contemporary version of the medieval mystery plays, The Mysteries by Tony Harrison, co-produced by Revels and Shakespeare & Company, and Benjamin Britten’s opera Noye’s Fludde. He writes scripts and directs all Cambridge Revels productions and, with music director George Emlen, serves as a national consultant to the eight affiliated Revels companies.

GEORGE W. EMLEN is a conductor, composer, arranger, songleader, and music educator. He has directed choral ensembles all his adult life in churches, schools, and theatrical productions throughout New England. A graduate of Dartmouth College, he earned his Master of Music in choral conducting at the New England Conservatory of Music, where he studied with Lorna Cooke de Varon. While living in Maine he founded and conducted the Acadia Choral Society and conducted the Oratorio Chorale and the Mount Desert Summer Chorale. His choral compositions and arrangements are published by Lawson-Gould, Thorp, and Redwing Press.

George has been the music director of Revels since 1984. Together with the artistic director he creates the Cambridge Revels stage productions and advises the eight other Revels companies. He selects and trains the adult and children’s choruses, researches and arranges musical selections, and engages guest artists. He is responsible for producing Revels recordings and editing Revels’ published musical materials, including choral octavos and songbooks. He leads public singing events such as Revels RiverSing, Spring Sing, and Revels pub sings.

In 2004 he conducted a memorable Revels production of the opera Noye’s Fludde. George is the founding director of The Revels Singers.

George has served on the faculties of the New England Conservatory, where he directed the Conservatory Camerata, and of Lesley University in the Creative Arts in Learning program. He was music director at the Putney School in Vermont and has taught and conducted at Noble and Greenough School, the College of the Atlantic, and the University of Maine.

DAVID COFFIN has performed throughout New England since 1980. Widely known for his rich baritone voice, David performs on an impressive collection of musical instruments, including concertinas, recorders, penny-whistles, bombards, gensehorns, carminasse, shawm, rauschpfeife—or, as he explains, “generally anything that requires a lot of hot air.” At the heart of David’s work is his extensive collection of songs from the maritime tradition. David has recorded four solo CDs, Last Trip Home, his latest CD, features his daughter Linnea, also a Revels performer.

David has been performing with Revels since 1980 as a singer, instrumentalist and, since 1991, Master of Ceremonies. In 2014, he was appointed Revels’ Artist-in-Residence and he now performs his highly acclaimed School Enrichment Programs throughout New England under the Revels Education banner. David has appeared in over 56 different Revels productions. He runs tours of Boston Harbor during the summer months, leading over 7,500 inner-city children on boat trips to George’s and Spectacle Islands. He also directs the narration program for Boston Harbor Cruises and hosts the Brunch Cruises every weekend from May to October.

BILLY MELEADY is delighted to be returning to perform with Revels once again. Recent productions include The Turn of the Screw (Newton Nomadic Theater) and the east coast premiere of The Belle of Belfast (Irish Repertory Theatre). He has also performed in productions of Faith Healer (Newton Nomadic Theater), The Belle of Belfast (EST/LA), and The Last Will (Commonwealth Shakespeare Co.). He received the 2014 Best Actor award at the 48 Hour Film Project in Boston and a 2013 Ovation award nomination for Best Featured Actor for his performance in The Belle of Belfast. Billy was resident Irish actor with The Sughan Theatre Company, New Repertory Theatre, and Boston Playwrights Theatre; he received both Elliot Norton and IRNE awards for his work with Sughan. He is looking forward to presenting Molly Sweeney by the late, great Brian Friel with Newton Nomadic Theater, January–March, 2016.
EMMA CRANE JASTER is a performer, choreographer, and teacher. She has been called a “splendid mover” (The Washington Post) and “a master of her craft” (Baratunde Thurston). She has studied and performed around the world, notably with Natanakairali Institute for Sanskrit Theater in India, LaMama’s International Theater Symposium in Italy, U-Theatre, a Zen-drumming troupe in Taiwan, and Teatr Zar at Gorowskii’s Institute in Poland. She has choreographed for dancers, actors, students, and puppets. Emma is the recipient of two Roland Fellowship for independent graduate study in theater and dance, a HARP artist residency at HERE Arts Center in New York, and an artist fellowship from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. She received her degree in theater and dance from Amherst College and attended the Lecoq school for physical theatre in Paris. And she’s a life-long Reveler! She watched her mother direct the show in Washington for many years and from the age of six, performed alongside her father Mark, who has appeared onstage here at Sanders for several Revels in the past. Emma is thrilled to be returning to Cambridge after her last turn here as the Fool in 2010. emmajaster.com

