

Shepherds and Angels

Old American Christmas Songs for SATB chorus, harp and violin

Summer 2010

Dear Singers and Supporters,

I'm working on a new piece of Christmas music, titled *Shepherds and Angels*, for the Halalisa Singers of Lexington, MA, which provides another Christmas programming option with harp, along with Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols* and Conrad Susa's Spanish *Carols and Lullabies*.

The songs I've selected are old American Christmas tunes, accompanied by harp and violin, sometimes played in a fiddle style. Some of the tunes come from *Southern Harmony*, the shape-note songbook from the 1850s, and others are tunes I've loved for a long time from Ruth Crawford Seeger's collection, *American Folk Songs for Christmas*. Some of these early American songs have a simple and unsentimental directness, and others have grand words and vigorous imagery of "celestial fire" and the occasional "awful trumpet".

These are the songs:

Exultation
Rise Up Shepherd and Follow
Jesus, Jesus Rest Your Head
The Babe of Bethlehem
Shepherds in Judea
Oh, Mary and the Baby, Sweet Lamb
Restoration/Cradle Hymn (two very similar tunes)
Jesus Born in Bethny
Rejoice My Friends

To support this new work, I've set up a Spindrift Commissioning Guild project. Spindrift Commissioning Guild is a community of supporters who believe in new art music and want to help me create it. A commission is expensive for a single performer or a small performing group. The Guild gives you the opportunity to be a commissioner of a new piece of music without having to support a whole project individually, and it helps me make a modest income creating that music. Joining the Guild means paying an amount of your choice to support a project: in this case, the American Carols project for Halalisa. The Guild operates under the fiscal sponsorship of Fractured Atlas, so your contribution is tax-deductible too!

If you are a choral director interested in this kind of concert programming, I'd like to have your early input on this project and its suitability for your chorus. Please be in touch!

To read more online:

<http://www.spindrift.com/projects/guild2010christmas.html>

To go directly to the Fractured Atlas donation page:

<https://www.fracturedatlas.org/site/contribute/donate/2878>

Thank you for your interest and consideration.

Best musical wishes,
Pamela Marshall

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