

*As a child, my most vivid impression of music for the winter season came from songs and carols recorded in churches or great halls, rich with their own unique ambience and tradition. In that spirit, I have ventured into several similar locations that I have come to cherish in my travels.*

*Annaghmakerrig, the one-time home of the late Sir Tyrone and Judy Guthrie, nestled in the woods of County Monaghan, Ireland, is presently a retreat for artists. I have had the privilege of working there several times over the years. The hall in which we recorded is a rehearsal hall where Guthrie once worked with many of the world's finest actors.*

*Glenstal Abbey is a Benedictine monastery located outside of the city of Limerick, Ireland. Through their devotion and warm sense of humour, the monks have created a tranquillity amidst the surrounding hills that I can only hope gleams through in the songs we recorded there.*

*This recording was completed in The Church Of Our Lady in Guelph, Ontario, Canada. As we recorded through the dark hours of the night, this magnificent church, built in 1877, offered great inspiration.*

*The arrangements are sparse, but somehow I felt that reflected the dynamics of the fall and winter seasons, and that there can be much beauty in such simplicity. As it is recorded on location, you may occasionally hear sounds of life continuing on around us. We hope these are not distracting, but rather are embraced like flecks of straw in the wool sweater your grandmother might have knitted to keep the cold winter away. – L. M.*



To Drive the Cold Winter Away  
Loreena McKennitt

**E**nfant, ce qui m'a le plus marquée dans la musique du temps des Fêtes est comment les chants et les cantiques enregistrés dans les églises et les grandes salles de spectacles étaient empreints de l'atmosphère et des traditions propres à ces lieux. Depuis, j'ai souvent été attirée par de tels endroits au cours de mes voyages.

Niché au beau milieu d'un bois du comté de Monaghan, en Irlande, Annaghmakerrig fut, à une certaine époque, le domicile des défunts Sir Tyrone et Lady Judy Guthrie. Transformée depuis en lieu de retraite pour artistes, j'ai eu le privilège d'aller y travailler plusieurs fois au fil des années. La grande salle dans laquelle nous avons enregistré l'album était une salle de répétition jadis utilisée par Guthrie dans le cadre de son travail avec quelques-uns des plus grands acteurs du monde.

L'abbaye de Glenstal est un monastère bénédictin située à l'extérieur de la ville de Limerick, en Irlande. Grâce à leur dévouement et à leur sens de l'humour chaleureux, les moines de cette abbaye ont su créer un petit havre de paix au cœur des montagnes de cette région. J'espère que les chansons qui y ont été enregistrées traduisent ce bien-être.

Nous avons achevé l'enregistrement de l'album à The Church Of Our Lady de Guelph, en Ontario, au Canada. L'ambiance de cette église magnifique, édifiée en 1877, nous a servi d'inspiration lors de l'enregistrement qui dura jusqu'aux petites heures de la nuit.

Telles les saisons d'automne et d'hiver, les arrangements sont sobres et dépouillés. Or, j'estime, à tort ou à raison, qu'il peut y avoir une grande beauté dans une telle simplicité. Comme l'album a été enregistré à même les lieux, par moments, les bruits ambiants se sont mêlés à la musique. Nous espérons que ces bruits ne vous sembleront pas tant être des distractions que des brins de paille dans le gilet de laine que grand-mère aurait tricoté pour nous parer du froid de l'hiver. – L. M.

## IN PRAISE OF CHRISTMAS 6:06

*Music and lyric: Traditional English (18th century)*

*Recorded at The Church Of Our Lady, Guelph, Ontario*

*LM: vocals, harp, accordion  
Shannon Parves-Smith: viols*

All hail to the days that merit more praise  
Than all the rest of the year  
And welcome the nights that double delights  
As well for the poor as the peer!  
Good fortune attend each merry man's friend  
That doth but the best that he may  
Forgetting old wrongs with carols and songs  
To drive the cold winter away.

'Tis ill for a mind to anger inclined  
To think of small injuries now  
If wrath be to seek, do not lend her your cheek  
Nor let her inhabit thy brow  
Cross out of thy books malevolent looks  
Both beauty and youth's decay  
And wholly consort with mirth and sport  
To drive the cold winter away.