NONI LEWIS is a fluent Welsh-speaking actress and voiceover artist currently based in Boston who is still reeling from the serendipity of being here in time for The Christmas Revels to visit Wales! Having spent many years as a stage and screen performer and recently voice acting from her home studio, Noni is delighted to emerge from behind the microphone to perform in The Christmas Revels. Previous credits include Wallace and Gromit: Curse of the Were-Rabbit (Aardman Animations/Dreamworks), poetry readings, plays and audiobooks for BBC Radio Four, Macbeth and Twelfth Night (Orange Tree Theatre, London), and Odysseus’ Journey (Bristol Old Vic). Noni has also recently appeared as Tessa in the Welsh language soap opera Pobol y Cwm and can be heard on radio and television advertisements across Wales, on websites, phone messages, apps, computer games, audio trails, as well as in museums and even lifts through her work at www.welshvoiceover.co.uk.

CRISTI CATT performed in both our Northlands and Italian Renaissance Revels. Cristi is a soloist and chamber musician who specializes in mixing contemporary, world, folk, and medieval music. She has performed throughout the U.S., Europe, and South America, and is a founding member of the internationally renowned vocal ensemble Tapestry, winner of the Echo Klassik and Chamber Music America’s Recording of the Year. Her interest in the meeting points between medieval and world traditions has led to research grants in Portugal and southern France, and performances include Ensemble PAN, Revels, La Dôme Musicale, and Boston Camerata. A frequent performer of modern music, she performed Steve Reich’s Tehillim with the Colorado Symphony and Cabrillo Festival Orchestra conducted by Marin Alsop, as well as at Jordan Hall conducted by Steven Drury. Cristi currently serves on the faculty of New England Conservatory and Berklee College of Music.

SUSAN COOPER Co-Author is the author of the classic five-book sequence The Dark is Rising, which won a Newbery Medal, Newbery Honor Award, and two Carnegie Honor Awards. Born in England, she was a reporter and feature writer for the London Sunday Times before coming to live in the US. Her writings includes books for children and adults, a Broadway play, films, and Emmy-nominated screenplays. Her most recent books for children are Ghost Hawk, King of Shadows and Victory. For adults, she has written a portrait of Revels’ founder Jack Langstaff called The Magic Maker. In 2012, Susan was given the Margaret A. Edwards Award and in 2013 she received the World Fantasy Award for life achievement. Susan lives and writes in Marshfield, MA.

JEFF ADELBERG Lighting Design is marking his 6th season with The Christmas Revels. Jeff has designed over 200 productions here in Boston. Recent work. Mothers and Sons, Necessary Monsters, Carrie: The Musical, The Whale (SpeakEasy Stage Co.); Beckett Women: Ceremonies of Departure (The Poets’ Theatre); Mary’s Wedding (Playmakers Repertory Theatre, NC); Dusk Rings a Bell and Equally Divided (Merrimack Repertory Theatre); mr. g, Car Talk: The Musical!!! and Remembering HM (Underground Railway Theatre); God’s Ear, The Comedy of Errors (Actors’ Shakespeare Project); The Last Goodbye (The Old Globe, San Diego); The Lily’s Revenge (American Repertory Theatre); That Hope Change Thing, The Adams Family: A New Musical, Miracle on 34th Street, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Stoneham Theatre); The Prodigal Son (Intermezzo), Alice in War, The Threepenny Opera, The Pajama Game, The Museum of Useless Desire, L’Italiana in Algeri (The Boston Conservatory). Jeff attended the University of Connecticut and teaches at Brandeis University, MIT, and Boston College. JeffAdelberg.com

