



*The Pipes of Christmas*

# The Pipes of Christmas

21<sup>st</sup> Annual Production

*Proudly presented by  
The Clan Currie Society - Learned Kindred of Currie*

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# The 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Production of **The Pipes of Christmas**

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**Saturday, December 14, 2019**  
Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church  
New York City

**Sunday, December 15, 2019**  
Central Presbyterian Church  
Summit, NJ

There will be one fifteen-minute intermission. Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices. The taking of photographs, videos and the use of recording equipment is strictly prohibited.

***The 2019 edition of *The Pipes of Christmas* is lovingly dedicated to the memory of***

Duncan Bruce  
John "Jock" Nisbet  
Jean Anne MacNab Petrov  
Ann Stephenson

***The Clan Currie Society – Learned Kindred of Currie gratefully acknowledge the generous support of***

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## Welcome Home to The Pipes of Christmas

On behalf of our Honorary Chairman, our company of outstanding performers and the many members, friends and volunteers of the Clan Currie Society – Learned Kindred of Currie, **we wish you a warm Highland welcome and thank you for joining us.** We especially welcome back our many loyal audience members who have come back to celebrate with us over the years, some approaching two decades!

In the midst of these uncertain times, *The Pipes of Christmas* affords a rare opportunity to honor the Sacred and celebrate the holiday season in a reverent, joyful style that found its genesis among our Celtic ancestors. With music and poetry that reflect our cherished traditions, this year's program includes perennial favorites as well as inspiring original works.

We are delighted to be presenting two world premiere compositions this year. *Christmas in George Square* takes us to Glasgow, Scotland and the vision of the magical decorations that live in the memory of any Scots child who wandered this Christmas wonderland with their family and friends.

*The Mystical Nativity*, is based on a renaissance painting by Sandro Botticelli. The artist captures the wonder of the birth of Christ with the child surrounded by Mary, shepherds, farm animals and a host of angels announcing his birth. The viewer is led into this most Sacred of places to witness the Christmas miracle much the same as the shepherds that were present that Silent Night. In his portrayal of this mystical moment, the artist also captures a foreshadowing of what is to come in Christ's persecution, death and resurrection.

We hope you enjoy these new entries into the realm of Christmas music and that they will continue to inspire and entertain future audiences.

It is through the proceeds from this concert that we are permitted to educate and inspire students, scholars and historians as well as the general public on this proud heritage, history and customs.

Thank you for choosing to support the Learned Kindred of Currie and *The Pipes of Christmas* with your presence at this performance.

From all of us to all of you, we wish you a blessed holiday season.

**Nollaig Chridheil agus Bliadhna Mhath Ur!  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!**

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## William S. Caudill

It is my very distinct honor to have been invited to serve as the Honorary Chairman for this year's *Pipes of Christmas* Concert. This event, as you may know, has been named one of the "Top 10 Holiday Events" in the NYC Metro area, as well as being known nationwide within the Scottish-American community for its overall excellence

of presentation and the high-caliber of performers involved in the production. The Learned Kindred of Currie, and in particular Mr. Robert Currie – Commander of the Name and Arms of Currie, are to be commended for bringing together such notable talent for the public to enjoy and appreciate for 21 consecutive years. Moran Taing! (Many thanks!)

For roughly 800 years, the progenitor and descendants of the noble family of Currie served as highly revered bards to the Lords of the Isles – the most powerful clan chiefs in the Scottish Highlands. Their contributions as the poets and chroniclers of genealogy and history within the Highlands is unmatched.

As the Curries were patronized by the great warrior chieftains of the Highlands to keep their history and traditions, it is notable that the present day Learned Kindred of Currie has occupied a leadership position in helping to preserve and perpetuate the rich legacy of the Highland arts and culture for future generations – a role in many ways similar to that which their ancestors were entrusted with centuries ago. Through the various scholarship programs and prizes for excellence in the study and performance of the Highland arts, as well as historical research, which proceeds from this concert help support – we can be assured that deserving students will continue to keep these valuable and rich traditions alive for future generations to learn from and appreciate.

You are in for an extraordinary treat in *The Pipes of Christmas*. You will hear award winning musicians and vocalists who are leaders in the performance of traditional Celtic – and in particular Scottish music. You will hear tunes and songs which are hundreds of years old, as well as newly composed music which demonstrates the fact that Scottish music and traditions are not just antiquated museum pieces to be admired as relics of the past – but rather continually evolving and vibrant in the present. The excitement of the music and the stories which are told through it will touch and inspire both Scots and non-Scots alike. Let us all enjoy and be transported briefly to the land and heritage which we cherish through this wonderful production.

