

Welcome to our
**EU Christmas
Concert 2024**



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**UNICEF's work for
children in Ukraine**

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Adolf Fredrik
Church, Stockholm
9 December, 18:00

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This winter, children in Ukraine are vulnerable.

With homes destroyed and energy supplies frequently cut off, many children will face a harsh winter without what they need. With your support, UNICEF are providing warm clothes, boots, and blankets to keep children warm.

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Dear friends

A warm welcome to this year's EU Christmas Concert, organised by the European Commission Representation in Sweden, in close collaboration with the Embassies of 19 EU Member States to Sweden and the European Union National Institutes for Culture. It is a fantastic yearly tradition we have created to celebrate that Christmas is coming and to showcase European unity.

Christmas is about peace and solidarity, and with war still raging in Europe, it is crucial that we continue to stand with Ukraine and to show our unwavering support. We are therefore delighted to have Ukraine with us again this year, as our special guest to perform the opening act.

Christmas is also a special time for children, but for many children in Ukraine, another Christmas in fear and unrest is approaching. For this year's EU Christmas Concert, we are pleased to promote UNICEF by raising funds to support the children in need in Ukraine. You find the QR code in this leaflet and on your ticket, so please do not hesitate to show your support and solidarity.

Tonight, we will cherish the Christmas carols that are such important elements of that wonderful Christmas spirit. I hope you will enjoy tonight's concert and I wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas, with joy, health and love!

Annika Wäppling Korzinek
Head of Representation
European Commission in Sweden



Tonight's host
Nikos Tsiamis

Performance from last year's concert
by the Czech choir *Sboreček*

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Ой, як же було ізпрежди віка

Oy, yak zhe bulo izprezhdy vika

Language: Ukrainian



Ira Bilyk (Іра Білик) is a Ukrainian multi-instrumentalist composer, vocalist, concertmaster, ensemble artist and teacher of organ. She is a member of the “Piacella Duo” project and the founder of the “IRÖ music” project.

About the song

The Ukrainian entry is one of the most prominent ritual folk songs, representing a late variant of Ukrainian cosmological carols. These carols explore themes related to the creation of the world, celestial bodies and the order of the universe, rooted in ancient Slavic cosmology. Over the centuries, this authentic song has been modified and adapted several times, with the earliest lyrics dating back to pre-Christian times. The song combines elements of mythological beliefs and religious symbolism, making it a powerful piece of Ukrainian cultural heritage. It is particularly significant within the context of Christmas, embodying both spiritual and agrarian traditions.

About the performers

Yanina Zelenska (Яніна Зеленська) is a Ukrainian director, actress, singer, playwright and cultural manager, organising festivals and theatrical events, as well as a researcher of Ukrainian national heritage. In Stockholm, she founded **Fågelbo Teater** and directed the post-documentary play *Flashes* at Improvisationsteatern.

Anna Nuzha (Анна Нужа) is a touring cellist, acting associate professor of the Department of Stringed Instruments at the Tchaikovsky National Music Academy of Ukraine, and a lecturer at the Glier KIM. She also serves as the director of the Kyiv Chamber Ensemble (National House of Organ and Chamber Music of Ukraine) and is an Honoured Artist of Ukraine.



Christmas traditions

Since 2023, Ukrainians of all religious confessions celebrate Christmas on 25 December. By early December, the spirit of winter holidays typically fills Ukrainian cities and villages with Christmas markets, festivals, decorations and magical lights. Due to Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine, though, many cities now tone down or opt out of the festive activities. Christmas Eve (Holy Eve) is marked by traditional family gatherings on the evening of 24 December, known as *Sviata Vecheria* (Holy Dinner). The table is served with 12 dishes, symbolising the twelve apostles, with the main dish being *Kutia* (boiled

wheat mixed with poppy seeds and honey). Children prepare special songs and verses to perform from house to house, entertaining their neighbours in exchange for sweets and tips. The more carollers that visit, the more fortune and wealth the family will have in the coming year. Another Ukrainian Christmas tradition is *Vertep*, a portable puppet theatre and drama that performs the nativity story and other mystery plays. *Vertep* has been performed since the late 16th century and – despite the ban under the USSR – has survived and remains a central Ukrainian Christmas tradition today.

Ой, як же було ізпрежди віка

Ой, як же було ізпрежди віка
Ой, дай Бо[г].
Ой, як не було неба і землі
Ой, дай Бо'.

А тільки було синєє море
Ой, дай Бо'.

На тому морі горіли огні
Ой, дай Бо'.

Коло тих огнів сиділи святи.
Ой, дай Бо'.

Радять радоньку, кого в море
послать.
Ой, дай Бо'.

Ой, пойдь, Петро, по море на дно
Ой, дай Бо'.

Та достань Петро жовтого піска
Ой, дай Бо'.

Та посіємо по всьому світу,
Ой, дай Бо'.

Щоб уродилось небо і земля
Ой, дай Бо'.

Небо зорями, земля квітами
Ой, дай Бо'.

Oh, how it was since the dawn of time

Oh, how it was since the dawn of time
Oh, God bless!
Oh, when there was no Heaven and
no Earth
Oh, God bless!
And there was only the blue sea
Oh, God bless!

There were fires burning on that sea
Oh, God bless!
The Saints sat around those fires
Oh, God bless!
They were deciding whom to send to
the bottom of the sea
Oh, God bless!

Oh, go, Peter, to the bottom of the sea
Oh, God bless!
And get, Peter, the yellow sand
Oh, God bless!
And we will sow it all over the world
Oh, God bless!

To give birth to Heaven and Earth
Oh, God bless!
The sky with stars, the earth with
flowers
Oh, God bless!

Language: Portuguese



a friendship rooted in their shared passion and respect for music.

About the song

The Portuguese entry is two from the *Four Christmas songs* composed by **Fernando Lopes-Graça** (1906-1994), arguably the most influential Portuguese composer of the 20th century. He drew much of his inspiration from Portuguese folk songs and traditional music. The two songs are traditional melodies from northern Portugal (Braga and Foz Côa), which Lopes-Graça transcribed and arranged with piano accompaniment in 1955. *Vinde Pastores* celebrates the joyous tradition of calling the shepherds to see the newborn Christ. This song is simple yet festive, embracing the folk melodies that the composer admired and often infused with expressive harmonies that lend it a sense of reverence and community celebration. *Ó Menino Tão Lindo* is more tender, focusing on the adoration of the infant Jesus. Its gentle melody and harmonies convey a heartfelt simplicity, conveying both reverence and affection. Lopes-Graça's arrangement honours Portuguese folk styles while capturing a universal warmth associated with the nativity.

About the performers

Job Tomé is a baritone who has established himself as a prominent figure in Portuguese vocal music, performing at major venues across Portugal and Europe. He studied classical singing at the University of Aveiro and has built a reputation for his broad vocal range, performing in multiple languages, including English, French, Spanish and Portuguese. Tomé has collaborated with notable institutions, such as Coro da Sé Catedral do Porto, demonstrating his versatility across a wide range of musical genres. **Gonçalo Vasquez** is a skilled classical pianist and accompanist, now based in Sweden. He has shared the stage with Job Tomé for many years. Together, they have performed a wide-ranging repertoire from Baroque to contemporary music, building



Christmas traditions

Christmas is the most important family reunion in Portugal. Families gather on 24 December for the Christmas dinner, where – according to Catholic tradition – only fish is served, traditionally the salted codfish (*bacalhau*). On Christmas Day, after opening the presents in the morning, families reunite for a lunch with meat dishes, such as lamb, baby goat or roast turkey. The typical desserts are *Bolo-Rei* (a cake filled with candied or dried fruits), *broas castelares* and traditional fritters, such as *filhoses*, *sonhos* and *rabanadas*. In the past, presents were

brought by Baby Jesus, but now it has become popular that Santa Claus leaves the gifts under the tree. Before bedtime, children leave a shoe close to the chimney, and in the morning, they rush out of bed to find out what surprise has been left inside. In many parts of the country, children help keep the tradition of *Janeiras* alive. From 1 to 6 January, groups of people, particularly children from the same school, go around their villages or neighbourhoods singing traditional folk songs (*janeiras*) and receive sweets in return.

Quatro Cantos do Natal

II – Vinde Pastores

Vinde, pastorinhos,
Vamos a Belém,
V'sitar o menino
Que a Virgem tem.

Meus olhos não viram
Pois tal novidade,
Diz-me, pastorinho,
Dizei-me a verdade.

Vós dizeis que chora,
Lá em lapa fria,
Quem o céu adora
A noite e o dia.

IV – Ó Meu Menino Tão Lindo

Ó meu menino tão lindo,
Ó meu menino tão belo!
Vinde, vinde já ao mundo,
Que por vossa vinda espero.

Ó meu menino tão lindo,
Vinde, vinde já ao mundo,
Livrar-nos do cativoiro
Deste abismo tão profundo.

Ó meu menino tão lindo,
Deus de infinita bondade,
Vinde, vinde já ao mundo,
Abrandar sua maldade.

Four Christmas Songs

II – Come, Shepherds

Come, little shepherds,
Let's go to Bethlehem,
To visit the child
That the Virgin holds.

My eyes have not seen
Such a wonder,
Tell me, little shepherd,
Tell me the truth.

You say that He cries,
There in the cold manger.
Whom heaven worships,
By night and by day.

IV – Oh, My Beautiful Little Child

Oh, my beautiful little child,
Oh, my lovely little child!
Come, come now into the world,
For with your arrival, I await.

Oh, my beautiful little child,
Come, come now into the world,
To free us from the captivity
Of this abyss so deep.

Oh, my beautiful child,
God of infinite goodness,
Come, come now into the world,
To soften its wickedness.

Regalo di Natale

Language: Italian



About the performer

Giulia Lazzerini is a singer and songwriter from Monza, located in the Lombardy region. Active in pop and jazz contexts, she has had the opportunity to perform on prestigious stages since 2020, such as the Blue Note in Milan and the Goldoni Theatre in Venice, and to collaborate with some of the big protagonists of Italian music. In 2023, she performed her original songs at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome during the *World Meeting on Human Fraternity*, an event organised by Pope Francis.

About the song

The Italian entry is a modern song written in 2007 by **Enrico Ruggeri**, a popular Italian singer and two-time winner of the Sanremo Music Festival – and his wife **Andrea Mirò**. It was included in their Christmas album, also entitled *Il regalo di Natale*, which blends traditional Christmas classics with original compositions. The song is a centrepiece of the album and stands out for its contemporary flavour, while still capturing the spirit of the season. It is a tender ballad, almost like a lullaby, telling the story of a child

waiting alone in his room at Christmas. The child dreams of gifts and toys, but there is no one to keep him company, apart from his stuffed cat. Despite the solitude, the song carries a sense of hope, symbolising the child's belief in the magic of the season.