JEREMY BARNETT Set Design holds an MFA in scenic design from Boston University. He has designed scenery for Opera Boston, Boston Midsummer Opera, the Opera Institute at Boston University, Mssn Lnsk Inc., Revels, Gloucester Stage Company, and the Stoneham Theatre Company. He has worked with designers on productions at The Lyric Opera of Chicago, The New York Philharmonic, The Pasadena Playhouse, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, Arena Stage, The Shakespeare Theatre in Washington DC, Philadelphia Theatre Company, and Huntington Theatre Company. Mr. Barnett’s designs were a featured part of the Harley-Davidson International Open Road Tour in 2003 and the Bruce Springsteen’s Seeger Sessions Band Tour in 2006. He has taught university courses at Oakland University, Gordon College, Endicott College, Boston College, and Boston University. Mr. Barnett is a returned Peace Corps volunteer and is an active facilitator of arts education in urban communities.
HEIDI HERMILLER Costume Design has been designing costumes for The Christmas Revels for the past 18 years. She combines whimsy, history, and fantasy to make the magic of the Revels happen in a new and exciting way every year. She also designs the Harvard Hasty Pudding Theatricals.

PJ LYNCH Illustrator has created signature pieces for countless children’s books. A native of Dublin, he has been recognized with numerous prestigious commendations, including the Mother Goose Award, Christopher Medal (three times) and the prestigious Kate Greenaway Medal (two times). He was commissioned to design posters for Opera Ireland and the Abbey Theatre. His meticulous research brings impeccable detail to the many books he has illustrated, including A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens, Mysterious Traveller by Mal Peet and Elspeth Graham, and The Boy Who Fell Off the Mayflower, or John Howland’s Good Fortune, the first book that PJ has both written and illustrated. Most recently, he created the artwork for Once Upon A Place, Irish Children’s Laureate Eoin Colfer’s anthology of stories and poems. PJ has also designed several sets of stamps for An Post (the Irish Postal service), including four Christmas issues. This is his second collaboration with The Christmas Revels and Cahoots Design.

Heartfelt thanks go to many people for helping us bring this Welsh Christmas Revels to fruition. The first of these goes to Brian O’Donovan, our go-to guy for all things Celtic. Besides offering us a wealth of ideas and material, Brian also connected us with Richard Driver, who early on brought us ideas on Welsh music and lore. Nicole Galland lent us her recording of “In the Language of Heaven,” a wonderful resource, and Susan Cooper shared a trove of Welsh recordings, ideas, and experiences with us. Edward Kerslake provided translations, background, enthusiastic encouragement, and especially pronunciation help through every rehearsal, in collaboration with fellow Welsh citizen Noni Lewis. From Wales we had help from dance expert Huw Williams in finding great dances and dance tunes. Our good friends Natasha Vogt and Susie Rioff created wonderful wheat and wren cage props. Susie has also been a gracious host to our out-of-town guests, as have long-time Revels friends Shippen Page and Anne St. Goar. Thanks to Nilah MacDonald and Clark Topper who annually find and package just the right Revels ornament. Finally, our cast party is in the capable hands of Michelle Roderick, for which we are eternally grateful.
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Revels was founded in Cambridge, MA, in 1971 and established as a non-profit, tax-exempt organization in 1974. The Christmas Revels program © 2014 Revels, Inc. “Christmas Revels”, “Sea Revels,” “Midsummer Revels,” and “Revels” are ® service marks of Revels, Inc., Watertown, MA. All rights reserved.
Wales has always been different. In the 1950’s, when I was a child traveling from Manchester to Ireland to visit relatives for the summer holidays, the boat train traveled through North Wales on its way to the ferry terminal at Holyhead. Two railway stations that the train had to pass through on the way were unforgettable. The first came after a long bend that signaled our imminent arrival. This event was best viewed by sticking your head out the window, braving the black smoke and sparks from the engine to see the curve of the carriages, then pulling it back smartly as the train plunged with a dramatic roar into a pitch black tunnel before emerging abruptly within the ancient ramparts of a real live medieval castle—Conway! The second was a tiny station in Anglesey further along the line. I don’t remember anybody getting on or off there, but faces were pressed against every door and window of the train to verify the length of the single sign that ran the length of the platform. It read: Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogogoch. It must have been some resonance set up by a reading of Dylan Thomas’s A Child’s Christmas in Wales that connected these memories to Revels. When we began to collect the music and source material for our CD A Revels Christmas in Wales a good deal of it was reassuringly familiar to me. Other elements, however, like the language on the railway sign, were foreign and mysterious. Poetry, ritual, and song have long been powerful elements in the shaping of the Welsh identity...
Owen Glendower) and the wealth of hymn tunes, carols, love songs, and robust melodies gave us plenty of material to work with. On the dramatic front, Dylan Thomas’s evocative prose offered a gateway for Revels into a culture that still features national eisteddfodau or competitions for the bardic chairs of poetry and prose, pagan rituals like the Mari Lwyd (Grey Mare), Hunting of the Wren, and prolific male choirs that sing in harmony at every opportunity, especially at rugby matches.

