

## Early Music: Easter & Beyond

RTHK Radio 4  
10 – 11 am

Programme 1  
Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2005



**MUSIC: Vivaldi: Alleluia**                      **98R05 // 4**                      **1:39**

**KANE:**                      A particularly cheerful 'Alleluia', from the ending of one of Vivaldi's motets. 'Alleluia' is *the* Easter song, and you're listening to the first in a short *series* of "Early Music for Easter and beyond", with me Ciaran Kane. There'll be a lot more 'Alleluias' over the next few weeks, in various shapes and contexts, including a delightful one by Handel but, no, *not* his Hallelujah Chorus. The great 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century Christian teacher, St Augustine of Hippo, told his Christian audience, "We are Easter people, and 'Alleluia' is our song", and in his discourses exhorted people to *sing* their 'Alleluias' with full voice and heart. The monastic chants and church music of the *Russian* and eastern-rite Christians are full of *repeated* Alleluias. In the latin liturgy of the *Roman* rite, the first Alleluia of Easter was a triple-Alleluia with a verse from Ps 118, "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good", sung at the Vigil on Holy Saturday night, just before the proclamation of the Easter gospel: here it is, sung by the Benedictine monks of Glenstal Abbey, Ireland.

**MUSIC: Plainchant -- Alleluia, Confitemini Domino**    **97R23 // 16**                      **1:36**

**KANE:**                      The plainchant Easter Alleluia, from the Easter Vigil service. Next, a six-voice setting of the Kyrie eleison / Christe eleison (Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy) from the vespers of Easter Day. This is by John Sheppard, from the mid-1500s, a prolific English composer whose work has been largely unknown until some 35 years ago when it finally began to appear in print. Apart from some Mass settings, most of his music is for the hymns and responsories for the prayer-services of the major festivals of the Christian year, and usually following the custom of alternating chant with polyphony. Sheppard's Paschal Kyrie is sung here by The Sixteen.

**MUSIC: Sheppard --- Paschal Kyrie 90R04 // 7 3:47**

**KANE:** A 'Paschal Kyrie' by John Sheppard. And *that's* a bit of serendipity, because the title of the *next* work in this 'Early Music' for Easter is "O shepherd of Israel, hear me"..... and this is Bach, Johann Sebastian. I'm afraid *he* got left out almost *entirely* in *last* month's series of 'Early Music for Lent', so I'm making amends by having *two* of his Sunday church cantatas in *this* series. For centuries, and through the Reformation era up to today, the gospel of St John about the Good Shepherd has been proclaimed in Christian churches of all kinds on one of the Sundays soon after Easter Day. It was so in Bach's time, and the three cantatas he wrote for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Easter all refer to this gospel, though without necessarily quoting it: all three *do* quote Psalm 23. The one that's catalogued as BWV 104 was composed for the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 1724, with the German title "Du Hirte Israel, höre" (Shepherd of Israel, listen), the opening words of the text, which comes from Ps 80. Musically this opening chorale suggests a pastoral scene, like the opening sinfonia of Bach's Christmas Oratorio. A later aria also has a pastoral rhythm; and the final section is a chorale on part of Ps 23, "The Lord's My Shepherd"

**MUSIC: Bach --- Cantata BWV 104 CD 49544 // 7—12 16:24**

**KANE:** J.S.Bach's Easter cantata, BWV 104, 'Shepherd of Israel', with the Gächinger Kantorei Stuttgart and Bach-Collegium Stuttgart, recorded in 1979 Returning to Gregorian plainchant, this next piece is the Introit verse (entrance song) for the Mass of Easter Sunday morning: "Resurrexi, et adhuc tecum sum" (I have risen, and am with you still), and it includes a couple of verses from Ps 139, ('Lord you have tested me and you know me: you know where I sit and when I arise'). Again it's Benedictine monks singing it, this time from Ampleforth Abbey in Yorkshire, England.

**MUSIC: Plainchant --- Resurrexi 98R50 // 20 2:55**

**KANE:** The Easter Sunday morning Introit chant, "Resurrexi" (I have risen and am with you) In the series of "Early Music" for Lent, I introduced the collection of medieval popular Italian *laude* contained in the

Laudario di Cortona. For today I've chosen another one, no. 26, "Jesu Cristo glorioso" about the Resurrection of Christ. It's a kind of early-model musical dramatisation of the Easter story; told in a shortened paraphrase or interpretation of the gospel accounts of the apparitions of Jesus to his friends and disciples. The narrator of the poem is joined by the angel of the resurrection, by the pilgrims to Emmaus and by Thomas. The poem ends with the message to Thomas, "be not incredulous, but ever trusting in things unseen, for there is greater merit and virtue in believing in that which is absent than in that which is present; and in heaven there is greater rejoicing."

**MUSIC: Laudario di Cortona --- Resurrection 98R20 // 11 10:47**

**KANE:** From the 'Laudario di Cortona', the 'lauda' of the Resurrection, "Jesu Christo glorioso" sung by Ensemble Organum. Another regular Eastertime text, often set to music, is the prayer-hymn "Regina Coeli laetare" (Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia). This takes the place this season of the perhaps more familiar "Salve Regina". There are four such *seasonal* hymns to Mary, deriving from the Middle Ages, that have traditionally been used at the end of the day's prayer. "Queen of heaven rejoice, alleluia; because He whom you did merit to bear, alleluia; has risen as He said, alleluia; pray for us to God, alleluia". This is a setting by Spanish 16<sup>th</sup> century composer Francisco Guerrero, long associated with the cathedral of Seville. He was one of the leading lights of his time in Spain, and when he died at the age of 71 left 105 printed motets, the cream (no doubt) of what must have been many more of that popular genre that he wrote in his long professional choral career. "Regina coeli" is scored for 8 voices, and is sung here by La Capella Reial de Catalunya.

**MUSIC: Guerrero ---- Regina Coeli 97R31 // 12 4:49**

**KANE:** "Regina coeli", by Francisco Guerrero. A short *end*-piece today, from the same *location* as the one we began with, the Ospedale della Pieta in Venice: This is the lively *start* of a setting for the Corpus Christi hymn "Pange Lingua" (which is *also* associated with the Holy Week celebration of the Lord's Last Supper) ('Sing, my tongue, the mystery

of the glorious body and precious blood'). The composer isn't Vivaldi, but Giovanni Porta who was the choir-master at the Ospedale in the 1720s and 30s. Appropriately, the singers here are the San Francisco *Girls* Chorus; and they take us to the end of this week's 'Early Music' programme for Easter and beyond, with me Ciaran Kane.

**MUSIC: Porta --- Pange Lingua                      SFGC 9801 // 12                      1:33**

Music timing: 43:30  
Text word-count: 1121