

Early Music Christmas

RTHK Radio 4
10 – 11 am

Programme 5
Sunday 30th December 2007

MUSIC: Bach “In dulci jubilo” CD 44909-00 1 tr. 10 1:00

KANE: Hello again; and welcome to this *final* programme of Early Music for Christmas, with me Ciaran Kane. Yes, it still *is* Christmastime and the traditional 12 days have yet to run their course, till “little Christmas”, Epiphany, on 6th January. So, there are still carols to be sung and seasonal music to be heard. One song that’s been around for literally hundreds of years in Europe is a little latin hymn so well-known in Germany that its first word and half the *next* one became synonymous with carols and carol-singing. People referred to “quempas” singing, and “quempas books”. The song begins “Quem pastores laudavere” [thus the “quempas”] (‘The one praised by shepherds to whom angels spoke’). Its second verse is about the Wise Men, the Magi, with their gifts of gold, incense and myrrh. So it *fits* particularly well in *this* part of Christmastime. “Quem Pastores Laudavere” sung by the Taverner Consort.

MUSIC: Quem Pastores Laudavere 90 X 03 # 14 1:57

KANE: The 15th century ‘Quem Pastores Laudavere’. It’s curious that *few* carols feature the Magi (or the 3 Kings) as *that* one does: especially as in early Christian *art* they feature *more* and much earlier than the Christmas angels and shepherds. *They* came along in the middle ages with the Christmas crib, popularised by St Francis of Assisi. In Italy also there developed *vernacular* religious songs for festival days, known as *Laude* (‘praises’). Here’s a Christmas ‘*lauda*’ dating from 1563. “Ecco il Messia” (‘Behold the Messiah and his mother Mary’).

MUSIC: Ecco il Messia 98 X 02 # 6 4:28

KANE: The Ex Cathedra Chamber Choir, conducted by Jeffrey Skidmore, with an Italian Christmas *Lauda*, “Ecco il Messia”. The sung *latin* Mass at Christmas *midnight* begins with the Introit words, “The Lord has said to me, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you’. The plainchant ‘Dominus dixit ad me’ suggests quiet expectancy and the mystery of that midnight hour, before the trumpets and flutes of angels and shepherds break out in joyful announcement of great news. The choir of the Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral sing the Christmas midnight Introit.

MUSIC: ‘Dominus Dixit ad Me’ HAVPCD 326 # 2 3:02

KANE: A recurring image of Christmastime in old European carols is the *rose*, which stands variously for Christ, for His mother, for His passion, as the flower from the stem of Jesse. The *German* carol “es ist ein’ ros entsprungen” (‘There is a rose e’re blooming’) is maybe the most familiar. ‘There is no rose of such virtue as is the rose that bare Jesu’ is an *English* early 15th century carol that weaves a few *latin* phrases into its text. Here’s part of it sung by an early-music Irish vocal ensemble, Anúna.

MUSIC: Ther is no ros 03 X 01 # 13 3:29

KANE: The old English carol, ‘There is no rose’. Germany again now, for a cantata for Christmas Day 1761 in St Peter’s Church in Hamburg. By *that* time, George Philipp Telemann had been 40 years in Hamburg as music director, responsible for producing music for Sunday and feast-day services in the 5 principal churches of the city. The *text* for his 1761 Christmas Day cantata is by an unknown author, possibly one of Telemann’s Hamburg circle of poets, young theological students and his own pupils. Based on St Luke’s gospel, it dramatises the angel’s message in a soprano solo, the astonished reaction of shepherds, and the heavenly host announcing glory to God and peace on earth. A bass aria (“Rejoice, pious souls of hope and faith”), and a tenor recitative (“Here is the Son, the child who brings us reconciliation... a star has risen for us from Jacob”), lead to the concluding chorus and chorale (“Earth, sea and sky praise the Lord”;

“the peace of God abides in me”). Ludger Rémy conducts the Telemann-Kammerorchester und Kammerchor Michaelstein.

