

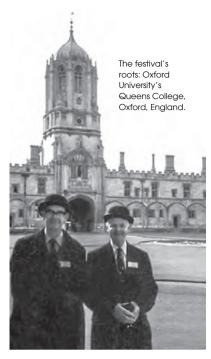


HISTORY

The Boar's Head Tradition

From Medieval Terrors to Modern Magic 1340-2016

The Boar's Head Festival is probably the oldest continuing festival of the Christmas season. When it came to Cincinnati in 1940, it already had a 600-year history.



The pageant's roots go back to medieval times when wild boars were the most dangerous animals in European forests. They were a menace to humans and were hunted as public enemies. Like our Thanksgiving turkey, roasted boar was a staple of medieval banquet tables—symbolizing the triumph of man over ferocious beast. As Christian beliefs overtook pagan customs in Europe, the presentation of a boar's head at Christmas time came to symbolize the triumph of the Christ Child over the evils of the world.

The festival we know today originated at Queen's College, Oxford, England, in 1340. Legend has it that a scholar was studying a book of Aristotle while walking through the forest on his way to Christmas Mass. Suddenly he was confronted by an angry boar. Having no other weapon, the quick-witted student rammed his metal-bound philosophy book down the throat of the charging animal and the boar choked to death. That night, the beast's head, finely dressed and garnished, was carried in procession into the dining room accompanied by carolers.

By 1607, a similar ceremony was being celebrated at St. John's College, Cambridge. There, the boar's head was decorated with flags and sprigs of evergreen, bay, rosemary, and holly. It was carried in state to the strains of the Boar's Head Carol (still used in the Christ Church's Cathedral ceremony).

By then, the traditional festival had grown to include lords, ladies, knights, historical characters, cooks, hunters, and pages. Eventually, shepherds and wise men were added to tell the story of the Nativity. More carols were added, as well as accourrements like mincemeat pie, plum pudding, a Yule log—and Good King Wenceslas.

This was the ceremony brought to colonial America by French Huguenots who had experienced it during a period of exile in England. A Huguenot family named Bouton settled in Troy, NY, and in 1888, a Bouton became an Episcopal rector and chaplain of the Episcopal Hoosac School. He established the first Boar's Head Festival in America at the school. It grew over the years, and in 1926, the New York Evening Post called it a "complex and rich tapestry of exquisite melodies."

HISTORY CONTINUED

In 1939, the rector of a Troy church, the Rev. Nelson Marigold Burroughs, was called to Christ Church and brought the Boar's Head Festival tradition with him. The next year it became the first Boar's Head Festival to be performed in a church setting. Since then, the festival has evolved from a light-hearted celebration into a richly theatrical performance that is profoundly moving to audiences and performers alike.

From the start, several traditions have shaped the Christ Church Boar's Head. One is that every aspect of the performance must be authentic to the 14th century. With wild boars being in short supply in the forests of Cincinnati, a hog's head is dressed to represent the boar. It is roasted and garnished.

At first, following the English custom, only men and boys served in the cast—about 50 of them. Women joined the cast in 1973, opening up new possibilities for historical characters and costumes, and the cast bloomed to today's 190 performers.

Continuous improvement is another tradition. Processions have expanded to use different aisles and entrances and today are elaborately choreographed. The music has been through one major reorchestration of its scores and is regularly tweaked. The corps of musicians has grown, too—now numbering 70—and includes some of the city's top instrumentalists and singers.

Our theatrical lighting has dramatically changed under lighting manager Trevor Shibley. Now 150 lights powered by more than 1,000 feet of cable add to the festival's visual magic.

There's also a tradition of quick thinking in the face of theatrical disaster. One year, a performer tripped over the power cord serving the organ console. With immediate silence, performers stopped in their tracks—but minstrel Maurice Mandel kept singing a cappella until the organ was restarted, to the audience's applause.

Another year, the mincemeat pie slid off its trencher and broke into pieces just before its entrance. Performers scampered around, stuck the pieces back together, and nobody but the back-stagers ever knew. In another mishap, a wait sliding down the rope from the organ loft lost his pantaloons. Thank goodness for tights.

