

## The CoMA Singers

CoMA (Contemporary Music for All) was founded in 1993 to enable musicians of all abilities to participate actively in contemporary music. It has a national network of instrumental and vocal ensembles and an expanding international programme. Its unique music collection of hundreds of works contains some of the most exciting and rewarding new music being created today and is an invaluable resource for professional, amateur and youth based ensembles.

[www.coma.org.uk](http://www.coma.org.uk)



## The Michael Singers

The Michael Singers are a friendly, non-auditioned choir sponsored by the Maths department at UCL. Most of our members are mathematicians or physicists but anyone is welcome. We're named after Michael Singer, a maths professor and friend of our conductor Sheena Phillips. Go figure! Our repertoire ranges around the world and through history. This year we're rehearsing on Tuesday evenings. If you'd like to join us next term for another diverse programme, please get in touch. All voices welcome.

Enquiries: Ellen Webborn [e.webborn@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:e.webborn@ucl.ac.uk)

## Singing for Syrians

Singing for Syrians is a UK initiative that encourages individuals, bands, choirs, schools and churches to raise money for some of Syria's most vulnerable people through singing. It's part of the Hands Up Foundation which supports projects in Syria, run by Syrians, to supply aid, chiefly in the form of medical training and treatment. We hope you will give generously.

[www.singingforsyrians.com](http://www.singingforsyrians.com) and [www.handsupfoundation.org](http://www.handsupfoundation.org)  
Registered charity in England and Wales no. 1156491

# Christmas CRACKED

a collaboration between  
the Michael Singers (UCL) and  
the CoMA Singers

The Haldane Room, UCL  
Saturday 8 December, 2018  
7:30 pm

in aid of Singing for Syrians

**CRACKED : broken – or opened up – or crazy – or solved!**

**Our programme includes traditional carols and other Christmas music dating from medieval times to the present, including several new pieces in which carols have been fractured in some way: broken up and reassembled, morphed into soundscapes, or mixed with speech and vocal sound effects, to make something wholly new and rather strange. We hope you enjoy this cracking mixture of ancient, new, beautiful and crazy.**

## Programme

**Wassail!** a medley of phrases from traditional wassail songs

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**Es ist ein Ros entsprungen** Melchior Vulpius (c. 1570 – 1615)  
Vulpius was a German singer and composer of Protestant church music.  
The text, first published in 1599, is a hymn to Mary (the rose).

**Gabriel fram Heven-King** 13<sup>th</sup> century English anon.  
A song telling the story of the Annunciation. It's mentioned by Chaucer in  
The Miller's Tale and survives in both English and Latin versions.

**Beata Progenies** Leonel Power (d. 1445)  
Leonel Power was an English composer based in Kent. Little is known  
about him but he was probably choirmaster of Canterbury Cathedral.

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**Bleak** Janet Oates, 2018  
Janet is the director of the CoMA Singers, and also runs other choirs,  
choral societies and professional ensembles. She is a composer with a  
PhD from Royal Holloway, University of London, and is also a performer,  
having premiered works by Tansy Davies, Colin Riley, Greg Rose and  
others as well as singing early and classical music.

**In the Bleak Midwinter** Harold Darke (1888 – 1976)  
Solos: Clair Townsend and Liam Escott  
This carol is a famous setting of a well known poem by Christina Rossetti.

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**Coventry Carol** 16<sup>th</sup> c. English arr. Janet Oates  
**Refusing to be Comforted** Colin Johnson, 2018  
Colin is a lecturer in the school of computing at Kent University, and an  
active member of CoMA as composer and bassoonist. He has written  
works for voice, orchestra, and for film, often using open score (meaning  
that they can be performed by any instruments).

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**Lullay My Liking** Thomas Hewitt Jones, 2014  
This setting of a 15<sup>th</sup> century English text was commissioned by BBC  
Music Magazine in 2014 and distributed free to subscribers of the  
magazine to encourage the use of new music.

**Taladh Chrìosda** 19<sup>th</sup> century Hebridean carol arr. Sheena Phillips  
Sheena is a composer and choral director, currently directing the Michael  
Singers here at UCL as well as Belsize Community Choir. She has over 30  
published choral titles and is also editor of Canasg Music Publishing, a  
choral sheet music website. She studies with Emily Doolittle.

**Maria durch ein Dornwald ging** Hugo Distler (1908 – 1942)  
Distler was a German organist, choir director, composer and teacher. He  
became increasingly affected by the pressures of working in Nazi Germany  
and committed suicide at the age of 34.

**Ave Maria no Morro** Herivelto Martins (1912 – 1992) arr. Alexandre Zilahi  
Martins was a Brazilian composer and singer and wrote many songs that  
are still very popular in Brazil.

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**Frozen Place** Joel Jarventauste, 2015  
Joel is a young Finnish composer with many awards and international  
performances to his name, despite still being a PhD student (at King's  
College London). In 2016, Joel became one the youngest people ever to  
be granted membership of the Society of Finnish Composers.

