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Deo gracias Anglia!

Medieval English Carols
The Trinity Carol Roll

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DIRECTED BY DAVID SKINNER

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Medieval English Carols

The Trinity Carol Roll

The Trinity Carol Roll (nos. 1–7)

1. Hail Marye ful of grace
2. Nowel, nowel, nowel
3. Alma redemptoris mater
4. Now may we syngyn
5. Be mery, be mery
6. Nowel syng we
7. Deo gracias Anglia

8. Nowel, nowel
9. Lullay, lullay
10. Princeps pacis
11. Nova, nova
12. Tibi laus, tibi gloria

The Trinity Carol Roll (nos. 8–13)

13. Now make we merthe
14. Abyde I hope it be the beste
15. Qwat tydynges bryngyst thu messenger
16. Eya martir Stephane
17. Prey for us the prynce of pees
18. Ther is no rose of swych vertu

Total time

Producer: Nigel Short

Engineer: Jim Gross

Executive Producer: Martin Souter

Recorded in: The Wren Library, Trinity College, Cambridge, by kind permission of the Master and Fellows, 1-3 September 2011.

Performing editions: David Skinner

Cover image: The Adoration of the Magi (detail)/Trinity College, Cambridge, MS B.11.7, f. 45r., by kind permission of the Master and Fellows

ALAMIRE, directed by David Skinner

GRACE DAVIDSON, *soprano*

CLARE WILKINSON, *contralto*

NICHOLAS TODD, *tenor*

SIMON WALL, *tenor*

ANDREW LAWRENCE-KING,

gothic harp & psaltry

MICHAËL GRÉBIL, *plectrum lute*

PAMELA Thorby, *recorder & gemshorn*

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CD709

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Highly significant to the history of medieval English music, the Trinity Carol Roll is nevertheless an enigmatic document. Its striking physical format, a roll of parchment 18 centimetres wide and some two metres in length when fully unrolled, is highly unusual. Rolls were both portable and economic to produce, so were often used in the Middle Ages for texts that needed to be written down and passed on rapidly, but their lack of binding made them especially vulnerable to loss and damage, and it is likely that many medieval rolls have been destroyed. Inventories listing the (now lost) music-manuscripts held by medieval churches sometimes mention rolls, and they regularly feature in artistic depictions of singers, unfurled over a lectern to be sung from. But the Trinity Carol Roll is a rare survivor of this type of manuscript, and astonishingly well preserved. Its place of origin is unknown, as is the history of its ownership before it was donated to the College in the 19th century by H.O. Roe. The only evidence of the Roll's place of origin comes from the dialect of the carols themselves: this shows signs that the poet(s) or scribe hailed from

south Norfolk, though the Roll itself may have been produced and used elsewhere. A few different indicators suggest that the manuscript was produced in the second or third decade of the 15th century: its script and musical notation are both of a style that dates to the first third of the century, and one of its carols refers to events of 1415, so it cannot have been written before that year. These indicators make the Trinity Carol Roll the earliest of the manuscripts to contain musical settings of medieval carols.

In the 15th century, the carol's distinctive structure (a number of stanzas preceded by and alternating with a recurring burden) was one of the most popular choices for lyrics in the English language, though in the vast majority of cases, only the texts of these carols survive. Perhaps many of these were intended to be sung nonetheless, and in a few cases carol texts are annotated with the names of well-known tunes to which they were to be sung. If this is the case, though, the carols for which music was committed to parchment belong to a different musical sphere: these polyphonic carols, of which