It was Wales that produced the earliest prose literature of Britain with the Mabinogion, a collection of poems, histories, and folk tales that began to appear in manuscript around 1350–1410. The stories were compiled from the earlier oral traditions of Welsh bards and are lively tales with compelling characters in strong narrative settings that feature romance, drama, and a surprising amount of humor. These stories have wide appeal to both young children and adults. Another manuscript, Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Lives of the Kings of Britain, introduced the world to Merlin the magician and King Arthur and his round table, and set the stage for later stories of chivalry and knightly prowess.

One of these stories tells of King Vortigern, who tried to build a castle as defense against the Saxons. Every day his masons would construct the walls and every night their work would collapse. Vortigern consulted his wise men, who recommended the blood sacrifice of a fatherless boy. A young boy was brought to him named Merlin, who rather than submit to be a sacrifice, offered instead an explanation for Vortigern’s problem. He advised the king to dig up the foundations and discover the lake beneath, then to drain the lake to expose two dragons, one red and one white. The dragons would begin to fight and when the red dragon was victorious, the king would be able to build his castle. The red dragon was of course Wales and was adopted as the national emblem, but Vortigern never did get to defeat the white Saxon dragon in his lifetime. That was accomplished by another king, who used diplomacy and a cleverly designed round table for the warring British tribes to sit around at negotiation time. That king was shrewd enough to appoint Merlin to his staff.

The red dragon was of course Wales and was adopted as the national emblem...

It is characteristic of the Revels process that a story like this will reappear in vestigial form, the Saxons replaced by the English. The ancient rivalry seems to be as active today as it was in the Dark Ages. Battles between the Welsh and the English are now mostly played out on the rugby field, but there is room in our mummers’ play for the real thing. We are pleased to announce that in the Revels Christmas in Wales…there will be dragons!

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It all happened because my great-grandfather couldn’t swim. Around 1875 his ship was in Liverpool harbor and it was Sunday, so like all good Welshmen of his day he headed for chapel. But his little dinghy was swamped in a sudden squall, and he drowned. He left a wife and three children in the village of Aberdyfi, and as soon as each child turned 14 the boys went into the Merchant Navy and the girl, my Nain (Welsh for “grandmother,” pronounced “nine”), was sent up to London to Go Into Service, which meant becoming one of these little maids you used to see in *Upstairs, Downstairs*.

Nain married an Englishman and had seven children, and brought her mother to London when she was old and lonely. The old lady was in hospital before she died, and the nurses said afterwards to Nain, “Poor dear, she was delirious at the end, she was talking gibberish.”

But it wasn’t gibberish; it was Welsh.

When they grew up, the seven children all went to Aberdyfi, some to live, some to spend holidays. It was full of relatives, when I was small. There was Great-Uncle Davy, all in navy blue, chatting with the other fishermen on the old creosoted jetty near the last remaining sailing ship; there was Auntie-Mary-Jane-the-Bakehouse, in her sweet-smelling shop just up the hill from the village smithy, all clanging and sparks. (We also had an Auntie-Mary-Jane-Patagonia; she’d emigrated to a Welsh colony far away.) Everyone was bilingual, everyone called you cariad, and my cousins and I dug in the sand for lugworms and fished for flattries in the estuary.

The river Dyfi divides North from South Wales, so this is the north we are talking about. When I grew up and became a newspaper reporter, for a while I worked in Cardiff and discovered South Wales, where the hills echoed with male voice choirs and rugby cheers, and coal was king (though the miners wouldn’t let me underground to report, because it was bad luck for a woman to go down there.)