Christmas traditions

A traditional symbol among Christmas decorations in Italy is the nativity scene (*presepe*). Mangers, built in various sizes and made from different materials, are very common in Italian homes. Christmas melodies are

adaptations of old traditional folk tunes, often played with bagpipes. Depending on each family's tradition, children may unwrap their presents either on the night of 24 or in the morning of 25 December. On Christmas Eve, Italians enjoy the classic *cenone* (literally "big supper"), which consists of several courses, often including fish or meat dishes, vegetables, pasta and various desserts. A slice of *panettone* (brioche cake with raisins and candied fruit) or *pandoro* (without raisins) is a treat that cannot be refused.

Regalo di Natale

Oltre la scogliera
c'è un castello
e quando piove forte
da mattina a sera,
la tempesta non lo può colpire mai.
Posso raccontarti?

Oltre la scogliera
c'è un bambino solo nella stanza,
cerca nella sera
se qualcuno un giorno giocherà con lui,
si addormenterà con lui.

Sta sognando il suo Natale,
ma non far rumore
che si può svegliare,
sopra il letto c'è un biglietto
scritto all'angioletto e poi
"Sarò buono come tu mi vuoi".

Oltre la scogliera
il bambino parla con un gatto
rivestito in tela,
poi rincorre il grande amico che non c'è
e lo stringe forte a sé.

Sta aspettando il suo Natale
pieno di regali e pacchi da scartare,
nel cassetto c'è un biglietto
che nessuno ha letto mai
e nessuno gli risponde mai.

È arrivato il suo Natale
pieno di regali e giochi da giocare,
resta solo, guarda il cielo,
cerca quello che non c'è
ed il gatto stringe forte a sé.

Oltre la scogliera
c'è un bambino...

Christmas Gift

Beyond the cliff
there is a castle
and when it rains heavily
from morning till evening,
the storm can never hit it.
Can I tell you?

Beyond the cliff
there is a child alone in the room,
searching in the evening
if someone will one day play with him,
will fall asleep with him.

He's dreaming of his Christmas,
but don't make any noise
he might wake up,
above the bed there is a note
written to the little angel and then
"I'll be as good as you want me to be."

Beyond the cliff
the child talks to a cat
clad in cloth,
then runs after the big friend who's not there
and holds him tightly to himself.

He's waiting for his Christmas
full of presents and packages to unwrap,
in the drawer there is a note
that no one has ever read
and no one ever answers him.

His Christmas has arrived
full of gifts and games to play,
he stays alone, looks at the sky,
he searches for what is not there
and he holds the cat tightly to himself.

Beyond the cliff
there is a child...

Az ég és a föld

Language: Hungarian



About the performers

The *Hungarian Chamber Choir of Stockholm* (**Stockholmi Magyar Kamarakórus**) was founded in 2007 to keep the Hungarian musical traditions alive in Sweden. The members of the choir are Hungarians living in Stockholm, such as students, doctors and teachers, who find joy in choir singing, whether they have a musical background or not. Their repertoire consists of Hungarian songs arranged by renowned Hungarian composers, such as Zoltán Kodály, Béla Bartók or Lajos Bárdos, but they also perform Swedish and international choral pieces from the Renaissance to the modern period. The conductor of the choir is **László Harmat**.

About the song

The Hungarian entry is a traditional song, most likely from the 19th century, with deep roots in Hungarian folk music. It is associated with the Christmas celebration, particularly within the Greek Catholic tradition of northeastern Hungary. This carol, which refers to the birth of Christ, is part of the rich folk music and religious heritage of the region. The lyrics reflect profound theological themes of Christ's dual nature as both divine and human, as well as the joy and wonder of his birth. The song fits into the larger tradition of Hungarian Christmas carols, many of which have been passed down orally through generations.



Christmas traditions

Families in Hungary traditionally celebrate Christmas together. Children help decorate the Christmas tree with ornaments, lights, wrapped candies and cookies, which they often bake themselves from the day before. On Christmas Eve, families gather around the Christmas tree after a

delicious festive meal, which typically features traditional fish dishes as well as walnut and poppy seed rolls. Children sing carols while lighting Christmas sparklers and then open presents together with their parents. In Hungary, it is either the angels or Baby Jesus who bring the gifts.

Az ég és a föld

Az ég és a föld, az ég és a föld
Mostan ünnepelnek,
Angyal és ember, angyal és ember
Vígán örvendeznek.

Krisztus született,
Isten ember lett,
Angyalok dicsérik,
Királyok tisztelik.
Pásztorok imádván,
Térdhajtva éneklik,
A nagy csodát hirdetik.

Kis Betlehemben, kis Betlehemben
nagy a vigalom ma.
Mert Isten fiát, mert Isten fiát
szülte a Szűzanya.

Mi Krisztus előtt, mi Krisztus előtt
térdreinkre esünk,
dicsőségéről, dicsőségéről
ímgígy zengedezünk:

Heaven and Earth

Heaven and Earth, Heaven and Earth
Now they are celebrating,
Angel and man, angel and man
Joyfully rejoice.

Christ is born,
God became man,
Angels praise Him,
Kings honour Him.
Shepherds worship Him,
Kneeling down and singing,
Proclaiming the great miracle.

In little Bethlehem, in little Bethlehem
There is great rejoicing today.
For the Son of God, for the Son of God
Was born of the Virgin Mother.

Before Christ, Before Christ
We fall on our knees,
Of His glory, of His glory
We sing our joyful praise:



Veseli se, Majko Božja

Language: Croatian



About the performers

The ensemble **Glasovi nade** (“Voices of Hope”) consists of three Croatian singers based in Stockholm and Eskilstuna: Ema Burić, Miriam Martini and Helena Zovko. They are accompanied by **Vanja Bugarin** on the flute. The arrangement was created exclusively for their performance in our EU Christmas Concert by **Davor Zovko**, who excels as both a heraldic artist and a musician, proudly holding the title of *State Herald for the Kingdom of Sweden*. With a fervent baritone voice shaped by over three decades of career in music, he typically shines in solo performances.

About the song

The Croatian entry is a well-known religious hymn written by the Franciscan friar **Petar Knežević** (1701–1768), a great devotee of the Mother of God, the Miraculous Lady of Sinj. While the song is closely associated with his religious and literary work, it is believed that he wrote the lyrics, and the music was likely composed by him as well, or at least arranged to fit his verses. It was first published in 1765 as part of the collection *Pisme duhovne razlike*. This joyful Christmas carol celebrates the role of the Virgin Mary in the birth of Jesus Christ, highlighting her spiritual grace and divine motherhood. The hymn has remained an integral part of Croatian liturgical and cultural traditions, especially in Dalmatia, and is often performed during Advent and Christmas. The melody and the style of the song reflect the rich spiritual and musical heritage of Croatia.

Christmas traditions

Christmas in Croatia is a beautiful blend of religious observance, family gatherings and deeply rooted customs passed down through generations. The festive season begins with Advent, a period of anticipation marked by the lighting of candles on Advent wreaths. On St. Nicholas Day (6 December), children polish their shoes and place them by the window, hoping for gifts from St. Nicholas. For those who have misbehaved, the traditional twist of *Krampus*, St. Nicholas’s dark companion, leaves a birch rod instead of sweets. On Christmas Eve (*Badnjak*), families are busy with final preparations. It is customary to set up the Christmas tree that day, often decorated with homemade ornaments like *licitar* hearts (honey biscuits) and traditional straw stars. The highlight of Christmas Eve is the Midnight

Mass (*polnoćka*), when communities gather to celebrate the birth of Jesus in a joyful and reverent atmosphere. This is often followed by a warm meal upon returning home. Christmas Day itself is a time for family, marked by a special lunch featuring regional dishes, such as roast turkey, *sarma* (cabbage rolls) and festive desserts like walnut rolls and gingerbread cookies. St. Stephen’s Day (*Štefanje*) on 26 December is also a national holiday, typically spent visiting extended family and friends. In Croatia, the Christmas season traditionally extends until 6 January, the Feast of the Epiphany (*Sveta tri kralja*). This day marks the end of the festive period, when many families take down their decorations and participate in the traditional blessing of homes.

Veseli se, Majko Božja

Veseli se, Majko Božja, puna milosti.
Veseli se, i raduj se, rajska svjetlosti,
Jer si noćas porodila,
Svojim mlijekom zadojila
Boga malahna.

Vesel' mo se i mi, braćo, ovdje zajedno,
Al' veselje neka naše bude pravedno,
Svi se grijeha odrecimo
I srdačno utecimo
Bogu rođenu.

Vesel'te se, sve planine i sve živine,
Ptice, vode, stabla, brda i sve doline,
Jer koji je vas stvorio
I od ništa učinio
Sad se rodio.

Svim vam Božić nazivamo, braćo
ljubljeni,
U stečenju vječnog zdravlja od vas željena,
Kojega vam rođen dao,
Kako bude tko pitao
Na dan današnji.

Rejoice, Mother of God

Rejoice, Mother of God, full of grace.
Rejoice, and be glad, heavenly light,
For tonight you have given birth,
Nursed with your milk
The small divine child.

Let us also rejoice, brothers, here together,
But let our joy be righteous,
Let us all renounce our sins
And wholeheartedly turn
To the God who is born.

Rejoice, all mountains and all creatures,
Birds, waters, trees, hills and all valleys,
For He who created you
And made you from nothing
Is now born.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas, beloved
brothers,
And in the attainment of eternal health, as
desired by you,
Which He gave you upon His birth,
As anyone may ask
On this very day.

Carúl Loch Garman

Language: Irish



About the performers

The Swedish-Irish Society has been promoting Irish culture in Sweden since 1949. The choir is composed of a group of enthusiastic amateurs with a love of Irish culture and music: Tara Bourke, Carolyn Conrad, Linda Toland, Laura Glennane, Patricia Crone, Tara Ó Neil, Eimear Noonan Treacy, Ellen McDermott, Teresa Ogenstad, Miriam Hill, Lisa Bruton Hellstadius, Ionna Sidiropolou, Susan Byrne, Karin Angus and Lydia Lafferty (choirmaster). **Kieran "Loughy" O'Loughlin** (guitarist) is a recording artist and producer with over 25 years of experience as a touring musician in Europe. He studied music production in Stockholm.