those in the Trinity Roll are the earliest examples, are complex and intricate, and could only have been composed, sung and notated by highly trained musicians. Their part-writing, for two or three independent voices, is of a musical sophistication that goes well beyond the plainsong that formed the musical bread-and-butter of most medieval choirs. Moreover, the carols are not based musically on any pre-existing plainsong melodies (as is much medieval polyphony) but involve two or three newly-composed voice-parts, equal in importance. A few of the carols in the Trinity Carol Roll vary the musical texture by setting the stanzas in two voice-parts and the burden in three; *Abyde I hope it be the beste* (track 14) is the most ambitious in this respect, with a total of four sections, using one, two and three voice-parts. Both this carol and *Deo gracias Anglia* (track 7) open with a burden in unison, a striking musical gesture that may perhaps be a nod to the monophonic tunes to which other carols were once sung. The carol's association with Christmas dates from late in its history: in the 15th century, the Nativity was only one of a range of religious topics that inspired

carol-writers. Many early carols relate to other festivals of the church's year, and it is possible that they were intended to be sung at feasts or evening entertainments on such occasions; an account of a royal banquet in 1487 records that members '... of the King's Chapell... incontinently after the Kings first course sange a Carall'. Six of the Trinity Roll's carols take up the theme of the Nativity, and one each is devoted to St Stephen and St John the Evangelist, whose feast-days fall within the broader Christmas season (on 26th and 27th December respectively). A further three praise the Virgin Mary, and one is a more general moral text. The most unusual carol in terms of its subject-matter is the renowned 'Agincourt Carol', *Deo gracias Anglia* (track 7), which is one of only a few carols in the entire 15th-century repertoire to relate to contemporary events.

Celebrating the victory of King Henry V at the Battle of Agincourt, this carol seems likely to have been composed soon after the events of 1415 to which it refers, and we can speculate that it may have formed some part of the spectacular pageant that was staged in London in November of that year

to welcome home the king and his troops. Though 15th-century carols rank among the highlights of late-medieval poetry in the English language, it is a distinctive feature of the genre to incorporate short phrases in Latin, often in the burdens. Many of these Latin phrases were drawn from the church's liturgy and would have been well-known to medieval audiences, churchmen or laypeople. *Deo gracias Anglia* (track 7) ends every stanza with the phrase 'Deo gracias' ('Thanks be to God'), a phrase spoken or sung at the close of many church services. There is no rose (track 18), on the other hand, derives its Latin lines from a less familiar source, a much older poem for the Christmas season, the sequence *Letabundus exultet fidelis chorus*. For the poets of the carols, the incorporation of Latin phrases offered the opportunity to link their texts into the framework of the liturgy whilst simultaneously displaying their skill as wordsmiths in weaving phrases in two languages seamlessly together. Though unlikely to have been sung during official church services, the carols are evidence that, in 15th-century life, the worlds of ecclesiastical worship and secular

entertainment were never very far apart.
Helen Deeming

Further reading: Helen Deeming, 'The Sources and Origin of the Agincourt Carol', *Early Music*, Vol.35, No.1 (2007), 23-38.

Note on the Performing Editions, Forces, and Pronunciation

It is unlikely that the Trinity Carol Roll itself was used in performance, but served simply as a notated record of the tunes and text. Owing to the poetic metre and stress, individual verses of each carol must rhythmically be reset for each line of text. A new performing edition of the entire roll has been prepared especially for this recording.

For many of the carols we have, at liberty, employed medieval instrumentation, offering a variety of timbres for each, including the gothic harp, psaltery, plectrum lute, recorder, and, for *Lullay, lullay* (track 8) the haunting and watery sounds of the gemshorn. Some, though, remain a *cappella*.

This recording uses a predominately early-fifteenth century and southern

pronunciation of Middle English as yet little marked by the extensive changes in English phonology known as the Great Vowel Shift which occurred later in the century. Simply speaking, this entails using the so-called 'Continental' vowels (somewhat as in Italian) so that, for example, Middle English 'grace' becomes a virtual homonym of Modern English 'grass' and the long /i/ sound heard in Modern English with its distinctive glide (as in 'shine') is absent. Many consonants now silent are here duly voiced (e.g. the 'gh' in 'light').

We are very grateful to Professor Christopher Page, who offered pronunciation guides and related assistance for this recording.