When a mid-1990s snow storm paralyzed Cincinnati the night of the pre-show rehearsal, only one performer showed up. Director Bob Beiring had to cross his fingers and hope his cast would do well without rehearsing. The shows were fine and a new tradition began: no more rehearsals. With a few tweaks during the first performance, what's been called the "Miracle on 4th Street" comes together. It helps that many cast members have been involved for decades. The longest serving, Phil Hagner, started as a knee-high sprite and marches more than 65 years later as a Beefeater.

The only absolute show-stopper in the festival's history happened when an enthusiastic king's page overloaded his incense censor and sent up such a cloud that it set off the church's fire alarm. A long wait followed, with fire trucks and flashing lights outside and screeching alarms and first responders in bunker gear inside—until the fire marshal was satisfied and allowed the alarms to be turned off and the show to go on.

HISTORY CONTINUED

For all its lushness, Boar's Head has an ancient and honorable tradition of thrift. The trees and other greens on the stage are donated by a suburban tree lot on Christmas Eve and trucked to town by volunteers. The poinsettias are plucked from the lobbies of Procter & Gamble after it has closed for the holidays. The cast, musicians, and backstage crews are fed by parishioners who bring sandwiches, deviled eggs, snacks, cookies—and lately, even sushi.

The Boar's Head Festival is our gift to the people of Cincinnati: a traditional story of living faith told by modern-day minstrels.

As we have done for over 80 years, we give these performances with our best wishes for a blessed and joyous Christmas season.

Happy Christmas-Tide!

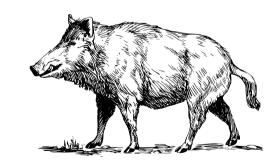
ACKNOWLEDMENTS

Boar's Head Directors

1940 – 1948	The Rev. Nelson Burroughs	1963 – 1967	Miner Raymond
1949	The Rev. Sidney McCammon	1968 – 1973	Michael & Lenore Hatfield
1950	The Rev. Harold Chase	1974 – 1975	Michael Detroy
1951 – 1952	The Rev. William B. Key	1976	George Snider
1953 – 1971	The Rev. Morris Arnold	1977 – 1978	June Coldiron
1953 – 1957	Lloyd Pritchard	1979 – 2014	Robert Beiring
1958 – 1962	Herbert Shaffer	2015 - 2022	Robert Beiring & Anne Jaroszewicz
		2022 – Present	Anne Jaroszewicz

Boar's Head Music Directors

1940 – 1962	Parvin Titus
1962 – 1971	Gerre Hancock
1972 – 1975	Searle Wright
1975 – 1984	Henry Lowe
1984 – 2006	Ernest Hoffman
2007 - 2008	Charles Hogan
2009 – present	Stephan Casurella
-	-



LEARN MORE



To learn more about the heart and vision of Christ Church Cathedral, including services & events, please scan the QR Code.

DONATE



Donate now and be a part of giving the gift of the Boar's Head Festival to Cincinnati each and every year by scanning the QR code.

When you read this program, notes in the margin explain the history, trivia, and folklore of the Boar's Head.

Bold face text in the margin explains the actions of the performance. Please join in singing whenever the lyrics are in bold.



Orchestral Prelude



Procession of the Beefeaters

As Dew in Aprille Anonymous, 13th Century

I sing of a maiden that is matchless, King of all kings To her son she chose.

He came all so still
Where his mother lay,
As dew in Aprille
That falleth on the spray.
Mother and maiden was never none but she.
Well may such a lady Goddess mother be.

The Yule Sprite Comes

A gong sounds the hour. Like the echo of history through centuries past, the heavy tread of the Beefeaters—traditional guardians of the king—sounds in the narthex and aisles. Solemnly, they stand their watch of honor.

The orchestral prelude has been arranged from the English folk song "The May Day Carol." It is based on the "Cherry Tree Carol" in which Iesus, from within the womb, charges a cherry tree to bend down its branches to Mary, who "has cherries at command." This. and similar apocryphal stories, were popular among traveling mendicant friars in the Middle Ages.