About the song

The Irish entry is one of the oldest traditional carols in Ireland, originating

from Enniscorthy in County Wexford, though its exact origins remain uncertain. Some believe that it dates back to the 12th century, while its musical and lyrical style suggest that it was likely composed in the 15th or 16th century. The carol became widely known in the early 20th century thanks to William Grattan Flood (1859-1928), an Irish musicologist and organist at St. Aidan's Cathedral in Enniscorthy. He transcribed it from a local singer and helped it reach an international audience by having it published in *The Oxford Book of Carols*. The Wexford Carol is notable for its simple yet beautiful melody, and for preserving Irish folk traditions within a Christian context.

Christmas traditions

Lights brighten up the streets of Ireland in the weeks before Christmas, and carol singers come together to



perform well-known Christmas songs, spreading joy to passers-by. Christmas is celebrated in Ireland on 25 December. Children are sent to bed on Christmas Eve (24 December) in eager anticipation of Santa Claus's arrival on Christmas morning, wondering if he has read their letters... A pint of

Guinness and traditional mince pies with candied fruit and spices may be left for Santa to enjoy during his busiest time of the year. On Christmas Day, dinner tables are typically set with turkey, ham, roast potatoes, cranberry sauce, mince pies and Christmas pudding.

Carúl Loch Garman

Ó, tagaig' uile is adhraigí
An leanbh cneasta sa chró 'na luí
Is cuimhnigí ar ghrá an Rí
A thug dár saoradh anocht an Naí.

'S a Mhuire Mháthair i bParrthas Dé,
Ar chlann bhocht Éabha guigh 'nois go caomh,
Is doras an chró ná dún go deo
Go n-adhram' feasta Mac Mhuire Ógh.

I mBeithil thoir i lár na hoích'
Ba chlos an deascéala d'aoirí,
Go follas don saol ón spéir go binn
Bhí aingle 'canadh ó rinn go rinn.

"Gluaisig' go beo," dúirt Aingeal Dé,
"Go Beithil sall is gheobhaidh sibh É
'Na luí go séimh i mainséar féir,
Siúd É an Meisias a ghráigh an saol."

The Wexford Carol

Good people all, this Christmas time,
Consider well and bear in mind
What our good God for us has done
In sending His beloved Son.

With Mary holy we should pray
To God with love this Christmas Day;
In Bethlehem upon that morn,
There was a blessed Messiah born.

Near Bethlehem did shepherds keep
Their flocks of lambs and feeding sheep;
To whom God's angels did appear,
Which put the shepherds in great fear.

"Prepare and go," the angels said,
"To Bethlehem, be not afraid;
For there you'll find, this happy morn,
A princely babe, sweet Jesus born."

Language: Czech



About the performers

Lucie Žurmanová (cello) graduated from the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague and the Royal College of Music in Stockholm.

Daniela L. Jönsson (mezzo-soprano) studied classical singing for 15 years in Prague and London, and is now a member of the Enebyberg Church Choir.

Magdaléna Whiteman (piano) graduated from the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. The musicians share a passion for chamber music and enjoy cross-disciplinary projects.

About the song

The Czech entry is a beloved Christmas song composed by **Jiří Šlitr** (1924-1969) with lyrics by **Jiří Suchý** (b. 1931). It was first recorded in 1962 by Pavlína Filipovská, Jiří Suchý and a choir conducted by Lubomír Pánek. The song is famous for its poetic and nostalgic portrayal of the Christmas spirit. The lyrics describe the aroma of *purpura* – a Czech herbal blend often associated with Christmas cooking – subtly linking it to the magical atmosphere of the holiday season. Reportedly, the song's inspiration came from a conversation between jazz and pop hitmakers Šlitr



and Suchý, who aimed to create a Czech equivalent of *White Christmas* – a song that would return each holiday season to evoke warmth and festive cheer. The song has since become such a seasonal fixture in Czechia that it is now synonymous with Christmas itself.

Christmas traditions

Children in Czechia receive their presents from Baby Jesus (*Ježíšek*) on Christmas Eve. A particularly charming tradition, popular with children and suitable for the whole family, is playing

with boats made from walnut shells. In a large bowl of water, children place halved walnut shells with a tiny lit candles inside and let them float. The one whose boat remains lit the longest and does not sink will have a long and happy life. The one whose boat floats to the centre of the bowl will travel the world. On the other hand, the one whose boat sticks to the edge of the bowl will stay at home for the coming year. After playing this game, it is time for the traditional Christmas dinner, featuring fish soup and fried carp with potato salad.

Purpura

Tiše a ochotně
purpura na plotně
voní, stále voní,
nikdo si nevšímá,
jak život mění se v dým.

Snad jenom v podkrovní
básníci bláhoví
pro ni slzy roní,
hrany jí odzvoní
rampouchem křišťálovým.

Slunce se vynoří,
hned však se k pohoří
skloní, rychle skloní.
A pak se dostaví
dlouhá a pokojná noc.

Tiše a ochotně
purpura na plotně
voní, stále voní.
Po ní k nám vklouzlo
to tajemné kouzlo Vánoc.

V krajině vánoční,
zvony když půlnoční
zvoní, krásně zvoní,
nesou nám novinu,
že pokrýl krajinu sněh.

Tiše a ochotně
purpura na plotně
voní, stále voní.
Nastal čas Vánoc
a rampouchů křišťálových.

Incense

Quietly and willingly
the incense on the stove
drifts, still drifts,
no one notices
how life turns into mist.

Perhaps only in the attic's gloom,
foolish poets
shed tears for it,
a crystal icicle tolls its knell
with a ringing, frozen tune.

The sun rises briefly,
only to bow quickly
to the mountains' edge,
and then
a long and peaceful night arrives.

Quietly and willingly
the incense on the stove
drifts, still drifts.
With it, slips into our hearts
the mysterious magic of Christmas.

In the Christmas landscape,
as midnight bells
toll, beautifully toll,
they bring us the news
that snow has blanketed the fields.

Quietly and willingly
the incense on the stove
drifts, still drifts.
The time of Christmas has come,
and with it, crystal icicles.



Παραδοσιακά Κάλαντα

Paradosiaka Kalanda

Ελλάδα
Greece

Language: Greek



About the performers

The Greek choir *Orfeas* (Ορφέας) was founded in Stockholm in 2005 and is named after Orpheus, the legendary musician of ancient Greek mythology. It is a mixed choir of 35 women and men singing in four-part harmony, under the direction of Argentinean maestro **Rolando Pomo**. *Orfeas* has a broad repertoire of Greek music, ranging from traditional folk music to modern songs. The choir is accompanied on the piano by **Johan Sandback**.

About the song

The Greek entry in our EU Christmas Concert is a medley of traditional carols that feature strong religious references. The **Christmas carols**

from the Dodecanese – the group of islands in the southeastern Aegean Sea – are known as *This is the Day* and highlight the significance of the day of Christ's birth. The **New Year's carols from Mykonos** – the popular island in the Cyclades – are known as *Today is the Beginning of the Month* and refer to the Tree of Jesus, depicting scenes with Christ, the Virgin Mary and the Angels, as well as beautiful images of Heaven. These carols are quite different from those sung in the rest of Greece. They were originally sung by people who came to Mykonos from Asia Minor and were revived in the 1980s by the local women's cultural and folklore association.



Christmas traditions

Children in Greece customarily go from house to house to sing the traditional carols (*kalanda*), accompanied by the triangle or other traditional musical instruments, on three different occasions during the Christmas season: Christmas Eve (24 December), New Year's Eve (31 December) and Epiphany Eve (5 January). They are rewarded with small amounts of

money and traditional sweets, such as *melomakarona* and *kourabiedes*. Instead of a Christmas tree, the traditional custom is to decorate a small sailing boat, especially on the Greek islands and in port cities. *Agios Vasilis* (Saint Basil) is the Greek version of Santa Claus, who brings the presents on New Year's Eve while children are sleeping.

Παραδοσιακά Κάλαντα

Αυτή είναι η ημέρα

Αυτή είναι η ημέρα
όπου ήλθ' ο Λυτρωτής
από Μαριάμ μητέρα
εκ Παρθένου γεννηθείς.

Άναρχος αρχήν λαμβάνει
και σαρκούται ο Θεός,
ο Αγέννητος γεννάται
εις την φάτνην ταπεινώς.

Σήμερα είν' αρχιμενιά

Σήμερα είν' αρχιμενιά
κι αρχή του Γεναρίου
κι αρχή που βγήκε ο Χριστός
στη Γη να περπατήσει.

Και κει που περιπάτησε
χρυσό ντεντρί εβγήκε,
χρυσά ήταν τα κλωνάρια του
κι ολόαργυρη η κορφή του.

Στην μέση εκάθητο ο Χριστός,
στην άκρα η Παναγία
και στα περικοκλάδια του
άγγελοι κι αρχάγγελοι.

Κι ο Μιχαήλ Αρχάγγελος
επέρασε και λέει:
«Χαρίσατέ μου τα κλειδιά
και τα μαλαματένια

Ν' ανοίξω τον Παράδεισο,
να πιω νερό δροσάτο,
να πέσω ν' αποκοιμηθώ
σε μια ροϊδιά από κάτω.

Να πέσουν τ' άνθια πάνω μου,
τα ρόδα στην ποδιά μου
και τα χρυσά τριαντάφυλλα
στην ροδοπλεξουδιά μου.»

Traditional Carols

This is the Day

This is the day
when the Redeemer came,
born of Mary, His mother,
born of the Virgin.

The Eternal One takes the beginning
and God takes on flesh,
the Unborn One is born
in the manger humbly.

Today is the Beginning of the Month

Today is the beginning of the month
and the beginning of January
and the beginning when Christ came
to walk on Earth.

And where He walked,
a golden tree appeared;
its branches were golden
and its top was full of silver.

Christ was sitting in the middle,
the Virgin Mary on the edge
and on its branches
angels and archangels.

And the Archangel Michael
passed by and said:
"Give me the keys
and the golden ones

To open Heaven,
to drink fresh water,
to fall asleep
beneath a rose bush.

Let the flowers fall on me,
the roses into my apron
and the golden roses
in my rose braid."

Minuit, chrétiens

Language: French



and graceful movements. As a former student of *Franska skolan*, she is accompanied on the piano by **Per Olsson**, music teacher at the school.

About the song

The French entry is one of the most popular Christmas carols in France and worldwide, known in English as *O Holy Night* and in Swedish as *O helga natt*. Its story dates back to 1843 in the small French town of Roquemaure, where poet **Placide Cappeau** (1808-1877) wrote a Christmas poem at the request of the parish priest to celebrate the completion of renovation works at the local church. Cappeau referred to the new carol as *Cantique de Noël* and asked the famous opera composer **Adolphe Adam** (1803-1856) to set his poem to music. The song was premiered at the Midnight Mass in Roquemaure on 24 December 1847, sung by opera singer Emily Laurey. It was translated into English in 1855 by American music critic and minister John Sullivan Dwight, and over time, it became a cherished Christmas carol, recognised for its powerful melody and message of hope, joy and redemption.

