

# The Tudor Choir



2366 Eastlake Ave. E., Suite 335, Seattle, WA 98102  
Tel (206) 323-9415 Fax (206) 860-9151  
Email [info@tudorchoir.org](mailto:info@tudorchoir.org) Website [www.tudorchoir.org](http://www.tudorchoir.org)  
Doug Fullington, Artistic Director Dawn Elwell, General Manager

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Contact: Dawn Elwell, General Manager  
(206) 323-9415

## The Tudor Choir and Players celebrate a German Renaissance Christmas and favorite German carols, including the original version of *Silent Night*

### German Renaissance Christmas

**WHAT:** The Tudor Choir *presents*  
**German Renaissance Christmas: Music of Praetorius and traditional carols**

**WHEN & WHERE** **Saturday, December 16, 2006 at 8:00 pm**  
**St. Mark's Cathedral, 1245 10<sup>th</sup> Ave E., Seattle 98102**

**Sunday, December 17, 2006 at 3:00 pm**  
**St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 8398 NE 12<sup>th</sup> St., Medina 98039**

**TICKETS:** \$25 general admission; \$20 seniors; \$15 students  
**ORDER ONLINE** at [www.tudorchoir.org](http://www.tudorchoir.org) or call the Tudor Choir at (206) 323-9415

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The Tudor Choir and Players presents A GERMAN RENAISSANCE CHRISTMAS, featuring the works of Renaissance masters Hieronymus and Michael Praetorius, and carols from German tradition, including the original version of *Silent Night*. The Tudor Choir and Players, directed by Doug Fullington, will include the 12-voice Tudor Choir, organist J. Melvin Butler, and a period wind ensemble. The Tudor Choir and Players will perform on **Saturday, December 16, at 8:00pm at Saint Mark's Cathedral, Seattle**, and **Sunday, December 17, at 3:00pm, at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Medina.**

These performances of *A German Renaissance Christmas* are sponsored in part by 4Culture. The Tudor Choir's 2006-2007 Season is sponsored in part by The Seattle Foundation and Classical KING-FM. Additional season support provided by ArtsFund.

### About the program

The Tudor Choir's GERMAN RENAISSANCE CHRISTMAS highlights the wealth of cherished Christmas songs and carols of German origin. Many of these tunes developed into the forms we recognize today through the tradition of *Wechselgesang* (Exchange Song), which had its roots in pre-Reformation Bohemia and was brought to its fullest flowering by German Lutherans in their Christmas Night services. The essence of *Wechselgesang* is the alteration, or exchange (*Wechsel*), of verses or sections of extended songs between different groups of voices and instruments which are placed strategically around the church, including clergy, congregation, choir and soloists and often employ both the German and Latin languages. The cathedral organ served the important role of introducing choral tunes to the congregation before they began to sing. Additionally, the organist might improvise a *praeambulum*, a short, virtuosic cadenza preceding a song. Several of the songs and carols on our program follow the *Wechselgesang* format using early 17th century arrangements by Michael Praetorius.

Michael Praetorius (1571-1621) was the most influential, multifaceted and prolific German composer of his generation. Over some 15 years in the early 17th century, he produced an enormous amount of sacred music, which soon became the basic repertory for Lutheran churches in northern Germany. Almost as astonishing as the quantity of his output is its variety of forms, which range from the simplest of congregational hymns to massive polychoral motets.

Born into a strict Lutheran family, Praetorius studied at Frankfurt an der Oder and settled in Wolfenbüttel around 1592. By 1595 he had entered the service of Duke Heinrich Julius of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel as organist. In 1604 he was appointed court Kappelmeister, a position he held until shortly before his death. He was in Dresden between 1613 and 1615, where he met composer Heinrich Schütz and was introduced to many of the latest Italian musical developments that influenced his later works. Renowned as an organist, Praetorius also designed organs and wrote the most important musical treatise of the early Baroque, his monumental *Syntagma musicum*.

Praetorius' music on our program represents what might have been part of Lutheran Christmas services around 1620. Ever-practical, the composer provides a number of options for performance which involve soloists, solo choirs and congregation, all accompanied by a variety of instruments in any number of combinations. Many of the musical settings – including **Puer natus: Ein Kind geboren, Vom Himmel hoch, Puer nobis nascitur, Quem pastores laudavere, Resonet in laudibus** and **In dulci jubilo** – are based on existing chorale tunes which were central to any Lutheran service in the early 17th century.