"As Dew in Aprille" is probably the oldest carol text in the Boar's Head ceremony.

darkened Into the church comes a sprite bearing the tiny light of a burning taper. From it, the Dean lights the great Festival candle and holds it high so that all may feel its blessed light on their shoulders. This symbolizes the coming of the Christ Child into an unenlightened world. The light is given to the Church not only to preserve, but to extend it throughout the Earth.

A trumpet sounds. Led by a minstrel, a noble company of knights and attendants brings the boar's head with its many accourrements. At length the conquered enemy is presented near the altar. A long line of companies follow the slain boar.

The Boar's Head companies:

Chief Minstrel Chief Herald The Herald's Company Trumpeter Yule Pages Holly Bearers Boar's Head Company Cook's Company Plum Pudding Company Mince Pie Company Lord and Lady of the Manor and their Children Lady's Attendants King Wenceslas and Pages Poor Man Dame Julian and Orphans Huntsman and Pages Pilgrims Woodsmen Yule Log Waits Shepherds Star of the East and Pages Kings and Pages Torchbearers Beefeaters



The Boar's Head Procession

The Boar's Head Carol

Traditional 16th Century

The boar's head in hand bear I,
Bedecked with bays and rosemary.
And I pray you, my masters, be merrie,
Quot estis in convivio

(Refrain)

The Boar's head as I understand,
Is the bravest dish in all the land.
When thus bedecked with gay garland,
Let us servire cantico.

(Refrain)

Our steward hath provided this,
In honor of the King of Bliss,
Which on this day to be served is,
In regimensi atrio
(Refrain)

The mightiest hunter of them all,
We honor in this festal hall.
Born of a humble virgin mild,
Heaven's King became a helpless child.

(Refrain)

He hunted down through earth and hell,
The swart boar death until it fell.
This mighty deed for us was done,
Therefore we sing in unison.

(Refrain)

Let not this boar's head cause alarm, The huntsman drew his power to harm, So death, which still appears so grim, Has yielded all its powers to Him!

(Refrain)

Refrain: Caput apri defero, Reddens laudes Domino.



Good King Wenceslas Piae Cantiones, 1582

Good King Wenceslas looked out,
On the feast of Stephen,
When the snow lay round about,
Deep and crisp and even.
Brightly shone the moon that
night,
Though the frost was cruel.
When a poor man came in sight,
Gathering winter fuel.

King:

Hither, page, and stand by me. If thou know'st it, telling. Yonder peasant, who is he? Where and what his dwelling?

Page:

Sire he lives a good league hence, Underneath the mountain, Right against the forest fence, By Saint Agnes' fountain.

King:

Bring me flesh and bring me wine,
Bring me pine logs hither.
Thou and I shall see him dine,
When we bear them thither.

Page and monarch, forth they went
Forth they went together,
Through the rude wind's wild lament,
And the bitter weather.

Page:

Sire the night grows darker now, And the wind blows stronger. Fails my heart I know not how, I can go no longer.

King:

Mark my footsteps, my good page Tread thou in them boldly. Thou shalt find the winter's rage, Freeze thy blood less coldly.

In his masters steps he trod,
Where the snow lay dinted.
Heat was in the very sod,
Which the Saint had printed.
Therefore, Christian men, be sure
Wealth or rank possessing,
Ye who now will bless the poor,
Shall yourselves find blessing.

The Boar's tusks were carved for the first Boar's Head here. The three flags in his head represent the ceremony's British roots, the French Huguenots who brought it here, and our own nation.

Plum pudding and mince pie are symbols of hospitality and were always on hand to serve guests in medieval times. Here, they suggest the fullness of God's gifts to his children.

The trumpet now carried in the ceremony was used in the first Christ Church Cathedral Boar's Head Festival. It was given to Christ Church Cathedral in 1987 as a memorial to Lee Howard who had owned and played it in the first performance.