About the performer

Norea Humla is a 27-year-old classically trained lyrical soprano from Stockholm. She grew up immersed in music and has extensive experience with both solo and choral performances across a wide range of genres. With a professional background in dance, she is now committed of pursuing opera wholeheartedly. Norea attended classical music classes at Kulturama's Operastudio and recently began studying opera at Stockholms Konstnärliga Högskola to achieve her goals. She has an expressive and rich voice that is amplified by her colourful



Christmas traditions

At the popular Christmas markets throughout France, visitors can enjoy *crêpes* and mulled wine (*vin chaud*). The traditional Christmas meal takes place on 24 December and typically includes oysters, *foie gras*, smoked salmon and turkey. The dinner usually concludes with the *bûche de Noël*, a sponge cake shaped like a Yule log.

Afterwards, people are ready to go to church for the Midnight Mass (*messe de minuit*). Another common tradition is that children, before going to bed, leave a hot beverage and some biscuits for Father Christmas, as the French Santa Claus is called (*Père Noël*), while eagerly awaiting to open their gifts on 25 December.

Minuit, chrétiens

Minuit, chrétiens ! C'est l'heure solennelle,
Où l'Homme-Dieu descendit jusqu'à nous
Pour effacer la tache originelle
Et de Son Père arrêter le courroux.
Le monde entier tressaille d'espérance
À cette nuit qui lui donne un sauveur.
Peuple, à genoux, attends ta délivrance.
Noël, Noël, voici le Rédempteur,
Noël, Noël, voici le Rédempteur !

De notre foi que la lumière ardente
Nous guide tous au berceau de l'Enfant.
Comme autrefois, une étoile brillante
Y conduisit les chefs de l'Orient.
Le Roi des rois naît dans une humble
crèche.
Puissants du jour, fiers de votre grandeur,
À votre orgueil, c'est de là qu'un Dieu
prêche.

Courbez vos fronts devant le Rédempteur,
Courbez vos fronts devant le Rédempteur !

Le Rédempteur a brisé toute entrave,
La terre est libre et le ciel est ouvert.
Il voit un frère où n'était qu'un esclave,
L'amour unit ceux qu'enchaînait le fer.
Qui Lui dira notre reconnaissance ?
C'est pour nous tous qu'il naît, qu'il souffre
et meurt.
Peuple, debout ! Chante ta délivrance,
Noël, Noël, voici le Rédempteur,
Noël, Noël, voici le Rédempteur !

Midnight, Christians

Midnight, Christians! It is the solemn hour,
When God-Man descended to us
To erase the stain of original sin
And to end the wrath of His Father.
The entire world thrills with hope
On this night that gives it a Saviour.
People, on your knees, wait for your
deliverance,
Christmas, Christmas,
here is the Redeemer,
Christmas, Christmas,
here is the Redeemer!

May the ardent light of our faith
Guide us all to the cradle of the child.
As in ancient times, a shining star
Led there the leaders from the East.
The King of kings is born in a humble
manger.
Mighty of the day, proud of your greatness,

It is from there that God preaches to your
pride.
Bow your heads before the Redeemer!
Bow your heads before the Redeemer!

The Redeemer has broken all shackles,
The earth is free and heaven is open.
He sees a brother where there was only a
slave,
Love unites those who were chained by
iron.
Who will tell Him of our gratitude?
It is for us all that He is born, that He
suffers and dies.
People, arise! Sing of your deliverance,
Christmas, Christmas,
here is the Redeemer,
Christmas, Christmas,
here is the Redeemer!

Krinta baltos snaigės

Language: Lithuanian



About the performers

The *Stockholm Lithuanian Women's Choir 'Upė' (Stokholmo lietuvių moterų choras „Upė“)* was formed in September 2023, following the initiative of the teachers and mothers of pupils at the Lithuanian Sunday school in Stockholm (*Saulė*). The choir's members are women united by their love for song, their shared native language and traditions, and the joy of singing together. In July 2024, *Upė* (literally “River”) was qualified and participated in the Lithuanian Song Festival in Vilnius, which celebrated its 100th anniversary and attracted over 20 thousand visitors. It has been inscribed on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The

artistic director and conductor of the choir is **Rima Mingaila**.

About the song

The Lithuanian entry is a well-known Christmas song composed in 1989 by **Giedrius Svilainis** (b. 1972), set to a poem written in 1942 by **Bernardas Brazdžionis** (1907-2002). The composer was 17-years-old when he came across a recently published book of poems by the Lithuanian-American poet in exile. This particular poem caught his attention, evoking memories of his childhood through its depiction of beautiful winter scenery. He immediately came up with the composition, which he first performed solo for his family at the piano, and later adapted it for choir.



Christmas traditions

Lithuanian Christmas traditions bring special joy to children, creating a warm, festive atmosphere. Children love decorating the Christmas tree with handmade ornaments, cookies or candies. They particularly enjoy the customs surrounding the Christmas Eve dinner (*Kūčios*), such as tasting no fewer than 12 traditional dishes, all excluding meat, and participating in old fortune-telling rituals, like pulling a straw from under the table. An old tradition was going out and watching

the animals who would start talking, only once a year, during a night filled with miracles. Children sing carols, perform in Christmas plays and make cards for family and friends, fostering creativity and family closeness. They eagerly await Santa Claus (*Kalėdy Senelis*) to bring their gifts, often leaving them under the Christmas tree on Christmas Eve or the morning after. According to legend, he enters through keyholes, ensuring that no one sees him!

Krinta baltos snaigės

Krinta baltos snaigės, kaip žiedai balčiausi,
Kaip maži varpeliai kužda man į ausį.
Baltos snaigės šnara, baltos snaigės šneka
Apie šitos žemės pilką pelkių taką.
Iš rytų šalėlės kyla šaltas vėjas,
snaigės apie mano veidą sukinėjas.

Užkris baltas lūpas, užkris juodus plaukus,
Būsiu aš didžiausias balto sniego laukas,
Ir širdis nutilus naktį ima jau iš džiaugsmo plakti.

Langas nebe langas, namas nebe namas,
Iš po sniego balsas ryto maldai kelias.
Visą naktį, rytą Žemėį žmonės gieda,
Kristaus sveikint eisim, kai nušvis Kalėdos.
Krinta baltos snaigės, kaip žiedai balčiausi,
Kaip maži varpeliai kužda man į ausį.

White snowflakes fall

White snowflakes fall, like the purest blossoms,
Like tiny bells, they whisper in my ear.
White snowflakes rustle, white snowflakes talk
On this earth's gray marshy path.
From the eastern lands, a cold wind rises,
And snowflakes swirl around my face.

They'll fall on white lips, they'll fall on dark hair,
I'll become the vast field of white snow,
And my heart, silent in the night, begins to beat with joy.

The window is no longer a window,
the house is no longer a house,
From beneath the snow,
a voice rises for the morning prayer.

All through the night and into dawn,
people of Earth sing,
We'll go to greet Christ
when Christmas dawns bright.
White snowflakes fall,
like the purest blossoms,
Like tiny bells,
they whisper to my ear.

Sparven om julmorgonen

Language: Swedish



About the performers

Kristina Cecile is a Finland-Swedish artist and songwriter based in Stockholm. She holds a university degree in musicology and has an extensive background in choir, quartet and ensemble singing. Apart from performing at Stockholm's Stadion during *Finnkampen* and composing award-winning music for plays and films, she has held several solo concerts. **Birgitta Forsman** (organ) is a versatile concert musician with a diploma in organ performance from Sibelius Academy in Helsinki. She serves as the organist at the Finnish Parish in Stockholm's Old Town.

About the song

The Finnish entry is a poem written in 1859 by **Zacharias Topelius** (1818-



1898) and was later set to music by **Otto Kotilainen** (1868-1936). It was published for the first time in 1913 in *Joulupukki* magazine. Konrad Alexis Hougberg (1848-1923) translated it into Finnish as *Varpunen jouluaamuna*. The poem reflects Topelius's personal sorrow, as his one-year-old son had passed away the previous spring. It tells the story of a little girl offering food to a hungry sparrow, who then reveals himself as the girl's deceased brother, expressing gratitude for her kindness. The song embodies the spirit of compassion and highlights the tradition of helping those in need, with the sparrow representing not only the poor but also a divine message of reward for acts of charity.



Christmas traditions

In Finland, Santa Claus plays a central role in Christmas traditions, especially for children. He is known as *Joulupukki* in Finnish, which literally means "Christmas Goat", and as *Julgubben* in Swedish. Unlike the more distant, mythical version of Santa found in other cultures, the Finnish Santa is a warm, approachable figure who is often welcomed into homes on Christmas Eve. Finnish children eagerly anticipate his arrival, and many even receive a personal visit from him, though he typically doesn't stay

long – just enough time to share a song with the children and pose for a photo. Santa Claus's official residence is in Rovaniemi, Lapland, where he is a beloved symbol of Finnish holiday spirit. Children also engage with him through letters, phone calls, and even video chats, keeping the magical aspect of Christmas alive. This tradition reinforces values of kindness, family and celebration, with Santa serving not only as a gift-bringer but as a cherished part of Finland's holiday heritage.

Sparven om julmorgonen

Nu så föll den vita snö,
föll på björk och lindar,
frusen är den klara sjö,
väntar vårens vindar.

Liten sparv, fattig sparv,
ätit upp sitt sommararv.
Frusen är den klara sjö,
väntar vårens vindar.

Vid den gröna stugans dörr
stod en liten flicka:
– Sparvelilla, kom som förr,
kom ett korn att picka!

Nu är jul i vart skjul,
sparvelilla, grå och ful.
Sparvelilla, kom som förr,
kom ett korn att picka!

Sparven flög till flickans fot,
flög på glada vingar:
– Gärna tar jag kornet mot,
kornet som du bringar.

Gud skall än löna den,
som är här de armas vän.
Gärna tar jag kornet mot,
kornet som du bringar.

– Jag är icke den du tror,
ty ditt öga tåras.
Jag är ju din lilla bror,
som dog bort i våras.

När du bjöd glad ditt bröd
åt den fattige i nöd,
bjöd du åt din lilla bror,
som dog bort i våras.

Sparrow on Christmas Morning

Now that the white snow has fallen,
fallen on birches and lindens,
the clear lake is frozen,
waiting for the winds of spring.

