Ukrainian Christmas Carols

a set of 15 traditional carols (in English)

arranged by Vladimir Morozov for SATB a cappella

These delightful carols come from a long Ukrainian secular tradition of going house to house and singing, over Christmas and the New Year. The Ukrainian words for carols, “Shchedrivki” and “Kolyadki”, derive from words “shchedriy” (generous), “dobriy” (kind), “koldovati” (to conjure, or practice magic) and “vorozhiti” (to tell fortunes), reflecting the traditions of singing at people’s houses for rewards of food or money, and wishing good fortune to all for the coming year.

The last carol in the set is well known as ‘Carol of the Bells’, composed by Mykola Leontovych. Our new translation is much closer in meaning to the original Ukrainian.

The original Ukrainian lyrics of all the carols are available as an Appendix. Small rhythmic changes have been made to a few of the carols in order to accommodate the English translations. Perhaps the greatest loss is that the last carol features a catchy alternation between a 6/8 feel and a 3/4 feel, when sung in Ukrainian.

Vladimir Morozov, who was born and educated in the Ukraine, founded and directed The Russian Choir in Glasgow, UK. He has recently moved to Edinburgh, where he is starting a new Russian choir.
Ukrainian Christmas Carols

1. Christmas is Coming!
2. The Three Kings
3. God is Born
4. What a Wonder
5. Glory, Glory, Glory
6. O Eternal Father
7. A New Joy
8. Lullaby
9. Star of Wonder
10. Good Evening
11. Carol
12. Carol Ann
13. Caroline
14. High in the Sky

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Glad Christmas tidings come to all the world:

The Virgin Mary bears a little child,

holds the tiny stranger, lays him in a manger,

on only Son of God!

2. The Virgin Mary questions God above:
"What can I do to wrap my little Love?
Kind and heav'nly Father,
Send some clothes to cover
This the Son of God!"

3. The Angels come from heaven down to earth,
And bring to Mary gifts of gentle worth:
"Three wax candles for him,
Soft, silk garments for him,
Jesus, Son of God."

4. A star is shining brightly in the sky,
And holy Angels visit from on high,
Singing with each other,
And for Jesus' mother,
Songs of praise to God!

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The Three Kings
No. 2 of 15 Ukrainian Carols

words traditional
trans. editors and Vladimir Morozov

Ukrainian carol
arr. Vladimir Morozov

Andante

1. Three kings walked a long way

2. "We are going to see the King
   Newly born in Bethlehem."

3. To the men an Angel came.
   "Go then, seek him, see him there,
   Then I bid you come back here."

4. In the east a bright star shone,
   "Flee from Herod if you can,
   For he is an evil man."
   "Burned with beauty until noon,
   Cast its light upon the hay
   Where the child King Jesus lay."

5. He hailed them as they came:
   "What's your journey?", he asked them.

6. to the place where Jesus lay.

7. "Then I bid you come back here."
God is Born
No. 3 of 15 Ukrainian Carols

words traditional
trans. editors and Vladimir Morozov

Ukrainian carol
arr. Vladimir Morozov

Andantino

Miracle of winter: God both
son and father!
Jesus is the

child's name. Mary is his mother.

Refrain

The angels are amazed, the children are surprised, the wondrous star is

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2. Mary, Mary, Mary
Sings of this strange story,
Joined by choirs of angels
Chanting in their glory.

3. Old man Mister Joseph
Rocks the little bundle.
"Lully, lully, Jesus,
Sleep now in your cradle."

4. Three kings come to find him.
Gifts they lay before him,
Things of wealth and beauty:
Gold and myrrh and perfume.

5. Happy, humble shepherds
Run to see the baby.
"Greetings, dear King Jesus,
And to God be glory!"

6. And we too, the faithful,
Greet our Jesus daily,
Praising God who came down,
Born on earth so quietly.
What a Wonder

No. 4 of 15 Ukrainian Carols

words traditional
trans. editors and Vladimir Morozov

Lento

What a wonder! Great news! Tell without delay.
Joseph stands on the straw, in the cattle.
Mary swaddles the babe, wraps him soft and tight.

lay that a Virgin gives birth to a Son today.
sheds. And he takes up his tools, makes the child a bed.
tight. And she holds him up close on this holy night.

Refrain

Mary laboured in a bed of hay, bore the baby Jesus where she lay.

the lovely virgin Mary, the lovely virgin Mary.
Now revealed on earth is our Lord God Eternal.
Shepherd's in their fields are greeted by an Angel.
We too join the throng of heavenly angel voices.

He comes from a virgin, lies inside a cradle.
He tells of the Baby by, calls them to the stable.
Putting hope in Jesus, all the world rejoices.

Angel choirs are sweetly singing, greetings to the newborn bringing.

Glory, glory, glory to God in the highest!

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O Eternal Father
No. 6 of 15 Ukrainian Carols

Moderato

O Eternal Father, author of an un-
Angels and archangels sing their prais-es to
Gold and myrrh and incense are the gifts of the
To the God incarnate now all people on

speakable mystery. There is none can tell the won-
dous
you, little Jesus. Mighty kings and lowly shepherds
to the new-born. Then the humble shepherd gives a
earth sing a new song. Bless us Lord we pray to you, and

story, the story of your birth upon this earth.
greet you; they greet the king of all the universe.
lambkin; a lamb he brings to you, our holy son.
lead us, O lead us, Father, to your home in heav'n.