But home was Aberdyfi, where my parents were living by then. After I married an American, every year I would make my homesick way there across the Atlantic, with two babies who grew gradually into teenagers. And my children in turn would play with their cousins on the beach, fish for crabs from the new jetty, and look forward to seeing the two old ladies who kept their favorite shop, who would give them sweetsies and call them *cariad*.

Today my own grandchildren call me Nana, not Nain, because they are American and their friends would certainly demand, “Why do you call your granny Nine?” This past summer we took them to make their own discovery of Aberdyfi, 135 years after their great-great-great-grandfather drowned because he couldn’t swim. They walked for miles on the mountains that are even more beautiful in the north than in the south; they gazed at Carn March Arthur, the footprint of King Arthur’s horse, and at the ragged mist blowing down from Cader Idris that is called the breath of the *Brenin Llwyd*, the Grey King. They fished for crabs from the jetty, and Ma actually caught one. (She put him back.) They met distant cousins, they saw the cottage where my Nain was born.

They heard very little Welsh. Like a number of Welsh tourist destinations, Aberdyfi has been quietly infiltrated by the English in ways that 13th-century King Edward could never manage with his invading soldiers and castles. Now English voices fill the shops and the bed-and-breakfasts that occupy the handsome row houses built by 19th-century Welsh sea-captains. In the winter the population drops to 400, and this year the village school was closed, because there are so few children left.

But that’s a small sign of the times. It didn’t matter to my grandchildren, who were discovering a Wales of their own; it doesn’t matter to modern Wales itself, whose new National Assembly has made it compulsory to learn Welsh between 5 to 16, at least as a second language.

As for me, I came back with maybe a more complex understanding of that deeply Welsh word for longing, *hiraeth*.

As for me, I came back with maybe a more complex understanding of that deeply Welsh word for longing, *hiraeth*. And I couldn’t wait to dive into the magical, timeless Celtic mix of music and words and images that’s embodied in this year’s Revels. For someone who first did it in 1975, collaborating with two old friends on a Revels is one more way of coming home.
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“Joy, health, love and peace be all here in this place”—a powerful musical blessing. It opens the traditional Welsh song “Please to See the King,” associated with The Twelfth Night Killing of the Wren ritual. Though the lines spring from a specific Welsh custom, they express a much more universal wish for all good things, transcending any particular time or place.

When a benediction like this is embedded in traditional song it reaches a deeper place within us. And that is why traditional song has been a bedrock Revels aesthetic value from Day One. Songs like “Please to See the King” have a certain cultural weight integral to all traditional music and essential to the authenticity of a Revels production. Every culture we explore in our productions is mined for the music that conveys and mirrors the soul of that culture, whether in carols, anthems, solos, children’s games, or dances. Each piece brings us closer to an understanding of that culture’s history and a kinship with its people.

And so it is with this Welsh Christmas Revels. Wales is indeed a musical nation, as Billy proclaims at the top of the show (quoting Dylan Thomas), and more specifically a singing nation, and a choral singing nation at that. The Welsh passion for massed harmony singing was high on the list of elements that we needed to create a truly Welsh production. For those of us who grew up singing in choirs and glee clubs, this is a delightful opportunity. Such magnificent hymns as “Calon Lân” (Pure Heart), “Cwm Rhondda” (Come You Home Again) and “Hyfrydol” (Sing We Now) are a joy to...
bring to the Revels stage, even more so when the audience joins us to make an even mightier sound. Not only do we satisfy our own urge to hear a thousand voices lifted in song, we also tap into one of the great traditions that define Welsh culture. And what a blessing it is to have the uplifting poetry of Susan Cooper married to so much of the music in this production. As she has done for many other Revels shows, Susan brings new meaning to classic hymns and carols. Particularly for this Welsh year, in which she can truly claim the title of “tradition bearer,” her musical ear guides her voice in creating lyrical texts that roll beautifully off the tongue while expressing deep emotion.

Of course big choral singing is only part of the Welsh musical landscape. The rest is filled with traditional song in many incarnations. A nonsense song about saucepans boiling over has enormous resonance for Welsh people, especially when they belt it out at rugby matches. The Mari Lwyd troupe’s rough wassail, sung as they go from door to door, bestows good luck on those who invite them in. And you can melt any Welshman’s heart with either of the two haunting love songs in this show, “Ar Lan y Môr” and “Lisa Lân.”