A GERMAN RENAISSANCE CHRISTMAS also features several double-choir settings by Hieronymus Praetorius (1560-1629), who was organist of the church of St. James in Hamburg. Praetorius' setting of the **Magnificat** on the fifth tone for double choir was likely intended for Christmas celebrations, and his double-choir settings of the carols **Joseph Lieber** and **In dulci jubilo** may have been intended for performance in conjunction with the Magnificat.

Other music on the GERMAN RENAISSANCE CHRISTMAS program is drawn from the wealth of German traditional carols in a variety of arrangements. Both **Ein Kindlein in der**

**Wiegen** and **O Jesulein süß** are associated with the Medieval custom of cradle-rocking which flourished in Rhineland nunneries. Typically, the cradle would stand before the altar, with a brightly colored Christ-child visible within, and the priest would rock it in time to the triple-time music of the appropriate *Wiegenlied* (cradle-song). By the late Middle Ages cradles, were being enthusiastically rocked at Christmas Vespers throughout Germany and the Low Countries.

Another tradition from late Medieval Rhineland is the Christmas tree, which many Lutherans devoutly believed was a custom invented by Martin Luther. With a tune that first appeared in 1799, **O Tannenbaum** has become an essential carol in both Germany and the United States.

**Stille Nacht! heilige Nacht! (Silent Night! holy Night!)**, one of the most popular carols of all time, was composed by Franz Xavier Gruber in 1818, with a text by Joseph Mohr. Gruber was assistant organist and Mohr was curate at the parish church in the small Lower Austrian (now Bavarian) town of Oberndorf. Their new carol was popular from day one and is performed throughout the western world in any number of arrangements. Tonight we perform the **original version of Stille Nacht! heilige Nacht!**, reconstructed by British musicologists Hugh Keyte and Andrew Parrott, for choir and guitar, with two male soloists.

### Program

Magnificat V	Hieronymous Praetorius, 1622
Puer natus in Bethlehem	Michael Praetorius, 1607/1619
Still, still, still	German traditional, arr. Philip Ledger
<i>Organ praeambulum</i>	Anonymous, c.1650
Vom Himmel hoch	Michael Praetorius, 1607/1613
Ein Kindlein in der Wiegen	17 <sup>th</sup> century
O Jesulein süß	arr. J.S. Bach, 1736
Joseph Lieber	Hieronymous Praetorius, 1622
In dulci jubilo	Hieronymous Praetorius, 1622
Puer nobis nascitur	Michael Praetorius, 1609
<i>Organ voluntary: Nun lob mein Seel</i> (variations set II)	Michael Praetorius, 1610

### Intermission

<i>Organ prelude: Resonet in laudibus</i>	Anonymous, c.1650
Quem pastores laudavere	Michael Praetorius, 1621
O Tannenbaum	German Traditional
<i>Organ praeambulum</i>	Anonymous, c.1650
Resonet in laudibus	Michel Praetorius, 1622
Stille Nacht! heilige Nacht!	Franz Gruber, 1818
<i>Organ voluntary: Nun lob mein Seel</i> (variations set I)	Michael Praetorius, 1610
In dulci jubilo	Michael Praetorius, 1619

## The Tudor Choir

Hailed as “a superb choir” (*Gramophone*, Nov, 2005), as well as “a choir to watch” (*Fanfare*, Sept/Oct. 2001), the Tudor Choir and its director Doug Fullington are receiving increasing national and international attention as interpreters of both Renaissance polyphony and early American music. Founded in 1993, the Seattle-based professional vocal chamber ensemble comprises 12 core singers, but can expand to 40 for works such as Thomas Tallis’ monumental *Spem in alium*.

The Tudor Choir has performed extensively throughout the Pacific Northwest, including concert appearances in Vancouver, British Columbia, and Portland, Oregon. The choir presents an annual subscription series in the Seattle area, where it is both an Artist-in-Residence at St. Mark's Cathedral and a Resident Ensemble at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Medina. Recent appearances include concerts at the Tallis Scholars Summer School USA, Festival Vancouver, and the Annas Bay Music Festival.

The choir’s five CDs of Renaissance and early American music have been released on the Loft label. For more information, please visit [www.tudorchoir.org](http://www.tudorchoir.org).