THE TEXTS

The spelling as in the Trinity Carol Roll has here been retained, as a modern transcription by the late John Stevens is accessible in *Medieval Carols*, Musical Britannica, vol. 4 (1952). Punctuation has been kept to a minimum and the thorn symbol 'ȝ', when it occurs, has been replaced with the modern 'th'. Names and place names have been capitalised, while

inserted texts in Latin or French have been italicised. A modern version of the texts is also available on www.alamire.co.uk/discography/deo-gracias-anglia

For *Lullay*, *lullay* and *Nova, nova*, see *The New Oxford Book of Carols*, ed. Andrew Parrott and Hugh Keyte (Oxford, 1992).

Hail marye ful of grace

Hail Marye ful of grace
Modyr in virgynyte.

The holy gost is to the sent
Fro the fadyr omnyotent
Now is god wythin the went
While the aungel seyde 'Ave'.

Hail Marye...

So seyth the gospel of seynt Ion
God and man is mad but on
In flesch and bloyd, body and bon
O god in personys thre.

Hail Marye...

And the prophete Ieremye
Told in hys prophecye
That the sone of Marye
Schuld deye for us on rode tre.

Hail Marye...

Meche joye to us was graunth
And in erthe pece i-plaunth
Qwan the born was this faunth
In the lond of Galyle.

Hail Marye...

Mary graunth us the blys
Ther thi sonys wonyng is
Of that we han don amys
Prey for us pur charyte.

Hail Marye...

Nowel, nowel, nowel

Nowel, nowel, nowel

To us is born our god Emanuel.

In bedlem this berde of lyf
Is born of marye maydyn and wyf
He is bothe god and man i-schryf *Hail
Marye...*

Nowel, nowel...

Thys prince of pees shal secyn al stryf
And wone wyth us perpetuel.

Nowel, nowel...

This chyld shal bey us wyth hys bloyd
And be naylyd upon the royd
Hys raunsom pasyth al erdly goyd

Nowel, nowel...

Allas qwat wyth dar be so woyd
To sle so ientyl a iowel.

Nowel, nowel...

Be hys powste he hys emprys
Schal take fro helle at hys uprys
And save mankende upon this wys

Nowel, nowel...

Thus telly us the prophecys
That he is kyng of heven and helle.

Nowel, nowel...

This maydenys sone to hys empere
Schal stey to hevене be his powere
Hys holy gost us alle shal lere

Nowel, nowel...

[They and] the fadyr in feere
Schal rengne o God this leve I weel.

Nowel, nowel...

Prey we this chyld wyth good entent
In our deyng he is present
Onto hys fadyr omnyotent

Nowel, nowel...

The ferst tydyng of this testament
Browth to us seynt Gabryel.

Nowel, nowel...

Alma redemptoris mater

Alma redemptoris mater.

As I say by on a nyth
My thowth was on a berde so brith
That men clepyn Marye ful of myth
Redemptoris mater.

Alma...

To here cam Gabryel wyth lyth
And seyde: 'heyl be thu blysfyl wyth
To ben clepyd now art thu dyth'
Redemptoris mater.

Alma...

At that wurd that lady bryth
Anon consevyd god ful of myth
Than men wyst weel that sche hyth
Redemptoris mater.

Alma...

[Q]wan Ihesu on the rode was pyth
Mary was doolful of that syth
Til sche sey hym ryse up rith
Redemptoris mater.

Alma...

Ihesu that syttyst in hevene lyth
Graunt us to comyn beforn thi sith
Wyth that berde that is so brith.
Redemptoris mater.

Alma...

Now may we syngyn

*Now may we syngyn as it is
Quod puer natus est nobis.*

This bebe to us that now is bore
Wyndyrful werkys he hath iwrowt
He wil not lese that was ilore
But baldly ayen it bowth

And thus it is, forsothe iwys
He askyth nowt but that is hys.