Everyone in the procession carries a gift which has something to do with the occupation or rank of that person. Pilgrims' badges represent the destination of each pilgrimage.

Legend or fact? It is thought that the red and green lanterns carried by the sprites were originally used to indicate port and starboard on Ohio river boats. When electricity came to the waterfront and these lanterns were no longer needed, they were salvaged by a Christ Church Cathedral parishioner for the Boar's Head festival.

King Wenceslas, the symbol of Christian knightliness, and his pages recount their tale of caring for one another.



for God's praver keeping accompanies the gayest and brightest medieval holiday customs, the yule log. The huge log was gathered ceremony, and brought with hope to the home hearth where it was kindled with embers from the old year's fire. blazing warmth spoke of rekindled love and promise for the year to come.

Dame Julian of Norwich (1342-1373) was the first saint represented in the Christ Church Cathedral Boar's Head. A mystic, she was the first woman ever to write a book in the English language and she was also known for her kindness to the orphans of the great plague. She was added to this procession in 1987.



The Yule Log

Deck the Halls

Traditional Welsh

Deck the halls with boughs of holly. Fa la la
'Tis the season to be jolly. Fa la la
Don we now our gay apparel. Fa la la
Toll the ancient Yuletide carol. Fa la la

See the blazing Yule before us. Fa la la Strike the harp and join the chorus. Fa la la Follow me in merry measure. Fa la la While I tell of Yuletide treasure. Fa la la

Fast away the old year passes. Fa la la
Hail the new, ye lads and lasses. Fa la la
Sing we joyous all together. Fa la la
Heedless of the wind and weather. Fa la la



The Waits

Sons of Eve

Spanish, 16th Century

Sons of Eve, reward my tidings! Why should we make gifts to you? Born is He, the Adam new. Almighty God, what glad tidings!

Pay my boon, and sing for joy, For tonight is born our Savior, The Messiah promised to us, Man and God, a virgin's boy.

By his birth He gives us pardon,
For the sin and wrong we do.
Born is He, the Adam new.
Almighty God, what glad tidings!



The Wassail Carol

Here we come a-wassailing, among the leaves so green. Here we come a-wassailing, so fair to be seen. (Refrain)

We are not daily beggars, that beg from door to door, But we are neighbors' children, whom you have seen before. (Refrain)

Good Master and good Mistress, as you sit by the fire, Pray think of us poor children, who are wandering in the mire. (**Refrain**)

We have got a leather purse, of stretching leather skin, We want some of your small change, to line it well within. (Refrain)

Bring us out a table, and spread it with a cloth,
Bring us out a mouldy cheese, and some of your Christmas loaf.
(Refrain)

God bless the master of this house, likewise the mistress, too, And all the little children, who round the table go. (Refrain)

God bless the family of Christ Church, wherever they may be, Those who wander, those at home, the Saints who are with thee. (Refrain)

Refrain: Love and joy come to you, and to you your wassail, too. And God bless you and send you a happy new year. And God send you a happy new year. Exuberant in spirits, reveling in God's special gifts to youth, the waits come sharing gladness.

Before there were clocks, young men in training as guardians of the castle were also trained to mark the hours and days. They were called waits, which is the medieval term for "watchmen." Waits also marked the holidays, and the entertainment of the castle often depended upon them.

In the Middle Ages it was customary for the lord and lady of the manor to provide lavish Christmas feasts for their serfs and vassals. Frequently they came into the castle to sing carols and toast their lord saying, "Wassail!" which means "Good health to you!"

The coming of the waits divides the service into two distinct parts. First, we have celebrated our good health, our material wealth, and the love of family. At length, we grow introspective to recreate the long-ago miracle in Bethlehem.



St. Hilda of Whitby

The Annual Boar's Head and Yule Log Festival features a newer scene immediately following The Waits' Sons of Eve and The Wassail Carol in honor of Hilda of Whitby (614-680). St. Hilda was introduced to audiences in 2017 after a pilgrimage to Scotland by members of this cathedral. Hilda founded an abbey at Whitby, Scotland, where both men and women lived in obedience to strict rule. Known for her wisdom, her counsel was sought by kings and other public figures. She is considered a patron saint of learning.