I went back to Wales. I plunged into the deep, deep pool of Welsh music.

The Welsh film composer Michael Lewis tells of rediscovering the power of the simple folk songs of his native land. After a long, successful career in Hollywood, immersed in massive orchestral performances and richly romantic film scores, he happened upon a recording of “Lisa Lân,” which he had not heard in decades. “I fell in love all over again,” he writes. “I realized where my melodic inspiration came from. I recognized the foundations on which my life had been built. I went back to Wales. I plunged into the deep, deep pool of Welsh music. I had to share this joy with the rest of the universe. Big orchestras were not needed in this musical world.”

Big orchestras are not needed in Revels either. We too plunge into the pool of traditional song and hymn. We too share the joy we find there with the rest of the universe. May “joy, health, love and peace” be a blessing on us all, this season, and every season.

George W. Emlen

*  

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Dear Friends,

We are delighted you have joined us for our 45th annual Christmas Revels. This year’s production, A Welsh Celebration of the Winter Solstice, is without a doubt the largest celebration of Welsh culture in North America this year. Now you’re a part of it!

Although The Christmas Revels is our signature program with nearly 20,000 attendees annually, we have many year-round activities for revelers of all ages. Headed by Education Director Emily Williams and Artist-in-Residence David Coffin, our extensive youth education program provides 7,000 children with the opportunity to participate in and experience the joys of the performing arts each year. One of the highlights is the annual collaboration with the Perkins School for the Blind. (See page 55 for information about how you can bring David Coffin to your local schools.)

Other Revels programs include Revels RiverSing, our free, annual celebration of the Autumnal Equinox along the banks of the Charles River in Cambridge; Salons, our informative, interactive lecture series about various folk traditions and all things Revels; Revels Singers, our outstanding community chorus; Summer Harbor Cruises; Pub Sings; Twelfth Night, Spring Sing, and many more. If you have not joined us for these Revels events, you are missing lots of fun!

This year marks a big transition as George Emlen has announced he will be moving on in June after 32 years as Revels’ music director to concentrate full time on musical composition. George will be our honoree at this year’s Revels Spring Gala on April 30, 2016. I hope you will join us as we salute George’s invaluable contributions to Revels.

Revels is a non-profit organization that depends on the goodwill and donations of the community. This year we are grateful to the Clark Charitable Trust that will match new and renewal donations up to $5,000. If our show tonight exceeds your expectations, please consider helping us with a donation. You can donate online at Revels.org or pick up a donation envelope in the Sanders Theatre lobby. If you have any questions about how you can help, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

On behalf of The Christmas Revels cast, artistic leadership, production crew, and management team, thank you for your continued help and support.

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FRIENDS of REVELS
Continued on page 54
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Margaret Minor Wood
John Wroclawski
Chris & Fritz Yohn

Margaret Ward
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IN MEMORIAM

Lenore Gessner Travis

The Revels family dedicates this year’s The Christmas Revels performances to Lenore’s memory. Lenore Travis was an extraordinary friend of Revels who believed strongly in the value of our mission.

Aurora Productions
Tom & Susan Bates
Jackson Browne, Buddha &
Cree Miller & Dennis Scrimo
Katherine & Colin Conway
Alan & Catherine David
Mary Ann Flippin
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Gary Paster Family
Steve Sagman & Eric H. Weinberger
Soltech Group
Steven & Maureen Van Zandt
Kevin and Sue Wall
The Ruth Weinberg Family
Peyton Wilson & Ginny Buckley

Gifts made in Lenore’s memory have been designated to the Lenore G. Travis Visiting Artists Fund. The Fund enables Revels to include exceptional artists and performers in our programs, extending the range and variety of talent on stage and deepening the experiences of our audiences.

Gifts made in loving memory of Lenore Travis as of Nov. 5, 2015.

Volunteer to Be a Part of Revels!

Do you have skills or talents you’d like to share with Revels? We warmly welcome your participation in a wide array of activities throughout the year. You’ll deepen your connection, help support our mission, and make the most wonderful new friends.