Now may we syngyn...

[T]his chaffare lovyd he rith weel
The prys was hey and bowth ful dere
Qwo would suffre and for us feele
As dede that prince was owtyn pere.

And thus it is, forsothe iwys
He askyth nowt but that is hys.

Now may we syngyn...

Hys raunsum for us hath ipayd
Of resoun than we owyn to ben hys
Be mercy askyd and he be prayd
We may be rith kalange blys.

And thus it is, forsothe iwys
He askyth nowt but that is hys.

Now may we syngyn...

To sum purpos god made man
I leve weel to salvacyoun

Qwat was his blood that fro hym ran
But defens agens dampnacoun.

And thus it is, forsothe iwys
He askyth nowt but that is hys.

Now may we syngyn...

Almythy god in trynyte
The mercy we pray with hool herte
Thy mercy may al woo make fle
And daungerous dreed fro us to sterthe.
And thus it is, forsothe iwys
He askyth nowt but that is hys.

Now may we syngyn...

Be mery, be mery

Be mery, be mery I prey you ev'rychon.

A princypal poynt of charyte
It is mery to be in hym
That is but oon.

Be mery...

For he that is but one in blys
To be hath sent his sone i wys
To save us fro our foon.

Be mery...

For of a maydyn a child was born
To save mankende that was forlorn.
Man think theron.

Be mery...

Now Mary for thi sonys sake
Save hem alle that merthe make
And lengest holdy on.

Be mery...

Nowel syng we now al and sum

Nowel syng we now al and sum

For rex pacificus is cum.

In Bedleem in that fayr cite
A child was born of a maydyn fre
That shal a lord and prynce be.
A solis ortus cardine.

Nowel syng we...

Childryn were slayn ful greth plente
Ihesu for the love of the
Qwerfore here sowlys sayvd be.
Hostis Herodis impie.

Nowel syng we...

As sunne schynyth thorw the glas
So Ihesu in hys modyr was
The to serve now graunth us gras.
O lux beata trinitas.

Nowel syng we...

Now God is comyn to wurchepyn us
Now of Marye is born Ihesus
Make we mery amongys us.
Exultet celum laudibus.

Nowel syng we...

Deo gracias Anglia

*Deo gracias Anglia
Redde pro victoria.*

Owr kyng went forth to Normandy
Wyth grace and myth of chyvalry
Ther god for hym wrowth mervelowsly
Werfore Englonde may cal and cry

Deo gracias...

He set a sege for sothe to say
To Harflu toune wyth ryal aray
That toune he wan and mad a fray
That Fraunse shal rewe tyl domysday.

Deo gracias...

Than went hym forth owr kyng comely
In Achyncourt feld he faught manly
Thorw grace of God most mervelowsly
He had both feld and vycory.

Deo gracias...

There lordys eerlys and barone
Wer slayn and takyn and that ful soun
And sume were browth into Londone
Wyth ioye and blysse and greth renoun.

Deo gracias...

Almythy God he kepe our kyng
Thys pepyl and al hys weel-welyng
And give hem grace withoutyn endyng
Then may we calle and savely syng

Deo gracias...

Lullay, lullay

*Lullay, lullay, lay lay, lullay
Mi deere moder sing lullay.*

Als I lay on yoolis night
Alone in my longing
Me thought I saw a well fair sight
A may hir child rokking.

Lullay, lullay...

The maiden wold withouten song
Hir child o sleep to bring
The child him thought sche ded him wrong
And bad his moder sing.

Lullay, lullay...

Sing nou moder said the child
What schal to me befall
Heerafter wan I cum til eld
For so doon modres all.

Lullay, lullay...

Sweete sune said sche
Weroffe schuld I sing
Ne wist I nere yet more of thee
But Gabriels greeting.

Lullay, lullay...

He grett me goodli on his knee
And saide hail Marie
Hail full of grace God is with thee
Thou beren schalt Messie.