### **William S. (Bill) Caudill**

Director, The Scottish Heritage Center  
Instructor, St. Andrews University and Community Pipe Band  
St. Andrews University  
Laurinburg, North Carolina

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# ..... The Company .....

## ***Our Narrator***

Susan Porterfield Currie

## ***Our Readers***

James Robinson

Andrew Weir

## ***Our Musicians***

Rachel Clemente - *harp*

Mairi Dorman-Phaneuf - *cello*

Steve Gibb - *guitar*

Dan Houghton - *pipes and whistle*

Maddy Kearns - *vocalist*

William Peek - *organ*

Susie Petrov - *piano*

Mark Verdino - *bass*

Paul Woodiel - *fiddle*

The Solid Brass Ensemble

## ..... And .....

The Kevin Ray Blandford Memorial Pipe Band

Martha Hall, Pipe Major

## ***Musical Director***

Steve Gibb

## ***Executive Producer***

Robert Currie



# Act One

Highland Cathedral

Joy to the World

Noel Nouvelet

Baloo Lammy

Angels We Have Heard On High

I Wonder As I Wander

Amazing Grace

# Act Two

In Memorium  
*Lone Piper*

Pipe Band Medley

Christmas in George Square  
*World Premiere*

*Maddy Kearns – Composer*  
*Steve Gibb – Arranger*

Hymn to the Saviour

The Mystical Nativity  
*World Premiere*

*Steve Gibb – Composer and Arranger*

Oidhche Shamhach  
*Silent Night*

O Come All Ye Faithful

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George Square Glasgow  
Image Credit: Alamy

# John “Jock” Nisbet

In the early 1980s, I wandered into an antiques fair at the Bonnie Brae School for Boys in Millington, NJ. The fair promised a display of Scottish antiques and, while largely unaware of my personal Scottish heritage, I was compelled to visit.

From that day forward, I have been swept up into the world of my Scots heritage, and I have been fortunate to be named the Commander of the Name and Arms of Currie. Throughout my near forty-year journey was Jock Nisbet. Jock was the proud proprietor of the Argyle Fish and Chips Restaurant and the Piper's Cove in Kearny, NJ. A trip to Jock's was the closest thing to Glasgow on this side of the Atlantic where Jock could be found most any Saturday teaching pipe students, assisting bridegrooms seeking a proper wedding kilt and frequently hosting some of the country's best pipers who would stop by to say hello and chew the fat.

As a young man with much yet to learn, I found myself hugely influenced by Jock. I called him one of my “honorary” Scottish uncles who always had time to show me how to fit a kilt and sporran, how to run pipe band competitions, and how to appreciate the difference between good pipers and GREAT pipers.

I dare say anyone involved in the Scots-American world in those pre-Internet shopping years came to know Jock and the Piper's Cove, as it was one of the few shops that could provide all the staples of a proper Highland kit.

Jock was born in Musselburgh, Scotland and came to America in 1962. A gifted piper himself, he served as founder and Pipe Major of the Kearny Caledonian Pipe Band for many years.

Jock passed away earlier this year on October 4 at the age of 82. He was a devoted husband, father, businessman and friend. I can't even begin to estimate the number of weddings, funerals and special occasions that Jock and his pipes played at – he was part of so many lives and memories.

Now we must sadly say goodbye to our departed friend. There's no doubt in my mind that a chorus of pipes played Jock home, and he is now a member of that ancient and illustrious pipe band that plays on in eternity.

Auld acquaintance will not be forgot.

## **Robert (Bob) Currie**

Commander of the Name and Arms of Currie



# Congratulations to The Clan Currie Society

Best Wishes to 21 Great Years of  
The Pipes of Christmas

And for all you do on behalf of the  
Celtic community, Thank You!

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The Clan Currie Society



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# The Mystical Nativity

The Mystical Nativity is a painting dated c.1500–1501 by the Italian Renaissance master Sandro Botticelli. The Virgin Mary is shown kneeling before the Christ Child in the center, in the presence of the shepherds and Wise Men who are visiting him. At the bottom of the work, three angels embrace three men, while seven devils behind them flee to the underworld.