MUSIC: Telemann: Christmas Cantata 1761 cpo 999 419-2 ## 13 – 21 17:02

KANE: George Philipp Telemann’s cantata for Christmas Day 1761. Early carols often mix latin with local vernacular or translations (in those days carols were already quite international). “Make we joy now in this fest, in quo Christus natus est” comes from the 1400s in England. The latin lines refer to some well-known hymns, and one verse recalls “a bright star three kings made come” The Sixteen, under Harry Christophers sing “Make we joy”

MUSIC: Make we joy cor 16027 # 19 2:34

KANE: “Make we joy now in this fest”. John Sheppard was an organist and composer who lived through the religious turbulence of mid-16th century England. He composed mostly to latin texts, and until recently has been under-appreciated. His Christmas motet “Verbum Caro factum est” (‘the Word was made flesh’) is from the start of St John’s gospel, used in the morning prayer of Christmas Day. Sheppard’s setting is based on a plainchant melody, and is sung here by The Sixteen again.

MUSIC: Verbum Caro COR 16027 # 20 6:52

KANE: “Verbum Caro” by John Sheppard. Italian composers in the Baroque era wrote concerti and sinfonia for the night of Christmas, some of them now quite well known: works by Corelli, Vivaldi, Torelli, Manfredini These were for performance in church or as Christmas Eve dinner-entertainment, or for the time between dinner and midnight Mass. Here’ the *Largo* from a Christmas Sinfonia by one Giuseppe Valentini, from Florence, who went to Rome and became a pupil of the above-mentioned Corelli.

MUSIC: Valentini: Sinfonia a tre – Largo 89 X 11 # 9 3:07

KANE: From a “Sinfonia...per il Santissimo Natale” by Giuseppe Valentini, published in 1701 in Rome, Amsterdam and elsewhere; played by the Northwest Chamber Orchestra of Seattle, conducted by Alun Francis. And so to a *closing* piece for this *series* of programmes of early music for Christmastime: another English song from around 1600: “The old year now away is fled”. The *text* has many versions *and* verses, some about the birth and life of Christ, others more secular; we’ll hear just *three* verses. The melody *too* has many variants, and probably started out in life as a dance-tune in the 16th century. We know it *now* as “Greensleeves”. Thank you for your company over these weeks, and I hope you’ve enjoyed these programmes. I’m Ciaran Kane; and I’d like to leave you by making also my *own* the sentiments of the last *lines* of “The old year now away is fled” ---- “God bless us all and so I end; and God send us a happy new year”.

MUSIC: The old year now away is fled COR 16027 # 16 1:44

Total music-time 45:15 Total word count 995

Early Music Christmas - 5 30 december 2007

Quem Pastores	90 X 03	# 14	1:57
Ecco il Messia	98 X 02	# 6	4:28
Dominus dixit ad me (Liverpool)	HAVPCD 326	# 2	3:02
Ther is no Ros (Anuna)	03 X 01	# 13	3:29
Cantata Christmas Day (Telemann)	cpo 999 4 19-2	## 13 - 21	17:02
Make we joy	COR 16027	# 19	2:34
Verbum Caro (Sheppard)	COR 16027	# 20	6:52
Sinfonia (Valentini)	89 X 11	# 9	3:07
The old year now...	COR 16027	# 16	1:44

Sunday 5th December 2004

MUSIC: Scheidt "In dulci jubilo" 98 X 02 tr 15

KANE: An old German carol with a legend; and legends of the man who became Santa Claus: a bit of Bach and a bit *more* of a man whose **third centenary is this year** and who wrote a lot of music for Christmas: some of what's to be heard in the *first* of a Christmas series of Early Music, this Sunday morning between 10 and 11.

MUSIC: s a m e

Sunday 26th December 2004

MUSIC: Bach: Christmas Oratorio pt2 (pastorale) CD 1503 tr 10

KANE: Familiar Bach – the pastoral symphony from his Christmas Oratorio: and lots of shepherds and angels and bag- and other pipes, carols and noels, and a lady called Cozzolani ---- in the **Early Music Day-after-Christmas programme** on Sunday morning Radio 4, between 10 and 11

MUSIC: S a m e

Sunday 30th December 2007

MUSIC: Valentini: Largo fr. Sinfonia a tre... 89 X 11 # 9

KANE: Within the traditional 12 days of Christmas, some *more* Early Music for the season *this* Sunday, from 10 to 11 on Radio 4. The three kings, and the new year feature in carols from Germany, Italy and England, plus a Telemann cantata, and *this* Italian Sinfonia. Join me, Ciaran Kane, on Sunday morning.