A little sparrow, poor sparrow,
has eaten up its summer store.
The clear lake is frozen,
waiting for the winds of spring.

At the door of the green cottage
stood a little girl:
– Little sparrow, come as before,
come and peck at a grain!

Now it's Christmas in every shack,
little sparrow, grey and shabby.
Little sparrow, come as before,
come and peck at a grain!

The sparrow flew to the girl's feet,
flew on happy wings:
– I gladly accept the grain,
the grain that you bring.

God will reward the one
who is friend of the poor here.
I gladly accept the grain,
the grain that you bring.

– I am not who you assume,
for your eye is in tears.
I am your little brother,
who passed away last spring.

When you gladly offered your bread
to the poor in need,
you offered it to your little brother,
who passed away last spring.

Nech zdobí nás

Language: Slovak



Tonight, he is performing with the band **The Psycho Lovers**: Matej Smutný (lead vocals, acoustic guitar), Juraj Oravec (cajon, percussion), Marta Ďumbalová (backing vocals) and Jozef Smutný (bass).

About the song

The Slovak entry is a brand-new song premiering tonight at our EU Christmas Concert, written earlier this year by our performer **Matej Smutný**. In his words, the song was created very spontaneously, paradoxically, in the summer season. It talks about the feelings that Christmas usually evokes in us: a period in which we like to look back on the past year and evaluate it, a period in which no one should be left alone, and a period in which everyone would believe in miracles.

About the performer

Matej Smutný is a Slovak singer, musician and composer. He has been actively engaged in performance, songwriting and concert activities at home and abroad since the age of 15. Matej has been a singer since 2020, debuting with the single *Psycho Love*, which became a No. 1 hit on several music charts in Europe, including MTV stations. His debut album, *Aura*, was released in 2022. Matej currently lives in Malmö, where he composes music for a new musical and performs in concert tours throughout Europe.

Christmas traditions

Christmas in Slovakia is marked by unique customs, blending religious and folk traditions. The main celebrations occur on Christmas Eve, known as *Štedrý deň* (literally "Generous Day"), when families come together for a festive dinner after a day of fasting. Slovaks observe various customs meant to bring good fortune, health and prosperity. Some families place straw under the tablecloth, as a reminder of the humble birthplace of Jesus, or money to wish for a prosperous year. Dinner typically starts



with *oblátky* (thin wafers) served with honey and garlic. The main Christmas dish is usually *kapustnica* (a cabbage soup with mushrooms), followed by fried carp with potato salad. After dinner, families gather around the

Christmas tree to exchange gifts, which small children believe are brought by *Ježiško* (Baby Jesus). Carols are sung, and many families attend the Midnight Mass to celebrate the birth of Christ.

Nech zdobí nás

Leskot stromov,
na stenách sa pýta mráz
Či dnes láska nás spojí na stokrát
Či som kráčaľ za ňou rok čo rok mi
hlavou prúdi len
Ale dnes teším sa

Nech príde čas ten vianočný,
Ktorý sa láskou ozdobí
Nech príde už a zdobí nás

Vzduchom vôňu lásky nesú na saniach
V deň, keď sa v nás zrazu stráca to zlé
Kričím do nebies, ak rozumieš nám
prosím svieť
Prosím svieť

Nech príde čas ten vianočný,
Ktorý sa láskou ozdobí
Nech príde už a zdobí nás

Let it decorate us

The glitter of the trees,
the frost on the walls is asking
Whether love will unite us a hundred
times today.
Whether I've followed her year after year,
only flows through my mind
But today, I'm happy

Let the Christmas time come,
That decorates itself with love
Let it come already now and decorate us

The scent of love is carried through the
air by sleds
On the day when the bad in us suddenly
disappears
I shout to the heavens, if you understand
us, please shine upon us
Please shine

Let the Christmas time come,
That decorates itself with love
Let it come already now and decorate us

Lulajże, Jezuniu

Language: Polish



About the performers

Marzena Frankowska-Goliszek is a Polish soprano who graduated with top marks from the Poznań Academy of Music in 2017. Early in her career, she performed at the Teatr Wielki in Poznań and various opera festivals across Poland and Europe. Now based in Sweden, she collaborates with the Polish Institute, focusing on Polish vocal pieces, sacred music and opera. In 2020, she gained acclaim for her performance on the Swedish television show *Så mycket bättre* alongside Silvana Imam.

Marek Mazur (piano) has performed widely in Poland and Sweden since 2012. He completed his doctorate in 2020 at the Academy of Music in Poznań. Marek spent a year at the Malmö Academy of Music, further refining his piano skills under Prof. Hans Pålsson. He currently lives in Stockholm and collaborates regularly with the Polish Institute.

About the song

The Polish entry is a traditional Christmas carol in the form of a lullaby, most likely originating from the second half of the 17th century. The earliest preserved version of the lyrics comes from a 1705 collection stored in the Archdiocesan Archive in Poznań. The carol is a mother's lullaby, inviting Baby Jesus to sleep peacefully, and it portrays the human side of the nativity story, offering a glimpse of the bond between mother and child. It holds a significant place in classical music thanks to Frédéric Chopin. In his *Scherzo No. 1 in B minor, Op. 20*, Chopin incorporates the melody of this carol into its middle section. Composed in 1831, while Chopin was living in France, the work reflects his longing for his homeland. Its enduring popularity speaks to its emotional power and the way it connects people to the traditions and warmth of the Christmas season.



Christmas traditions

Christmas in Poland is a family holiday that begins on 24 December with the evening gathering called *Wigilia* (Vigil). The whole house is filled with the scent of traditional dishes prepared only during this time of the year, such as carp, *piernik* (gingerbread), *barszcz* (beetroot soup) and pierogi (dumplings). Hay is placed beneath the tablecloth as a reminder of the manger where new-born Christ rested. An extra place is set at the

table in case of an unexpected guest, as no one should be alone on *Wigilia*. Families sing Christmas carols while decorating the Christmas tree. Children eagerly search for the first star in the sky, which symbolises the Star of Bethlehem and marks the start of the supper. At this moment, all family members share *opłatek*, a thin wafer symbolising forgiveness and unity, and exchange wishes for good health and prosperity.

Lulajże, Jezuniu

Lulajże, Jezuniu, moja perełko,
lulaj, ulubione me pieścidełko.
Lulajże, Jezuniu, lulajże, lulaj!
A Ty Go, Matulu, w płaczu utulaj.

Zamknijże znużone płaczem powieczki,
utulże zemdlone łkaniem usteczki.
Lulajże, Jezuniu, lulajże, lulaj!
A Ty Go, Matulu, w płaczu utulaj.

Dam ja Jezusowi słodkich jagódek,
pójdę z Nim w Matuli serca ogródek.
Lulajże, Jezuniu, lulajże, lulaj!
A Ty Go, Matulu, w płaczu utulaj.

Hush, little Jesus

Hush, little Jesus, my little pearl,
Hush, my favourite little delight.
Hush, little Jesus, hush, hush!
But You, lovely Mother,
solace Him in tears.

Close Your little eyelids tired from
weeping,
Solace the little lips, fainted from
sobbing.

Hush, little Jesus, hush, hush!
But You, lovely Mother,
solace Him in tears.

I'll give Jesus sweet little berries,
I'll go with Him into the small garden of
His Mother's heart.
Hush, little Jesus, hush, hush!
But You, lovely Mother,
solace Him in tears.

Language: Bulgarian



About the performers

The vocal ensemble *Perunika* (Перуника) was founded in Stockholm in the autumn of 2014 by Bulgarian conductor Mikhail Delchev (Михаел Делчев). Composed of 19 selected choristers, *Perunika* (literally “Iris”) is actively engaged in concert activities, including participation in three consecutive editions of *Kulturnatt* in Stockholm and the 20th anniversary of the *Global Rhythms* programme of Miami University, Ohio, USA. *Perunika* also took part in the official opening programme of Plovdiv as the European Capital of Culture in 2019. The ensemble’s repertoire includes masterpieces of the rich Bulgarian folklore heritage.

About the song

The Bulgarian entry is a song based on folk lyrics with a lot of symbolism, describing the rebirth of nature and humanity through the birth of the “royal boy”. Written by Bulgarian composer and accordionist Kosta Kolev (Коста Колев, 1921-2010), the song refers to Jesus Christ, who conquers evil and brings prosperity and fertility to Earth. It tells the story of the Son of God who saddled his horse and went hunting. Although he failed to catch a partridge, he killed a snake (or dragon) instead. This act restored richness and prosperity to God’s land, as rivers of grace were unleashed upon humanity. By repeating the phrase “Kolade le” throughout the lyrics, the song makes a clear reference to Christmas.



Christmas traditions

Christmas is one of the most important and beloved holidays in Bulgaria, celebrated with rich traditions, symbolism and family warmth. Preparations begin on Christmas Eve, traditionally featuring fasting dishes such as beans, roasted peppers, walnuts, fruit and the ritual bread (*pita*). A lucky piece, often a coin, is placed inside the *pita*, and it is believed to bring good fortune to the person who finds it. Gifts are typically unwrapped on Christmas Day itself, as a symbol of affection and gratitude among relatives

and friends. Christmas lunch is a time for family reunions, and the table is filled with various meat dishes, such as roast pork and chicken, various salads, traditional Bulgarian dishes like *banitsa* and homemade cakes. One of the cherished traditions during Christmas in Bulgaria is carol singing by the so-called *koledari*. They are usually children or young men who go from house to house singing Christmas carols. They are considered bringers of well-being and prosperity, so their hosts welcome them with joy, offering small gifts in return.

Царско момче кон седлае

Царско момче кон седлае, Коладе ле,
Низ ливаде царюнчина, Коладе ле,
Кон седлало синьо седло, Коладе ле,
Оседла го, възседна го, Коладе ле.

Тръгнал беше лов да лови, Коладе ле,
Дребна лова яребица, Коладе ле,
Не удари яребица, Коладе ле,
Най-удари една зъмя, Коладе ле.

Та извади царско момче, Коладе ле,
Айде жито по чешмири, Коладе ле,

Айде мляко по овчари, Коладе ле,
Айде вино по винари, Коладе ле.

Протекли са дор три реки, Коладе ле,
Първа река жълто жито, Коладе ле,
Втора река бяло мляко, Коладе ле,
Трета река руйно вино, Коладе ле.

Та извади царско момче, Коладе ле,
Айде жито по чешмири, Коладе ле,
Айде мляко по овчари, Коладе ле,
Айде вино по винари, Коладе ле.