Find out how at Revels.org/get-involved or contact Jeanne Kelly at jkelly@revels.org.
BRING THE SHOW HOME WITH YOU!
“A Revels Christmas in Wales” is a celebration of Wales for the Christmas season, including poignant love songs, rousing hymns, tender lullabies, sweet children’s songs, and jaunty dance tunes. All are performed by our adult and children’s choruses, brass ensemble, folk band, and vocal soloists, including David Coffin and Jamie Jaffe. With this musical offering, we pay homage to an ancient and venerable land in all its proud, passionate, and exuberant spirit.

Available in the lobby.
Hear samples and purchase online at Revels.org/store, where you’ll find Revels’ extensive catalog of CDs, songbooks, greeting cards, and educational products.

SING WITH REVELS
AGES 8-12
Join a group of enthusiastic singers for the Sing with Revels experience! Develop the joy of singing the Revels repertoire while exploring cool rhythms and movement. Help us sing traditions to life!
THURSDAYS, 4:00–5:30PM

RITUAL DANCE
Morris Dancing:
AGES 8-12
→ provides more of a cardiovascular workout than jogging
→ gives dancers sticks to bang as part of the choreography
→ is unique in New England, with only 6 groups just for kids
WEDNESDAYS, 4:00–5:15PM

Longsword Dancing:
TEENS AND UP
WEDNESDAYS, 4:00–5:15PM

SUMMER WORKSHOP
AGES 7-17
Try your hand at comedy acting, singing, juggling, unicycling, and dancing. Revels Summer Vaudeville Workshop culminates in a public performance! Last year’s Vaudeville Workshop was sold out. Book now!
JULY 11–22, 2016: MONDAY–FRIDAY, 9AM–3PM

BRING REVELS TO YOUR SCHOOL WITH VISITING ARTIST DAVID COFFIN
David Coffin offers two elementary school programs: “Music from the King’s Court” and “Life at Sea: A Voyage in Song.” Children are captivated by David’s enthusiasm and depth of knowledge. He involves students in exploring the science of sound through his collection of 50 instruments that are ancestors of the recorder. In “Life at Sea,” they sing and act out the life aboard a whaling ship leaving Nantucket during the Colonial era. C’mon aboard!

Now booking for winter, spring, and fall 2016.

For information on all of Revels Education programs, contact Emily Williams, Director of Education: ewilliams@revels.org

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Saturday, April 30, 2016
WGBH STUDIOS, BRIGHTON, MA

For more information: Revels.org/gala
Please contact Diane Kennedy, Director of Development, about becoming a sponsor at dkennedy@revels.org

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GRACE VISION CHURCH, WATERTOWN
Help us put Christmas to bed!
SATURDAY, JANUARY 9, 1PM & 4PM

SPRING PUB SING
DOYLE’S CAFÉ, JAMAICA PLAIN
WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 6-9 PM

WINTER PUB SING
GARCIA BROGAN’S, WALTHAM
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 6–9 PM

A CELEBRATION OF SPRING
PERKINS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND, WATERTOWN
Free event!
THURSDAY, MAY 26, 7:30 PM

SPRING SING
GRACE VISION CHURCH, WATERTOWN
Family Celebration of the Spring!
SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 6–9 PM

BOSTON HARBOR CRUISE & SINGS
DEPARTS FROM ROWES WHARF, BOSTON
JULY & AUGUST DATES TBA, 7–9 PM

REVELS SPRING GALA
WGBH STUDIOS, BRIGHTON, MA
SATURDAY, APRIL 30

VAUDEVILLE WORKSHOP
GRACE VISION CHURCH, WATERTOWN
For ages 7–17
JULY 11–22

CHRISTMAS REVELS AUDITIONS
GRACE VISION CHURCH, WATERTOWN
MAY 22 & MAY 23
Details and more at Revels.org.

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THE BANKS OF THE CHARLES RIVER, CAMBRIDGE
A Family Celebration of the Autumnal Equinox. Free event!
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 6–7:30 PM

REVEIVING, Bringing Tradition to Life

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All through the winter remember the songbirds

(the original very early music groups). Between Monday, December 26th, when tradition says the wren is caught in the furze! - also known as Wren Day - and May 1st International Dawn Chorus Day (see idcd.info) feed them and donate to groups saving them: Mass Audubon, National Wildlife Conservation and Cornell Ornithology Center. “You will miss them when they’re gone!”
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