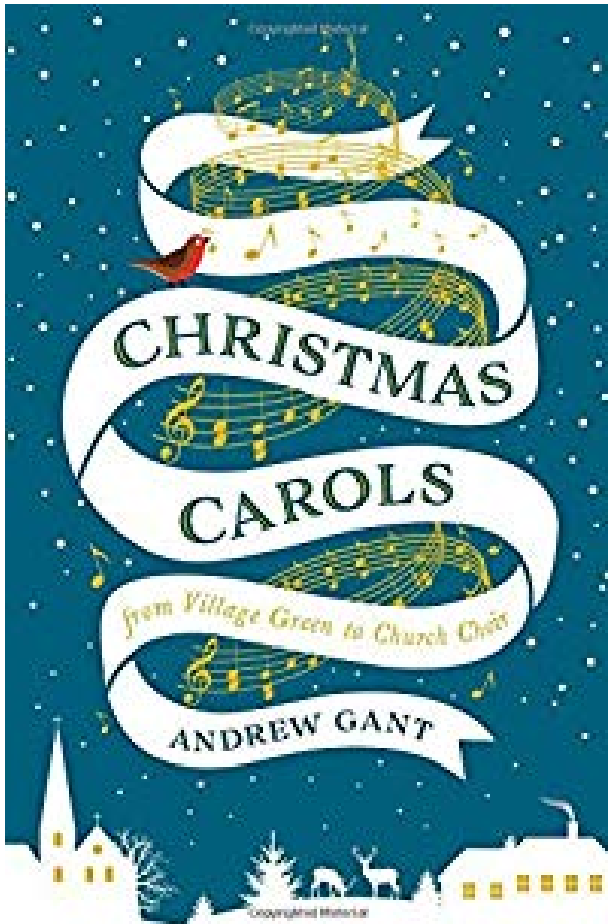


Christmas Carols: From Village Green to Church Choir



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Everyone loves a Christmas carol - in the end, even Scrooge. They have the power to summon up a special kind of midwinter mood, like the aroma of mince pies and mulled wine and the twinkle of lights on a tree. It's a kind of magic. But how did they get that magic? In Christmas Carols Andrew Gant tells the story of some twenty carols, each accompanied by lyrics and music, unravelling a captivating - and often surprising - tale of great musicians and thinkers, saints and pagans, shepherd boys, choirboys, monks and drunks. We delve into the history of such favourites as 'Good King Wenceslas', 'Away in a Manger' and 'The Twelve Days of Christmas', discovering along the way how 'Hark, the Herald angels sing' came to replace 'Hark, how all the welkin ring' and how Ralph Vaughan Williams bolted the tune of an English folk song about a dead ox to a poem by a nineteenth-century American pilgrim to make 'O little town of Bethlehem'. Christmas Carols brims with anecdote, expert knowledge and Christmas spirit. It is a fittingly joyous account of one of our best-loved musical traditions.