The painting uses the medieval convention of showing the Virgin Mary and infant Jesus larger both than other figures, and their surroundings; this was certainly done deliberately for effect, as earlier works by Botticelli use correct graphical perspective. The painting depicts a scene of joy and celebration, of earthly and heavenly delight, with angels dancing at the top of the painting. The infant Christ reaches up towards the Virgin Mary, oblivious of his visitors – the Three Kings on the left and the shepherds on the right.

And there are dark premonitions – the helpless child rests on a sheet that evokes the shroud in which his body will one day be wrapped, while the cave in which the scene is set calls to mind his tomb. The Kings on the left bear no gifts, but their own devotion. At the top of the painting twelve angels dressed in the colors of faith, hope and charity dance in a circle holding olive branches, and above them heaven opens in a great golden dome, while at the bottom of the painting three angels embrace three men, seeming to raise them up from the ground. They hold scrolls, which proclaim in Latin, “peace on earth to men of goodwill”.

Behind them seven devils flee to the underworld, some impaled on their own weapons. In Renaissance times Last Judgment paintings showed viewers the reckoning of the damned and the saved at the time of Christ's Second Coming. According to art historian Jonathan Nelson, “in echoing this kind of painting The Mystical Nativity is asking us to think not only of Christ's birth but of his return”.

*The Mystical Nativity* is a new composition making its debut at our 2019 concerts. Each year, the Learned Kindred of Currie seeks inspiration for new musical works. Over the years, this body of work marks our continued commitment to the arts and to remaining relevant in the world around us.

Some of our many new works have included, *Lament for the Lost*, a haunting lament composed on September 11, 2001, *Balmoral Snow*, composed to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth, II. *Lullaby for a Prince* marked the birth of HRH Prince George of Cambridge while *Sea of Tranquility* mourned the passing of Apollo 11 astronaut, Neil Armstrong.

A great many of these works were composed and/or arranged by our musical director, Steve Gibb. Steve's gentle touch can be found through all his works and we are delighted to have him back with us to score our original arrangements for this year's *Mystical Nativity*, *Christmas in George Square* and *Noel Nouvelet*.



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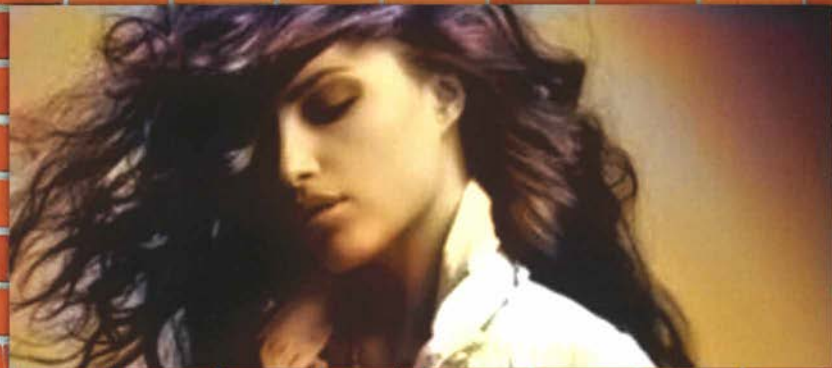
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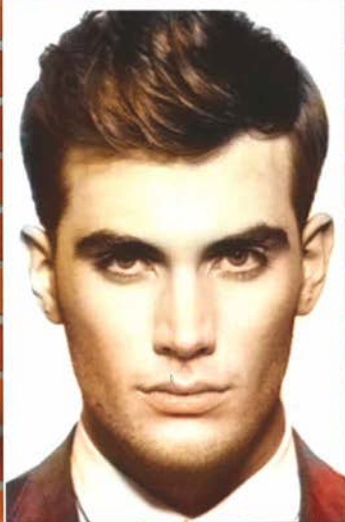


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Learned Kindred of Currie



# Seasons Greetings

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# ..... Silent Night .....

Silent night, holy night!

All is calm, all is bright

Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child

Holy Infant so tender and mild

Sleep in heavenly peace

Sleep in heavenly peace

Silent night, holy night!

Shepherds quake at the sight

Glories stream from heaven afar

Heavenly hosts sing 'Alleluia!

Christ the Savior is born

Christ the Savior is born

Silent night, holy night!

Son of God, love's pure light

Radiant beams from Thy holy face

With the dawn of redeeming grace

Jesus Lord, at Thy birth

Jesus Lord, at Thy birth