Lullay, lullay...

Ther als he saide I thee bare
On midewenter night
In maidenhede withouten kare
Be grace of God almight.

Lullay, lullay...

Serteynly this sight I say
This song I herde sing
Als I me lay this yoolis day
Alone in my longing.

Lullay, lullay...

Nova, nova

Nova, nova, ave fit ex Eva.

Gabriell off hye degre
He cam down from Trinite
To Nazareth in Galile.

Nova, nova...

He met a maydn in a place
He knelyd down afore hir face
He seyde heile Mary ful of grace.

Nova, nova...

When the maid herd tell off this
Sche was full sore abascyd iwys
And wened that sche had don amyse.

Nova, nova...

Then seid the angell dred not thue
Ye shall conceyve in all vertue
A chyld whose name shall be Ihesu.

Nova, nova...

It is not yt syx moneth agoon
Sen Elizabeth conceyved ion
As it was prophysed before.

Nova, nova...

Then seid the mayden verely
I am youre servaunt right truely
Ecce ancilla domini.

Nova, nova...

Now make we merthe

*Now make we mertbe al and sum
For Cristemesse now is icum*

That hath no pere

Syng we alle in fere

Now ioye and blysse

Thei shal not mysse

That makyth good chere.

Now god almythy down hath sent
The holy gost to be present
To lyth in Mary maydyn verament
That bar goddys sone wyth good entent.

That bath no pere...

Now goddys sone omnipotent
In Mary mylde he hath hent
Flesh and blood for he hath ment
Man to restore agen to his rent.

That bath no pere...

To mylde Marye our hert be bent
That blysfyl lady so be bent
To prey for us we may not schent
To lhesu crist here sone so ient.

that bath no pere. Syng. Now make we mertbe

Abyde I hope it be the beste

Abyde I hope it be the beste
Abyde I hope it be the beste
Syn hasty man wantyth never woo.

Abyde I hope...

Lat every man that wal han reste
Ever ben avysyd quat he schal do.

Abyde I hope...

Preye er thu take thinke er thu feste
In wal be war er thu be wo.

Abyde I hope...

Qwat tydyngs bryngyst thu messenger

Qwat tydyngs bryngyst thu messenger

Of cristys berthe this yobys day.

A bebe is born of hey nature
The prince of peas that ever shal be
Of hevene and erthe he hath the cure
His lordschepe is eternyte

Swich wynder tydyng ye may here
That man is mad now godys pere
Wom synne had mad but fendys pray.

Qwat tydyngs...

A wundyr thing is now be falle
That kyng that formyd sterre and sunne
Hevене and erthe and aunglys alle
Now in mankende is newe begunne

Swich wynder tydyng ye may here
Afaunt is now of o[n] yere
That hath ben ever and shal ben ay.

Qwat tydyngs...

That semlyest selkouth to se
This berde that hath this babe I born
And lord ateynyd of he degre
A maydyn is as was beforн

Swich wynder tydyng ye may here
That maydyn and mad is on her in fere
And sche a lady of greth aray.

Qwat tydyngs...

That lovelyst gan grete her child
'Heyl sone heyl brothyr heyl fadder dere
Heyl dowter' he seyth 'heyl moder myld'
This heylng was an qweyet manne
Swich wynder tydyng ye may here
That heylng was of so good chere

Qwat tydyngs...

Eya martir Stephane

Eya martir Stephane

For us we prey to the.

Of this martir make we mende
Qui triumphavit bodie
And to hevене blysse gan wende
Dono celestis graciae.

Eya martir Stephane...

Stonyd he was wyth stonys grete
Feruore gentis impie
Than he say Cryst sitte in sete
Immixum patris dextere.

Eya martir Stephane...

Tbou preydyt Cryst for tbin enmyse
O martir invictissime
Tbou prey for us that hye iustyse
Un nos purget a crimine.

Eya martir Stephane...

