



# The Magic Maker: A Portrait of John Langstaff, Creator of the Christmas Revels

*Susan Cooper*

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On Christmas Eve in 1920, John Meredith Langstaff was born into a music-filled home where a rousing, wassailing carol party was the peak of his family's year. Half a century later, his inspired Christmas Revels was born, a theatrical weaving of traditional song, folkdance, and drama that has become a beloved institution across the country. Now award-winning author Susan Cooper, a friend and writer for the Revels, traces its roots through the rhythms of Jack Langstaff's life—from star choirboy (and notorious troublemaker) to his early career as a noted recital singer; from a daunting World War II injury to his work as recording artist, TV performer, teacher, and children's author. Along the way, his passion for music, ritual, and community fused to spark the incomparable Revels, a participatory celebration that promises to draw children of all ages for generations to come.

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