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A New Joy
No. 7 of 15 Ukrainian Carols

Allegretto moderato

Here new joy has come to a world of woe.
Here the Christ is born of a Virgin pure,

For a star shines bright, and it shines on all.
And a human child lies in swathing bands.

Here a shepherd kneels, and a tiny lamb.

And they sing to God As they bow in prayer.
You, our heav'n-ly King, you, our God and Lord,

grant us years of joy, bless us all to-night.

May we live in peace. May we serve our God.

And ever more, may we be with Him.
2. Sleep, my baby, sleep,  
   Rest your head in sleep  
   In the arms of Mary mild,  
   Who enfolds her little child,  
   Who enfolds her little child,  
   Lully, rockabye, lully.

3. Sleep, my poor one, sleep,  
   Fold your arms and sleep.  
   Here comes Joseph on his feet  
   Bringing bread for you to eat,  
   Bringing bread for you to eat,  
   Lully, rockabye, lully.

4. Sleep, my darling, sleep,  
   Close your eyes and sleep.  
   Do not ask about tomorrow,  
   Future pain and future sorrow,  
   Future pain and future sorrow,  
   Lully, rockabye, lully.

5. Sleep, my Jesus, sleep,  
   Take my heart, and sleep.  
   You bring peace to us on earth,  
   And in heaven, by your birth  
   And in heaven, by your birth,  
   Lully, rockabye, lully.
Star of Wonder

No. 9 of 15 Ukrainian Carols

words traditional  
trans. editors and Vladimir Morozov

Adagio

High in the sky, shining from afar, oh! Light is the earth, hangs a silver star, oh!

Fall ing from heaven comes winter snow, ah! White is the path that we take below, ah!

Greetings to you, sir, from everyone, oh! Pray take these gifts which we bring your Son, oh!

Round-els and ca rols we chant and sing, ah! Gifts for the happy, the new-born king, ah!

Kind ho ly Fa ther, pray keep us near, oh! Grant us a

Refrain

Good cheer to all, good cheer to all, good health we wish to all. Good wish to all.
Good Evening
No. 10 of 15 Ukrainian Carols

words traditional
trans. editors and Vladimir Morozov

Ukrainian carol
arr. Vladimir Morozov

Vivace

Mas - ter of the house, we wish you a good eve - ning.

Refrain

Re - joice and sing! All the earth re - joice!

son of God now is born.

2. Set upon the table all your finest linen.
3. Bring us out some bread now, warm and brown and crusty.
4. Celebrate the season: three great feasts together.
5. First the feast of Christmas, birth of our king Jesus.
6. Next the feast of Basil, saint from Cappadocia.
7. Then the feast in January* of our lord’s Epiphany*
8. First the feast of Christmas brings us consolation.
9. Next the feast of Basil brings sweet jubilation.
10. Finally, Epiphany reminds us of our destiny.

* sing as Jan-uary and E-pi-ph’ny

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Carol
No. 11 of 15 Ukrainian Carols

words traditional
trans. editors and Vladimir Morozov

Ukrainian carol
arr. Vladimir Morozov

Andante

Carol, on that kitchen plate, I saw sausage, it looked great!

Such a tasty tempting smell, Way too good to go and sell.

I so want this sausage here, I will work for you all year!

If you don’t cut me a piece, Work yourself and never cease! See you later!
Carol Ann
No. 12 of 15 Ukrainian Carols

words traditional
trans. editors and Vladimir Morozov

Ukrainian carol
arr. Vladimir Morozov

Andante

Carol, Carol, Carol Ann, I’m the girl of my old man,

and I wear a little skirt, and I want some meat to eat, a

jack - et that is warm and dry, and a nice big piece of pie.

Have a good night!
Andante

Carol, Carol, Caroline Bread with honey is so fine!

Bread alone just will not do! Can you spare a coin or two?

Have a good night! good night!
High in the Sky
No. 14 of 15 Ukrainian Carols

Ukrainian carol
arr. Vladimir Morozov

words traditional
trans. editors and Vladimir Morozov

Allegro

High in the sky a star is a glow, casting bright beauty
here below. A wave of salvation comes with the dawn:

born of a virgin is the Son.

Heaven and earth sing 'Alleluia! Jesus is born! Glorious'

'Jesus is born! Glorious'

2. Lying on the straw in a poor cattle stall
Rest our dear Lord, the King of all.
The people rush in and kneel on the floor,
Greeting the child whom they adore.

3. Blessings we bring you, baby new born,
Yours is the glory on this morn.
Grant us your sweet love, and with you we'll stay;
Nothing can ever force us away.

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Good News!

No. 15 of 15 Ukrainian Carols

Mykola Leontovych (1877 - 1921)

words traditional
trans. editors and Vladimir Morozov

Allegretto

solo

"Good news I bring!"

Good news I bring!

swal-low flew in,

start-ed to sing,

mf

pp

simile

"Come to the door, hear while I tell what lies in store.

Called, "Come here, now!"

Look in the barn, there in the hay, sweet lit-tle lambs, new-born to-day.

Look, there, sweet lambs!

Life will be good, you will do well, plen-ty to buy, plen-ty to sell.

You will be rich, your luck is in, noth-ing to lose, plen-ty to win.

News of boun-ty the swal-low brings you.
Yours is a year full of good cheer, all will be well, nothing to fear.

Money, money, money, money for you! Money, money, money, money for you!

Grain in the barn, coin in the jar, good-looking wife, happy new year!

Grain in the barn, coin in the jar, good-looking wife, happy new year! Good news I bring!

Mmm...

A swallow flew in!

Mmm...

Mmm...