A royal boy is saddling his horse

A royal boy is saddling his horse,
Kolade le,
Along the meadows of the kingdom,
Kolade le,
He saddled the horse with a blue
saddle, Kolade le,
He girded it, he mounted it, Kolade le.

He set out on a hunt, Kolade le,
On a hunt for small partridge, Kolade le,
He didn’t hit the partridge, Kolade le,
But he hit a snake, Kolade le.

The royal boy took out, Kolade le,
Wheat to the boxwood, Kolade le,

Milk to the shepherds, Kolade le,
Wine to the winemakers, Kolade le.

There flowed out three rivers, Kolade le,
The first river – yellow wheat, Kolade le,
The second river – white milk, Kolade le,
The third river – red wine, Kolade le.

The royal boy took out, Kolade le,
Wheat to the boxwood, Kolade le,
Milk to the shepherds, Kolade le,
Wine to the winemakers, Kolade le.

Veltījums mīlestībai

Language: Latvian



Latvian Academy of Music (2004), and prior to this, studied at the Riga Dome Cathedral Choir School. He is currently pursuing a Master's degree at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm.

About the song

The Latvian entry was not originally written as a Christmas song, but it has become an integral part of the Christmas repertoire in Latvia. It gained widespread recognition from its appearance in the 1993 Latvian film *Ziemassvētku Jampadracis* (Christmas Huddle). In the film, the song is featured in an emotional scene where it is performed by a group of children. In the words of the composer, **Mārtiņš Brauns** (1951-2021), it is a song about things that are beautiful and inspire us. Poet **Māra Zālīte** (b. 1952), who wrote the lyrics, received the "Copyright Infinity Award 2017" due to the song's frequent airplay on television, radio and public performances in concerts in Latvia and abroad.

Christmas traditions

In Latvia, Christmas is celebrated as *Ziemassvētki*, which literally translates to "Winter Feast". The holiday retains many pagan traditions related to the winter solstice, reflecting deep cultural roots in nature and seasonal cycles. The majority of Latvians are Evangelical Protestants. Christmas



About the performers

Shipsea is a music project founded by singer, songwriter and audio producer **Jānis Šipkēvics**. He was previously a member and co-founder of the a cappella group *Cosmos*, which represented Latvia in the Eurovision Song Contest 2006 in Athens with the song *I hear your heart*. Šipkēvics has also co-founded the band *Instrumenti*. He holds a Bachelor's degree in choir conducting from the Jāzeps Vītols

Eve is considered the main day of celebration, marked by family gatherings and festive traditions, such as decorating the Christmas tree. A unique tradition involves singing a song or reciting a poem before receiving

gifts. This custom emphasizes the significance of performing a small act to earn one's gift, adding a special charm to Latvian Christmas culture and reinforcing the communal and festive spirit of the holiday.

Veltījums mīlestībai

Nevaru es atcerēties,
Kas tas ir, kas tumsā laistās.
Kas tas ir, kas tumsā laistās,
Nevaru es atcerēties.

Atceros es tikai vienu,
Tas ar tevi ļoti saistās,
Tas ar tevi saistās.

Vai tas bija mums un zuda,
Kas tur tagad tumsā laistās.

Kas tur tagad tumsā laistās,
Vai tas bija mums un zuda.

Aizvien siltāk, aizvien spožāk,
Tas ar tevi ļoti saistās,
Tas ar tevi saistās.

Visas lietas, kas ir skaistas,
man ar tevi saistās.

A tribute to love

I cannot remember,
What it is that sparkles in the dark.
What it is that sparkles in the dark,
I cannot remember.

I remember just one thing,
It is very much connected to you,
It is connected to you.

Was it for us and disappeared,
What is sparkling there now in the dark.

What is sparkling there now in the dark,
Was it for us and disappeared.

Even warmer, even brighter,
It is very much connected to you,
It is connected to you.

All things that are beautiful
for me are connected to you.

Language: German



About the performers

The *St. Gertrud Brass Ensemble of the German Parish Stockholm (St. Gertrud Bläserey Deutsche Gemeinde Stockholm)* is a classic instrumental group at the German Church in Stockholm, a historic Lutheran church dating back to the 17th century. It is located in the centre of the Old Town, an area that was dominated by Germans during the Middle Ages, symbolising the shared cultural roots between Germany and Sweden that trace back to the Reformation in the 16th century. The church is dedicated to Saint Gertrude (626-659), the patron saint of travellers, and its parish is part of the Church of Sweden. The brass ensemble plays music by old German composers from the 16th and 17th centuries, including Andreas Raselius, Johann Crüger and Samuel Scheidt. The vocals are provided by **Viktor Rydén**, and the organ is played by **Henry Turu** (see p. 42).

About the song

The German entry is a Lutheran choral and is considered one of the oldest German Christmas carols. **Martin Luther** (1483-1546) wrote the words likely for the Advent of 1523 as a paraphrase of the passage *Veni redemptor gentium* from a Latin Christmas hymn by Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (4th century). The theme was Christ's humanity and divinity, as testified by his birth of the Virgin Mary. Luther closely paraphrased the seven stanzas of the Latin hymn and added a doxology as an eighth stanza. The melody was composed by Luther and possibly Johann Walter, based on the original plainchant. It was printed in the *Erfurt Enchiridion* of 1524. The song became the prominent hymn for the first Sunday of Advent for centuries. It was widely used in organ settings by Protestant Baroque composers, most notably Johann Sebastian Bach, who also composed two church cantatas beginning with the hymn.



Christmas traditions

German Christmas traditions, such as the Advent calendar or the Advent wreath, date back to the 19th century and have spread all over the world since then. In early December, the Christmas market (*Weihnachtsmarkt*) becomes a feature of almost every city, town or village. *Christkindlesmarkt* in Nuremberg and *Striezelmarkt* in Dresden attract millions of visitors

every year, offering tinsel, mulled wine, *Lebkuchen*, *Stollen*, *Spekulatius*, *Marzipan* and more. On the evening of 5 December, children place a boot in front of the street door, hoping that *St. Nikolaus* will fill it with sweets overnight. On Christmas Eve, they wait for the *Christkind* to place presents under the Christmas tree.

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland,
Der Jungfrauen Kind erkannt!
Dass sich wundre alle Welt,
Gott solch' Geburt ihm bestellt.

Dein' Krippe glänzt hell und klar,
Die Nacht gibt ein neu Licht dar,

Dunkel muss nicht kommen drein,
Der Glaub' bleibt immer im Schein.

Lob sei Gott dem Vater g'tan,
Lob sei Gott sein'm ein'gen Sohn,
Lob sei Gott dem Heil'gen Geist
Immer und in Ewigkeit.

Now come, Saviour of the gentiles

Now come, Saviour of the gentiles,
recognised as the child of the Virgin!
So that all the world is amazed,
God ordained such a birth for Him.

Your crib shines bright and clear,
in the night there is a new light,

darkness must not overpower it,
faith remains always radiant.

Praise be given to God the Father,
praise be to God His only Son,
praise be to God the Holy Ghost
for ever and always.



Τα Κάλαντα της Αυκής

Ta Kalanda tis Afkis

Κύπρος
Cyprus

Language: Greek (Cypriot dialect)



the 9th European Transforming Planet Conference. *Kalesma* (literally “The Calling”) consists of Vassilis Philippou (conductor), Savvas Lagou, Anastasia Zakynthinou, Paris Paraschos, Ekaterini Paraschou and Freideriki Tompazou.

About the performers

The six-member vocal ensemble *Kalesma* (Κάλεσμα) was created in 2022 in Cyprus, with the aim of studying the musical traditions of the Eastern Mediterranean, as well as creating original compositions. Speech plays an important role in their music, with references to Cypriot folk poetry, and the bridging of local traditions with contemporary creation. In their two years of collaboration, they have presented their music at the Fengaros Festival, Rialto World Music Festival, Moonwalk Festival and Cyprus Jazz & World Music Showcase, as well as

About the song

The Cypriot entry is a new song written specifically for this year’s EU Christmas Concert by Vassilis Philippou (Βασίλης Φιλίππου). Born in 1991, he studied piano and composition in London and The Hague. He currently resides in Cyprus, where he teaches music and has released two albums with his compositions (*Sol Aurorae* and *Colourful Emptiness*). His music expresses his artistic vision in a way that is shaped by his interaction with people and the environment. Vassilis sought to capture the spirit of Christmas in his new song, focusing



on themes of love, light, peace, kindness, warmth and generosity. The song is written in the Cypriot dialect and the arrangement features the *pidkiauli*, one of the most ancient Cypriot instruments, which resembles the sound of the common flute. The English translation of the lyrics is by Sophie Fetokaki (Σόφη Φετοκάκη).

Christmas traditions

On Christmas Eve (24 December), many people attend church for the service in the early evening (*Megas Esperinos*), before gathering at home to enjoy a festive meal with family and friends. On Christmas

Day (25 December), many attend church again, this time very early in the morning. At noon, relatives and friends come together at home to break their fast with *souvla* (charcoaled pork and lamb) and other traditional dishes, such as *pasticcio*, *koupepia*, *avgolemono*. Traditionally, children in Cyprus do not receive their presents on Christmas Day, but instead on New Year’s Day in honour of *Agios Vasilis*, the Greek Saint associated with Santa Claus. The two most popular treats of the season are *melomakarouna* (cinnamon and orange cookies glazed in honey syrup and covered with nuts) and *kourabiedes* (almond biscuits coated with icing sugar).

Τα Κάλαντα της Αυκής

Ώρα καλή σας άρκοντες τζι' ώρα
γρουσή ανεράες,
ήρτα να φέρω τες χαρές πο'ν
φέρουν οι ππαράες
τζι' ευτζιές που 'χουν στα σσόψυχα
παππούες τζαι γιαγιαές.

Βάλλω το μπλε της θάλασσας στου
σύννεφου το άσπρον
τζαι σκεδιάζω τ' ουρανού το πιο
λαμπρόν το άστρον,
για να 'ν το φως παριορκά σε
μισταρκόν τζαι μάστρον.

Το φως γεννιέται στην καρκιάν κάθε
τζινούρκου βρέφους,
με το βουνόν ισιάζει το με η
σκοτεινιά του νέφους.
Τζι' ο Πλάστης που μας έδωκεν
ψυσιήν τζαι νουν αντάμα
θέλει το φως να 'ν ζωντανόν στο
γέλιον τζαι στο κλάμα.

Η ζεστασιά της αγκαλιάς εν της
ειρήνης δώρον

μες της αγάπης το τζηπίν, το πκιο
αθθισμένο φκιόρον.
Εν οι γιορτές η αφορμή πλάσματα να
μερώννουν,
σαν τα πουλιά μες τη φωλιάν να μάθουν
να κουρρώννουν.