This scene takes us further back in time to represent those Christians who kept the light of Christ alive through the centuries and then connects us to the final scene, the story of the birth of Christ. A bagpipe plays in honor of St. Hilda. As the choir begins to chant, Hilda enters in procession with her nuns and monks. When they reach the chancel, they kneel in reverence.



Hilda of Whitby

Of the Father's Love 11th Century

Corde natus ex Parentis,
Ante mundi exordium,
Alpha et O cognominatus,
Ipse fons et clausula,
Omnium quae sunt fuerunt,
Quaeque post futura sunt:
Saeculorum saeculis.

Of the Father's love begotten, ere the worlds began to be, he is Alpha and Omega, he the source, the ending he, of the things that are, that have been, and that future years shall see, evermore and evermore!

O that birth for ever blessed, when the Virgin, full of grace, by the Holy Ghost conceiving, bore the Savior of our race; and the Babe, the world's Redeemer, first revealed his sacred face, evermore and evermore!

Let the heights of heaven adore him; angel hosts, his praises sing; powers, dominions, bow before him, and extol our God and King; let no tongue on earth be silent, every voice in concert ring, evermore and evermore!

Christ, to thee with God the Father, and, O Holy Ghost, to thee, hymn and chant and high thanksgiving, and unwearied praises be; honor, glory and dominion, and eternal victory, evermore and evermore!



The Angel

I Bring You Tidings of Great Joy Folksong "Lord Rendall", Somerset

Fear not. For behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, Which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, A Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign to you:

Ye shall find the Babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, And lying in a manger.



Good tidings of great joy! God reaches down to a waiting and hoping world. An angel's voice from a darkened Judean sky, solemn and glorious, brings forth the first words of the Gospel. There is a change of mood in the music as the liturgy proceeds to tell of our deep longing and searching for God.

O sancta simplicitas! O holy simplicity! Ancient shepherds, men of God's sweet Earth, come in haste to find Mary and Joseph, with the Babe lying in the manger.

Six full sets of authentic shepherds' robes and headdresses were acquired in 1959. They were handmade by the Kazaz family of Jerusalem whose ancestors had been making such clothing for many centuries.

"Hail to the Lord's Anointed" is a paraphrase of Psalm 72.



The Shepherds

Angels We Have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains. And the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains. **Gloria in excelsis Deo, gloria in excelsis Deo.**

Shepherds, why this jubilee? why your joyous strains prolong? What the gladsome tidings be, which inspire your heav'nly song? Gloria in excelsis Deo, gloria in excelsis Deo.

See Him in the manger laid, whom the choirs of angels praise; Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while our hearts in love we raise. **Gloria in excelsis Deo, gloria in excelsis Deo.**

Hail to the Lord's Anointed Melchior Teschner, c. 1613

Hail to the Lord's Anointed, great David's greater Son! Hail, in the time appointed, His reign on earth begun!

He comes to break oppression, to set the captive free, To take away transgression, and rule in equity.

Kings shall fall down before Him, and gold and incense bring; All nations shall adore Him, His praise all people sing;

For He shall have dominion o'er river, sea and shore, Far as the eagle's pinion or dove's light wing can soar.



The Magi

Kings to Thy Rising French, 16th Century

Noel! Noel!

Where is He, born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East. Where is He, born King of the Jews? For we have come to worship Him.

Where is He, born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East. Where is He, born King of the Jews? For we have come to worship Him.

In Bethlehem the King is born! Rejoice! Emmanuel has come! Sing we Noel! Noel! Noel!

Behold your Lord! Rejoice! Rejoice! In praise lift up a joyful voice! Sing we Noel! Noel! Noel!

Where is He, born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East. Where is He, born King of the Jews? For we have come to worship Him.

At last the long and hopeful search is done. Afar from distant lands we come. Moved by great tidings of a newborn King, Costly gifts to him we bring.