Prey for us the prynce of pees

Prey for us the prynce of pees

Amici Cristi Iobannes.

To the now Cristes dere derlyng
That were a maydyn bothe eld and yying
Myn herte is set to the to syng

Amici Cristi Iobannes.

Prey for us...

For thu were so clene a may
The prevytes of hevене forsothe thu say
Quan an Crystys brest you lay

Amici Cristi Iobannes.

Prey for us...

Quan Cryst beforon Pylat was browth
Thou clene maydyn forsok hym nowth
To deye wyth hym was al thy thowth.

Amici Cristi Iobannes.

Prey for us...

Crystys moder was the betake
A maydyn to ben a maydynnes make
Thow be our helpe we be not forsake.

Amici Cristi Iobannes.

Prey for us...

Ther is no rose of swych vertu

Ther is no rose of swych vertu

As is the rose that bar Ihesu.

Ther is no rose of swych vertu

As is the rose that bar Ihesu.

Alleluya.

Ther is no rose...

For in this rose conteynyd was
Hevene and erthe in lytyl space.

Res miranda.

Ther is no rose...

Be that rose we may weel see
That he is God in persons thre.

Pari forma.

Ther is no rose...

The aungelys sungyn thh sheperdes to
'*Gloria in excelsis deo*'

Gaudeamus.

Ther is no rose...

Leve we al this worldly merthe
And folwe we this joyful berthe.

Transeamus.

Ther is no rose...

BIOGRAPHIES

ALAMIRE, directed by **David Skinner**

One of the leading vocal consorts in the UK, Alamire has an enviable line-up of some of the finest consort singers under the charismatic directorship of **David Skinner**. Inspired by the great choral works of the medieval and early modern periods, the ensemble expands or contracts according to its chosen repertoire and often combines with instrumentalists, creating colourful programmes to illustrate musical or historical themes. Recent collaborations with Andrew Lawrence-King and QuintEssential Sackbut & Cornett Ensemble have been uniformly well received.

Alamire presents concerts regularly in the UK, USA, and Europe and has enjoyed varied and highly acclaimed projects including soundtracks for TV and film, sound installations for art galleries, festival appearances and radio broadcasts.

David Skinner and Alamire record exclusively for Obsidian Records, with whom they have released six CDs and won

a number of awards. In March 2010 they received critical acclaim (Gramophone Record of the Month) for their groundbreaking CD of the complete motets of the *Cantiones Sacrae* (1575) of Thomas Tallis and William Byrd.

For more information about Alamire, and the soloists on this recording, please visit www.alamire.co.uk.

ANDREW LAWRENCE-KING

Andrew Lawrence-King is recognized as one of Europe's leading early music artists, and is currently leader of The Harp Consort. He has recorded with nearly all the leading specialist ensembles, and has made over 100 recordings of music ranging from Troubadour lyrics (with Paul Hillier for ECM) to 15th and 16th century repertoire (Gothic Voices) to new music for early harp (John Paul Jones' 'Amores Pasados' with The Harp Consort for DHM). Also on record are two accounts – with The Sixteen and the Taverner Players - of the Handel Harp Concerto. For further information, visit www.theharpconsort.com.

MICHAËL GRÉBIL

[to follow – will be similar length as Pamela Thorby]]

PAMELA THORBY

Pamela Thorby has established herself as one of the world's leading recorder players. Her stylish virtuosity can be heard on numerous recordings of music ranging from the medieval period to the present day. Pamela records as a solo artist for LINN Records. Pamela's ability to assimilate many styles of music and her skills as an improviser have led to her work with groups such as the modern jazz quartet Perfect Houseplants. Her appearances on these million-selling albums make her arguably the most listened to recorder player in the world. For further information, visit www.pamelathorby.com.

Image overleaf: The Agincourt Carol from The Trinity Carol Roll/Trinity College, Cambridge MS 0.3.58 (detail) by kind permission of the Master and Fellows.