Στρώστε τραπέζιν του γλεγκιού δίχα
καμιάν πικρίαν,
τζ' οι κούζες να γεμώσουσιν γλυτζιάν
κουμανταριάν.
Το φούρνον να πυρώσετε το ζύμωμα να
πκιάτε,
τζαι πλουμιστές γεννόπιπτες να κόψετε
να φάτε.

Πλουμίστε τζαι την τέγγην μας, για σας
που τραουδούμεν,
τζ' εν με αγάπην που 'ρταμεν τα
κάλαντα να πούμεν.
Να ζήσετε γρόνους καλούς δίχα καμιά
μαννιέρα,
τζαι οι ευτζιές τούντης γιορτής να
πκιάννουν κάθε μέρα.

Carols of the Dawn

Good tidings patrons of the house,
and golden wishes to the sprites,
I come bearing joys no wealth can buy
and the soulful blessings of grandfolks.

With blue and white I paint the
heavens,
adorning the sky with the brightest star
whose light will comfort apprentice
and master alike.

In the heart of each new babe a light is
born anew
undimmed by cloud or mountain.
And our Maker who gave us both soul
and mind
wills this light to shine, come laughter
or come tears.

An embrace is a gift when in peace
with one another,
like the most radiant blossom in the
flower bed of love.

Feast days are a time for people to
gather round,
and learn to huddle like birds in a
warm nest.

Set the table for merriment, free of any
bitterness,
and let the jugs be filled with sweet
commandaria.
Fire up the oven and knead the
dough,
so you may share the decorated
Christmas loaves.

Adorn too the craft of those who
came to sing for you,
for we came with love a-carolling.
May you live prosperous years, free of
airs and graces,
and the blessings of this celebration
be upon you every day.



Los campanilleros

Language: Spanish



About the performers

Irene Pelayo Lind (vocals) is a flamenco, Spanish folk and tango singer from Madrid, currently residing in Malmö. She regularly performs at *FlamencoFredag* in Stockholm, the most active flamenco scene in Sweden, where she works as a singer in the house band and as a communicator. She combines her performances with teaching activities.

Jonathan Bondesson (guitar) is Sweden's only flamenco guitarist to have earned a Master's degree from the Royal College of Music in Stockholm. He belongs to the new generation of Northern flamenco guitarists and has received praise for his debut album, *Andalusia in minus degrees*.

Souzana Volioti (dance) is a flamenco dancer and choreographer, originally from Greece. With a background in classical music and folk dance, she spent part of her life in Spain, both studying and working as a flamenco dancer. She currently focuses on traditional flamenco, while also building bridges with classical, folk and experimental music. Based in Sweden, where she manages her own studio, she remains artistically active with performances and seminars, both locally and internationally.



About the song

The Spanish entry is a flamenco Christmas carol inspired by an old folk tradition. The name *campanilleros* is associated with a group of men, mostly peasants, who used to ring small bells, reminding their fellow villagers to join the procession to the *Misa del Alba* (Dawn Mass) for the recitation of the Holy Rosary. This tradition was developed in the late 17th and 18th centuries, particularly in Andalusia and Extremadura. Choirs and guitar accompaniment provided a backdrop of folk music for the songs sung by those attending this religious gathering.

Christmas traditions

The traditional Spanish Christmas carols are called *villancicos* and are accompanied by *zambombas* (a type of friction drum) and *panderetas* (tambourines). Families come together on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, enjoying the season's traditional sweets: *turrón* and *polverones*. In most houses and public spaces, the nativity scene (*Belén*) is prominently displayed. While Santa Claus (*Papá Noel*) pays a visit on Christmas, most children in Spain eagerly await the arrival of the Three Wise Men from the East (*Reyes Magos*) on 6 January.

Los campanilleros

Por los pueblos de mi Andalucía
los campanilleros por la madrugada
me despiertan con sus campanillas,
y con sus guitarras me hacen llorar.
Y empiezo a cantar,
y al oírme, todos los pajarillos
que están en las ramas echan a volar

Pajarillos que vais por el campo
gozando el amor y la libertad,
recordadle al hombre que quiero
que venga a mi reja por la madrugada.
Que mi corazón
se lo entrego el momento que llegue,
cantando las penas que he pasado yo.

The bell ringers

Through the towns of my Andalusia,
the bell ringers at dawn
wake me with their little bells,
and make me cry with their guitars.
And I start to sing,
and when they hear me, all the little
birds sitting on the branches take
flight.

Little birds, you who roam through the
fields enjoying love and freedom,
remind the man I love
to come to my window at dawn.
That my heart,
I'll give it to him the moment he arrives,
singing the sorrows that I have endured.

Jõuluõhtul

Language: Estonian



with Estonian roots and interests. The conductor of the choir is **Jaan Seim**.

About the song

The Estonian entry is a song composed in 1988 by Ester Mägi (1922-2021), who is often referred to as the “First Lady of Estonian Music” due to her significant contribution to the country’s musical heritage. Although she is mainly known for her choral works and chamber music, she has also written a symphony that is held in very high esteem. The composition is a sacred choral work intended for mixed voices and is recognised for its deeply evocative portrayal of the Christmas spirit. It is particularly appreciated for its delicate musical language, combining elements of Estonian folk traditions with a modern sacred style. The lyrics, written by Estonian poet Milla Krimm (1894-1978), evoke the quiet, reverent atmosphere of Christmas Eve, expressing themes of peace, joy and the anticipation of Christ’s birth.

Christmas traditions

Christmas is a widely celebrated holiday in Estonia, blending the magic



and mysticism of ancient pre-Christian traditions with modern sacred and spiritual customs. Preparations begin as early as November, with communities coming together to make the classic blood sausage (*verivorst*) and other traditional dishes. The

Estonian word for Christmas (*jõulud*) is of ancient Scandinavian origin and derived from the word *jul*. Estonians decorate their Christmas trees, and Santa Claus brings gifts to children on the night of 24 December.

About the performers

The *Stockholm Estonian Mixed Choir (Stockholmi Eesti Segakoor)* was founded in 2002 and has been continuously active for 22 years. Its mission is to practice and promote choral singing, with a repertoire that includes Estonian music by composers such as Veljo Tormis, Eduard Tubin and Mart Saar, as well as music from Sweden and other cultures. The choir performs at concerts and events in Stockholm and elsewhere in Sweden for both Estonian and Swedish audiences. It also takes part in general singing festivals in Estonia. There are about 45 members in the choir, women and men, aged 20 to 70, including singers who have recently come from Estonia, as well as many generations of singers living in Sweden

Jõuluõhtul

Vaikne öö, jõuluöö.

Nii ema ial ei laulnud,
kui laulis ta jõuluööl,
nii säramas enne ei näinud
ta silmi ja põski me veel.

Nii õrnalt ja südamest kostis laul,
Jeesusest jõuluööl,
me hingi see taevasse tõstis
kui inglitiibade jõul.

Nii pehmelt kunagi köitnud
meid üksteise laul ja jutt,
me südameid surmani võitnud
laul Jeesusest jõulujutt.

Vaikne öö, jõuluöö.

Nii ema ial ei laulnud,
kui laulis ta jõuluööl,
nii säramas enne ei näinud
ta silmi ja põski me veel.

Nüüd ema enam ei laula,
kuid südames heliseb veel
meil siiski nii kaua,
kaua laul Jeesusest jõuluööl.

Vaiksel ööl, jõuluööl.

On Christmas Eve

Silent night, Christmas night.

Mother never sang like that,
the way she sang on Christmas night,
she had never seen our eyes and
cheeks shine like this before.

So gentle and heartfelt was the song,
about Jesus on Christmas night,
our souls were lifted to heaven
as if by the wings of angels.

We were so softly captivated
by each other’s song and talk,
it won our hearts to the point of death
the song of Jesus’ Christmas story.

Silent night, Christmas night.

Mother never sang like that,
the way she sang on Christmas night,
she had never seen our eyes and
cheeks shine like this before.

Now mother no longer sings,
but in our hearts, it still rings
for a long, long time
the song about Jesus on Christmas
night.

On a silent night, on Christmas night.

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht

Language: German



About the performers

Anna-Katarina Schatzl, born in Sweden with roots in Austria (from her grandfather), Slovakia and Hungary, is a graduate of the Music Conservatory in Bratislava. She has performed at renowned festivals held in churches and concert venues across Europe. Her own song *Heimatgefühl*, a tribute to Austria for the anniversary of “1000 years of Austria” in 1996, won a competition organised by the World Federation of Austrians Abroad. Anna-Katarina’s solo album *Songs of My Soul* showcases her emotional range and artistry. In 2022, she played a leading role in Claes Fellbom’s *Swan Lake* at Artipelag, Stockholm, and performed at Wels Stadttheater in Austria, where she will return for another concert in 2025. In addition to her performance career, she works as Executive Assistant at Early Music Sweden / Stockholm Early Music Festival.

The organ is played by **Henry Turu**, a 31-year-old musician who studied church music at the Royal College

of Music in Stockholm. He currently works as organist and conductor at Huddinge Parish, the German Church and the Estonian Church.

About the song

The Austrian entry is the favourite Christmas carol that has gained worldwide fame. The composer, **Franz Xaver Gruber** (1787-1863), an elementary school teacher and organist, wrote the song in 1818 in the village of Arnsdorf. At the time, he was playing the organ at St. Nicholas Church in the neighbouring town of Oberndorf bei Salzburg, where the author of the lyrics, **Joseph Mohr** (1792-1848), served as an assistant priest. Shortly before 24 December 1818, the young priest handed the six-verse poem to his organist friend, with a request to set it to music for the Christmas Mass, arranged for two solo voices, choir and guitar. The legend says that on Christmas Day that year, the organ was broken and this provided the opportunity for the song to be performed. Traditionally, the carol was sung exclusively on Christmas Eve in churches and homes.

Christmas traditions

During the four weeks leading up to Christmas, an Advent wreath made of fresh branches is placed in the house, with four candles that are lit one by one on each Sunday of Advent. Christmas markets, known in Austria



as *Christkindlmärkte*, can be found in many places across the country. On Christmas Eve, 24 December, parents decorate the Christmas tree (*Weihnachtsbaum*), often without the children noticing. In many households, the window is opened shortly before the celebration begins, allowing the Christ Child (*Christkind*) to “fly in” and bring the presents. A small bell is rung to signal that the children may

enter the room where the Christmas tree stands. The family then gathers around the Christmas tree, which is decorated with candles and sweets, with the presents placed beneath it. On Christmas Eve (*Heiliger Abend*), many families enjoy a simple meal, such as sausages or fish, while more festive meals are traditionally served on 25 and 26 December.