'Tis here He lies; Give thanks, be glad! Amidst the oxen sleeps our Lord. Sing we Noel! Noel! Noel!

Fall on your knees, proclaim His birth. Let there be peace throughout the earth. Sing we Noel! Noel! Noel!

We Three Kings Dr. J.H. Hopkins, c. 1857

We three Kings of Orient are; Bearing gifts we traverse afar, Field & fountain, moor & mountain, Following yonder star.

Breathes a life of gathering gloom, Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume

(Refrain)

(Refrain)

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, Gold I bring to crown Him again, King forever, ceasing never Over us all to reign.

Glorious now behold Him arise, King, and God, and sacrifice. Heaven sings, "Alleluia." "Alleluia," the Earth replies. (Refrain)

(Refrain)

Refrain:

Frankincense to offer have I. Incense owns a Deity nigh, Prayer and praising, all men raising, Worship Him, God on high.

O Star of wonder, Star of night, Star with royal beauty bright, Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light.

(Refrain)

Three great kings from the East, powerful men of politics and worldly affairs. follow their destinies to the Christ that has been foretold. Their splendor is dimmed by the Child's radiance. humble themselves in awe and kneel reverently.

"Kings to Thy Rising" is based on the French carol "Tryste Noel." The arrangement by Frank Levy suggests the swaying of marching camels. "We Three Kings" is the only wholly American element in the Boar's Head.

The three kings' costumes are the oldest in the ceremony. They are authentic eastern Mediterranean robes which were donated by a costume collector around 1943. One of the king's crowns is a copy of Edward the First's crown. A Christ Church Cathedral legend has it that each crown has a real gem stone on it; but no one knows which stone it

From everywhere, people are drawn to the Christ Child. They bring a diversity of gifts yet the same spirit. In the festival's climax, God comes down to his people. They reach up to God.



The painting above the altar, entitled "The Holy Family," depicts St. Elizabeth, St. Mary, St. Joseph, St. John the Baptist and Jesus. It is estimated that Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) created the work between 1615 and 1620 with the assistance of a pupil. Such collaborative efforts were common for the Baroque master at that stage of his career. "The Holy Family" was a gift to Christ Church Cathedral from Mary Emery in 1927.



The World Joins the Kings and Shepherds

(The congregation may kneel.)

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence French, 17th Century

Let all mortal flesh keep silence, And with fear and trembling stand. Ponder nothing earthly minded, For with blessing in His hand, Christ our God to earth descendeth, Our full homage to demand.

King of Kings, yet born of Mary, As of old on earth He stood, Lord of lords in human vesture, In the Body and the Blood. He will give to all the faithful His own self for heav'nly food.

Rank on rank the host of heaven Spreads its vanguard on the way, As the Light of Light descendeth From the realms of endless day, That the powers of hell may vanish, As the darkness clears away.

At his feet the six-winged seraph, Cherubim with sleepless eye, Veil their faces to the Presence, As with ceaseless voice they cry, "Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Lord most high!"



Recessional

Oh Come All Ye Faithful J.F. Wade, 1744

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels.
(Refrain)

God of God, Light of Light, Lo, He abhors not the Virgin's womb. Very God, begotten not created. (**Refrain**)

Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation. Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above. Glory to God in the highest. (**Refrain**)

See how the shepherds, summoned to His cradle, Leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze.

We, too, will thither bend our joyful footsteps.

(Refrain)

Child, for us sinners, poor and in the manger, We would embrace Thee with love and awe. Who would not love Thee, loving us so dearly? (Refrain)

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning. Jesus, to Thee be glory giv'n. Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing. (Refrain)

Refrain:

O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him. O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.



The Yule Sprite Returns



Orchestral Postlude

God's ultimate gift, His only begotten Son, has come to earth. From this reverent moment, the companies melt away, leaving only His essence, a burning light, the symbol that He has come.

Then, as at the beginning, a tiny sprite enters the church. The sprite joins the Dean at the altar, and together they carry the light out into the world. Christ is the Light of the World.



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