**Christmas Canon a 6 voci** David Johnson (1942 – 2009)  
David Johnson was a Scottish composer and scholar of 18<sup>th</sup> century  
Scottish music.

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**Not so Silent Night** Sheena Phillips, 2018  
**A Virgin Unspotted** William Billings (1746 - 1800)  
Billings was a mostly self-taught – and by all accounts eccentric –  
composer and singing master based in Boston, New England. He wrote  
numerous four part a cappella hymns, many to words by Isaac Watts.

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**Crackers** Andrew Furlow, 2016  
**Still Proceeding** Robert Percy, 2018  
Rob has a doctorate in composition and is a visiting lecturer at City,  
London University. His works are thoughtful and often intimate, ranging  
from small solo works to large orchestral pieces. With Janet, he is co-  
director of the Richmond New Music Collective, a composers' group which  
hosts yearly concerts of new music.

## Texts and translations

### The CoMA Singers

Katie Boot  
Alison Cross  
Elizabeth Dobson  
Jill House  
John McLeod  
Janet Oates (director)  
Sheena Phillips  
Page Starr

### The Michael Singers

Juliana Dias  
Liam Escott  
Estibaliz Fraca  
Damián Gvirtz  
Simon Jolly  
Yang Li  
Emily Maw  
Jonathan Rackham  
Alice Sackville Hamilton  
Qiyi Tang  
Adam Townsend  
Clair Townsend  
Ellen Webborn  
Helen Wilson  
Ying Zou

Joe Maccoll (piano, shruti box, percussion)  
Sheena Phillips (director)

### Wassail!

'Wassail' means 'good health'. It was a traditional greeting to householders from bands of singers going door to door offering drink (from a communal wassail cup or bowl) and singing in exchange for food and money.

### Es ist ein Ros entsprungen

A rose has sprung from a tender root, as sung by the prophets. It comes from the line of Jesse.

### Gabriel fram Heven-King

Gabriel, sent from the king of heaven to the sweet maiden, brought her happy news and greeted her courteously: hail be thou who art indeed full of grace! For God's Son, this light of heaven, for love of man will become man and take human form from thee, fair maiden, to free mankind from sin and the devil's power.

The gentle maiden then gently answered him: in what manner should I bear a child without a husband? The angel said to her: fear nothing; through the Holy Ghost shall be wrought this very thing of which I bring news; all mankind will be redeemed through thy sweet child-bearing, and brought out of torment.

When the maiden understood and heard the angel's words, gently and with gentle spirit she answered the angel: I am indeed the bondmaid of our Lord who is above. Concerning me, may thy saying be fulfilled that I, since it is His will, as a maiden, contrary to natural law, have the joy of motherhood.

### Beata Progenies

Blessed is the parent from whom Christ was born. O how glorious is the virgin who brought forth the king of heaven.

**Taladh Chrìosda** (*Lullaby to the Christ Child*)

My darling love and treasure, you,  
My wealth and joy, my pleasure, you,  
My gorgeous handsome wee son, you,  
I humbly kneel and bow.

I love your eyes that gently see,  
I love your sweet humility.  
In hope and love and charity,  
You show us how to be.

**Maria durch ein Dornwald ging** (*Mary in the Thornwood*)

Mary walks through a thornwood.  
*Kyrie eleison!* [Greek: have mercy on us]  
Mary walks through a thornwood  
Which for seven years has borne no leaves.  
*Jesus and Mary.*

What does Mary carry underneath her heart?  
A little child without pain.  
That's what Mary carries underneath her heart.

Roses appear on the thorns!  
As the child is carried through the wood,  
Roses appear on the thorns!

**Ave Maria no Morro** (*Ave Maria on the hillside*)

Tin shack,  
No roof, no paint.  
There on the hillside,  
The shack is a bungalow.

There, there's no  
Heavenly skyscraper bliss,  
For those who live on the hillside  
Are always right next to heaven.

There is dawn; there are bands of birds  
At dawn;

A symphony of sparrows  
Announcing nightfall.

And when the hillside grows dark,  
I raise a prayer to God: Ave Maria!

**Frozen Place**

The days are short,  
The sun a spark,  
Hung thin between  
The dark and dark.

From *January*, in *A Child's Calendar* (1965) by John Updike (1932 – 2009)

**Christmas Canon a 6 voci**

There is no rose of such virtue  
As is the rose that bare Jesu.  
*Alleluia.*

For in this rose containèd was  
Heaven and earth in little space:  
*Res Miranda.* (A thing to be wondered at).

Now by that rose we may well see  
That he is God in persons three,  
*Pares forma.* (Equal in form).

The angels sung'n the shepherds to:  
*Gloria in excelsis Deo,* (Glory to God in heaven)  
*Gaudeamus.* (Let us rejoice).

Leavè we all this wordly mirth,  
And follow we this joyful birth:  
*Transeamus.* (Let us go).

Translations by Peter Hill, Sheena Phillips and Bruno Rente