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!
Alles schläft, einsam wacht
Nur das traute, hochheilige Paar.
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!
Hirten erst kundgemacht
Durch der Engel Halleluja,

Tönt es laut von fern und nah:
Christ, der Retter ist da,
Christ, der Retter ist da!

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!
Gottes Sohn, o wie lacht
Lieb aus deinem göttlichen Mund
Da uns schlägt die rettende Stund',
Christ, in deiner Geburt,
Christ, in deiner Geburt!

Silent night, holy night

Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace!

Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar,

Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia;
Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born!

Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love’s pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!



Nu tändas tusen juleljus

Language: Swedish



About the performer

Everyone in the audience is invited to sing the Swedish carol as a sing-along, accompanied by our host, **Nikos Tsiamis**, on the piano. Nikos has been working for the European Commission Representation in Sweden since July 2013. He studied Communication, Media and Culture in Athens, earning two Master's degrees in the field. In addition to his mother tongue, Greek, he speaks 10 European languages at various levels, from basic to proficient. Nikos studied the piano and the flute during his childhood and has also been a member of the Choir of the Scandinavian Church in Athens. A true fan of the Eurovision Song Contest, he has attended 13 editions, with the most recent one in Malmö, where he also successfully organised the Europe

Day celebrations at the Eurovision Village and Malmö University.

About the song

The Swedish entry is a traditional Christmas song from 1898, composed by **Emmy Köhler** (1858-1925), who wrote both the lyrics and the music. The theme of the song is the gospel of the newborn Christ and specifically its aspects of domestic harmony and inner peace, symbolised by the lights of candles, as well as the stars above, especially the Star of Bethlehem. It became one of the most popular Christmas songs in Sweden throughout the 20th century, sung in churches, homes and schools. In 1986, it was included in the Swedish Hymnal (*Den svenska psalmboken*). The song has been covered by



renowned Swedish artists, such as Agnetha Fältskog, Carola Häggkvist and Lill Lindfors.

Christmas traditions

The most important day of Christmas in Sweden is Christmas Eve, celebrated on 24 December (*julafton*). It is a day devoted to family togetherness, starting with Santa's porridge (*julgröt*) for breakfast and families coming together across the generations from all corners of the country. There is a special Christmas

presenter on national television, along with a special Christmas cartoon that airs every year at 15:00. Dinner begins relatively early and features a traditional Christmas buffet (*julbord*), which includes pickled herring, *gravlax*, pâté, *knäckebröd*, Christmas ham, meatballs with beetroot salad and *lutfisk*. After dinner – typically when the father steps out to buy the newspaper - Santa Claus (*jultomten*) knocks on the door, enters and asks if there are any good children in the house. He then personally hands out the gifts before rushing off to the next home.

Nu tändas tusen juleljus

Nu tändas tusen juleljus
på jordens mörka rund
och tusen, tusen stråla ock
på himlens djupblå grund.

Du stjärna över Betlehem,
o, låt ditt milda ljus
få lysa in med hopp och frid
i varje hem och hus!

Och över stad och land i kväll
går julens glada bud
att född är Herren Jesus Krist,
vår Frälsare och Gud.

I varje hjärta, armt och mörkt,
sänd du en stråle blid,
en stråle av Guds kärleks ljus
i signad juletid!

Now a thousand Christmas candles are lit

Now a thousand Christmas candles are lit
around the Earth resting in darkness
and thousands of rays of light
from the deep blue sky.

You, star over Bethlehem,
oh, let your mild light
shine with hope and peace
in every single home and house!

And tonight, above city and countryside,
the joyful message of Christmas is spread
that Lord Jesus Christ is born,
our Saviour and God.

In every heart, lonely and dark,
send a gentle ray,
a ray of God's light of love
in sacred Christmas time!



Silent Night

Български ★ Bulgarian

Тиха нощ, свята нощ

Тиха нощ! Свята нощ!
 Всичка земя е в тишина;
 Виж! Витлеемската светла звезда
 Мъдрите кани от чужда страна,
 Гдето Христос се роди

Čeština ★ Czech

Tichá noc, svatá noc

Tichá noc, svatá noc,
 Všechno spí, u jeslí,
 Pouze přesvatí snoubenci bdí,
 Tam, kde spanilý Ježíšek sní,
 Anděly opěvován,
 Anděly opěvován.

Dansk ★ Danish

Glade jul, dejlige jul

Glade jul, dejlige jul,
 engle dale ned i skjul!
 Hid de flyve med Paradis-grønt,
 hvor de se, hvad for Gud er kønt,
 lønlig iblandt os de gå,
 lønlig iblandt os de gå.

Deutsch ★ German

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht

Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht!
 Alles schläft, einsam wacht
 Nur das traute, hochheilige Paar.
 Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
 Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh,
 Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh.

Eesti ★ Estonian

Püha öö

Püha öö, õnnistud öö!
 Kõik on maas rahu sees.
 Joosep valvab ja Maarjal sääl
 hingab lapsuke põlvede pääl.
 Maga, patuste rõõm!
 Maga, patuste rõõm!

Ελληνικά ★ Greek

Άγια Νύχτα

Άγια Νύχτα, σε προσμένουν
 Με χαρά οι χριστιανοί
 Και με πίστη ανυμνούμε,
 Τον Θεό δοξολογούμε
 Μ' ένα στόμα, μια φωνή
 Ναι, με μια φωνή

English

Silent night

Silent night, holy night,
 All is calm, all is bright
 Round yon virgin mother and child.
 Holy infant, so tender and mild,
 Sleep in heavenly peace,
 Sleep in heavenly peace.

Español ★ Spanish

Noche de paz

Noche de paz, noche de amor,
 Todo duerme alrededor
 Entre los astros que esparcen su luz
 Bella anunciando al niño Jesús
 Brilla la estrella de paz,
 Brilla la estrella de paz.

Français ★ French

Douce nuit, sainte nuit

Douce nuit, sainte nuit!
 Dans les cieux, l'astre luit.
 Le mystère annoncé s'accomplit
 Cet enfant sur la paille endormi
 C'est l'amour infini
 C'est l'amour infini.

Gaeilge ★ Irish

Óíche chiúin

Óíche chiúin, oíche Mhic Dé,
 Cách 'na suan dís araon,
 Dís is dílse 'faire le spéis
 Naíon beag leanbh ceansa 'gus caomh
 Críost, 'na chodladh go sámh,
 Críost, 'na chodladh go sámh.

Hrvatski ★ Croatian

Tiha noć

Tiha noć, sveta noć!
 Ponoć je, spava sve,
 samo Marija s Josipom bdi,
 divno Djetešce pred njima spi,
 rajski resi ga mir,
 rajski resi ga mir.

Italiano ★ Italian

Astro del ciel

Astro del ciel, Pargol divin,
 Mite Agnello, Redentor!
 Tu che i vati da lungi sognar
 Tu che angeliche voci annunziar
 Luce dona alle menti,
 Pace infondi nei cuor.

Latviešu ★ Latvian

Klusa nakts, svēta nakts

Klusa nakts, svēta nakts!
 Visi dus. Nomodā
 Vēl ir Jāzeps un Marija
 Kūtī, Dāvida pilsētā.
 Jēzus silītē dus,
 Jēzus silītē dus.

Lietuvių ★ Lithuanian

Tyli naktis

Tyli naktis, šventa naktis,
 Viskas miega, tik dar vis
 Motinėle ten budi viena,
 Kūdikis su meilia šypsena,
 Ilisi miega ramiai,
 Ilisi miega ramiai.

Magyar ★ Hungarian

Csendes éj

Csendes éj, szentséges éj!
 Mindenek álma mély.
 Nincs fenn más, csak a szent szülőpár
 Drága kisedük álmainál.
 Szent Fiú aludjál,
 Szent Fiú aludjál!

Malti ★ Maltese

O lejl ta' skiet

O lejl ta' skiet, lejl tal-Milied
 Lejl għażiż, lejl qaddis
 Dawlet is-sema il-kewkba li ddiel
 Habbret li l-fidwa tal-bniedem inbdiet
 Kristu hu mħabba bla qies,
 Kristu hu mħabba bla qies.

Nederlands ★ Dutch

Stille Nacht

Stille nacht, Heilige nacht
 Alles slaapt, eenzaam wacht
 Bij het kindje, 't hoogheilige paar
 Rond de kribbe zingt
 d'engelenschaar
 Slaap in hemelse rust
 Slaap in hemelse rust

Polski ★ Polish

Cicha noc, święta noc

Cicha noc, święta noc,
 Pokój niesie ludziom wszem,
 A u żłóbka Matka Święta
 Czuwa sama uśmiechnięta
 Nad dzieciątka snem,
 Nad dzieciątka snem.

Silent Night

Português ★ Portuguese Noite feliz

Noite feliz! Noite feliz!
Ó Senhor, Deus do amor
Pobrezinho nasceu em Belém
Eis na lapa, Jesus nosso bem
Dorme em paz, ó Jesus,
Dorme em paz, ó Jesus!

Română ★ Romanian Noapte de vis

Noapte de vis, timp preasfânt,
Toate dorm pe pământ
Două inimi veghează,
Pruncul dulce visează
Într-un leagăn de cânt,
Într-un leagăn de cânt

Slovenčina ★ Slovak Tichá noc

Tichá noc, svätá noc!
Všetko spí, všetko sní,
sám len svätý bdie dôverný pár,
stráží Dieťaťko, nebeský dar.
Sladký Ježiško spí, sní,
nebesky tíško spí, sní.

Slovenščina ★ Slovene Sveta noč

Sveta noč, blažena noč,
vse že spi, je polnoč.
Le devica z Jožefom tam
v hlevcu varje detece nam.
Spavaj dete sladkó,
spavaj dete sladkó.

Suomi ★ Finnish Jouluyö, juhlayö

Jouluyö, juhlayö!
Päättynyt kaik on työ.
Kaks vain valveil on puolisoa
lapsen herttaisen nukkuessa
seimikätkyessään,
seimikätkyessään.

Svenska ★ Swedish Stilla natt

Stilla natt, heliga natt!
Allt är frid, stjärnan blid
Skiner på barnet i stallets strå
Och de vakande fromma två
Kristus till jorden är kommen
Oss är en frälsare född

Українська ★ Ukrainian Тиха ніч

Тиха ніч, свята ніч!
Ясність б'є від зірниць
Дитинонька Пресвята
Така ясна, мов зоря
Спочиває тихо
Тихо, в тихім сні.



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