This time of the year is spent in good cheer  
And neighbours together do meet  
To sit by the fire, with friendly desire  
Each other in love to greet  
Old grudges forgot are put in the pot  
All sorrows aside they lay  
The old and the young doth carol this song  
To drive the cold winter away.

When Christmas' tide comes in like a bride  
With holly and ivy clad  
Twelve days in the year much mirth and good cheer  
In every household is had  
The country guise is then to devise  
Some gambols of Christmas play  
Whereat the young men do the best that they can  
To drive the cold winter away.

## THE SEASONS 4:55

*Music and lyric: Traditional English (19th century)*

*Recorded at Annaghmakerrig, Ireland*

*LM: vocals, harp, accordion*

Come all you lads and lasses, I'd have you give attention  
To these few lines I'm about to write here  
'Tis of the four seasons of the year that I shall mention  
The beauty of all things doth appear  
And now you are young and all in your prosperity  
Come cheer up your hearts and revive like the spring  
Join off in pairs like the birds in February\*  
That St. Valentine's Day it forth do bring

Then cometh Spring, which all the land doth nourish  
The fields are beginning to be decked with green  
The trees put forth their buds and the blossoms they do flourish  
And the tender blades of corn on the earth are seen  
Don't you see the little lambs by the dams a-playing?  
The cuckoo is singing in the shady grove  
The flowers they are springing, the maids they go a-Maying  
In love all hearts seem now to move.

Next cometh Autumn with the sun so hot and piercing  
The sportsman goes forth with his dog and his gun  
To fetch down the woodcock, the partridge and the pheasant  
For health and for profit as well as for fun  
Behold, with loaded apple trees the farmer is befriended  
They will full up his casks that have long laid dry  
All nature seems to weary now; her task is nearly ended  
And more of the seasons will come by and by.

When night comes on with song and tale we pass the wintry hours  
By keeping up a cheerful heart we hope for better days  
We tend the cattle, sow the seed, give work unto the ploughers  
With patience wait till winter yields before the sun's fair rays  
And so the world goes round and round, and every time and season  
With pleasure and with profit crowns the passage of the year  
And so with every time of life, to him who acts with reason  
The beauty of all things doth appear.

*\*It was believed that the birds chose their mates on St. Valentine's Day.*

## THE KING 2:04

*Music: Traditional English*

*Recorded at The Church Of Our Lady, Guelph, Ontario*

*LM: vocals, accordion*

*Cedric Smith: vocals*

Health, love and peace be all here in this place  
By your leave we shall sing, concerning our King

Our King is well-dressed in silks of the best  
In ribbons so rare no king can compare

We have travelled many miles over hedges and stiles  
In search of our King unto you we bring.

We have powder and shot to conquer the lot  
We have cannon and ball to conquer them all.

Old Christmas is past, twelve tide is the last  
And we bid you adieu, great joy to the new.

## BANQUET HALL 3:53

*Music: Loreena McKennitt*

*Recorded at Annaghmakerrig, Ireland*

*LM: troubadour and Celtic harps, tambourine,  
finger cymbals*

## SNOW 5:35

*Music: Loreena McKennitt*

*Lyric: Archibald Lampman*

*Recorded at Glenstal Abbey, Ireland*

*LM: vocals, harp, tin whistle*

White are the far-off plains, and white  
The fading forests grow;  
The wind dies out along the height,  
And denser still the snow,  
A gathering weight on roof and tree,  
Falls down scarce audibly.

The road before me smooths and fills  
Apace, and all about  
The fences dwindle, and the hills  
Are blotted slowly out;  
The naked trees loom spectrally  
Into the dim white sky.

The meadows and far-sheeted streams  
Lie still without a sound;  
Like some soft minister of dreams  
The snow-fall hoods me round;  
In wood and water, earth and air,  
A silence everywhere.

Save when at lonely intervals  
Some farmer's sleigh, urged on,  
With rustling runners and sharp bells,  
Swings by me and is gone;  
Or from the empty waste I hear  
A sound remote and clear;

The barking of a dog, or call  
To cattle, sharply pealed,  
Borne echoing from some wayside stall  
Or barnyard far afield;

Then all is silent and the snow falls  
Settling soft and slow  
The evening deepens and the grey  
Folds closer earth and sky  
The world seems shrouded, far away.

Its noises sleep, and I secret as  
Yon buried streams plod dumbly on and dream.

## BALULALOW 3:09

*Music and lyric: Traditional Scottish*

*Recorded at Glenstal Abbey, Ireland*

*LM: vocals*

I come from hevin which to tell  
The best nowells that e'er befell  
To you thir tythings trew I bring  
And I will of them say and sing.

This day to you is born ane child  
Of Marie meik and Virgin mild  
That bliss it bairn bening and kind  
Sall you rejoice baith hart and mind.

Lat us rejois and be blyth  
And with the Fyrdis go full swyth  
And see what God of his grace hes done  
Throu Christ to bring us to his throne  
My saull and life stand up and see  
Wha lysis in ane cribbe of tree  
What Babe is that, sa gude and fair  
It is Christ, God's Son and Air.

O my deir hart, yung Jesus sweit  
Prepair thy creddil in my spreit!  
And I sall rock thee in my hart  
And never mair fra thee depart.

But I sall praise thee evermoir  
With sangis sweit unto thy gloir  
The kneis of my hart sall I bow  
And sing that rycht Balulalow.

## LET US THE INFANT GREET 3:46

*Music and lyric: Traditional English*

*Recorded at Glenstal Abbey, Ireland*

*LM: vocals, harp*

Let us the Infant greet  
In worship before Him fall  
And let us pay Him homage meet  
On this His festival.

Let us to the Infant sing  
And bring Him of gifts rich store  
Let us honour our Infant King  
With praise for evermore.

Let us to the Infant kneel  
And love Him with faithful love  
And let our joyous anthems peal  
For Him who reigns above.

Glad hymns in the Infant's laud  
Sing we to Him while we may  
In heaven where He is throned as God  
Our service He will pay.

Be we to the Infant true  
While we are dwelling on mould  
And He will give us our wages due  
A crown of purest gold.

## THE WEXFORD CAROL 6:07

*Music and lyric: Traditional Irish*

*Recorded at The Church Of Our Lady, Guelph, Ontario*

*LM: vocals, harp*

*Shannon Purves-Smith: viols*

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.

The night before that happy tide  
The noble Virgin and her guide  
Were long time seeking up and down  
To find a lodging in the town  
But mark how all things come to pass  
From every door repelled alas!  
As long foretold, their refuge all  
Was but an humble ox's stall.

There were three wise men from afar  
Directed by a glorious star  
And on they wandered night and day  
Until they came where Jesus lay  
And when they came unto that place  
Where our beloved Messiah was  
They humbly cast them at his feet  
With gifts of gold and incense sweet.

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."

With thankful heart and joyful mind  
The shepherds went the babe to find  
And as God's angel had foretold  
They did our Saviour Christ behold  
Within a manger he was laid  
And by his side the Virgin maid  
Attending on the Lord of life  
Who came on earth to end all strife.

## THE STOCKFORD CAROL 3:02

*Music: Loreena McKennitt*

*Recorded at John Hazen's studio, Toronto  
LM: troubadour harp*

## LET ALL THAT ARE TO MIRTH INCLINED 6:52

*Music and lyric: Traditional English*

*Recorded at Glenstal Abbey, Ireland  
LM: vocals*

Let all that are to mirth inclined  
Consider well and bear in mind  
What our good God for us has done  
In sending his beloved Son

For to redeem our souls from thrall  
Christ is the saviour of us all.

The twenty-fifth day of December  
We have good cause to remember  
In Bethlehem upon that morn  
There was a blessed Messiah born

But mark how all things came to pass  
The inn and lodgings filled was  
That they could find no room at all  
But in a straw-filled ox's stall.

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

With thankful heart and joyful mind  
The shepherds went this babe to find  
And as the heavenly angel told  
They did our saviour Christ behold.

Three eastern wise men from afar  
Directed by a glorious star  
Came boldly on and made no stay  
Until they came where Jesus lay.

And being come unto that place  
Where the blessed Messiah was  
They humbly laid before his feet  
Their gifts of gold and incense sweet.

See how the Lord of heaven and earth  
Shewd himself lowly in his birth  
A sweet example for mankind  
To learn to bear an humble mind.

Let all your songs and praises be  
Unto his heavenly majesty  
And evermore amongst our mirth  
Remember Christ our Saviour's birth.

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