

Early Music: Poems, Pilgrims and Parodies -- 2

RTHK Radio 4
10 – 11 am

Programme 2
Sunday 8th April 2007

MUSIC: Bach: “Jesu meine Freude” 96R06 # 6 fade under at 0:40

KANE: This is ‘Early Music’: poems, pilgrims and parodies. And I’m Ciaran Kane choosing the music for you. I’m beginning these weeks with Bach’s famous “Jesu meine Freude”, because the text is *poetry*. Throughout Bach’s cantatas, motets, oratorios, passions, the texts contain many meditative lines, verses and poems. So many and so varied, in fact, that it should be no surprise to be returning to the great J.S. for some of the “poems” content of this Early Music series. For today, I’ve chosen three sections from an early cantata BWV 6, written for the second day of Easter in 1725, “Bleib’ bei uns”. The beautiful opening of the cantata is the well-known line from the gospel of Luke, “Stay with us Lord, for it is now towards evening”. The central soprano chorale is on a hymn by Nicholaus Selnecker starting with the same words. There’s also a tenor aria “Jesus let us look towards you”; and the words of the final chorale come from Martin Luther, “Show your might, Lord Jesus Christ”. Three sections from the Cantata “Bleib bei uns” by J.S.Bach, with the Munich Bach Choir, Peter Schreier (tenor) and Karl Richter conducting.

MUSIC: Bach : Bleib bei uns CD 34443 ## 11, 13 – 14 9:07

KANE From an Easter cantata of J.S.Bach. Easter is also the setting for the “pilgrim” choice in today’s programme, perhaps stretching the word ‘pilgrim’ a bit. This is from a 12th century French liturgical drama about those same two disciples who left Jerusalem and set out to walk to Emmaus. It was performed and sung as part of an extended Vespers service at Easter, and includes the lovely Easter poem, words and music, that still remain in the liturgical books, “Victimae paschali laudes”, the so-called ‘Sequence’ hymn of Easter week. The ‘Play of the Emmaus pilgrims’ begins with a processional entrance, and a procession to the

for the Paris church of the *Jesuits*, who were antagonists of the Jansenists, it's likely he wasn't embroiled in the theological controversies of those years. Here now is a setting of his for the old latin poem/hymn "Ave Maris Stella", Hail, Star of the Sea. In the French style and custom, only alternate verses were sung in plainsong by the choir, with the organ supplying the lines in between. Usually it was the odd-numbered strophes that the organ played; but here the roles are reversed and the choir sings the first, third, fifth and seventh

MUSIC: Charpentier -- 'Ave Maris Stella' 97R29 # 15 7:36

KANE: 'Ave Maris Stella', by Marc Antoine Charpentier. "L'Homme armé" (the armed man) is the name of a song that was very popular not only in France where it seems to've originated, but all over Europe from the mid-1400s. It became a favourite tune to borrow from or otherwise use in settings of the latin Mass, and some composers used it more than once. Some 40 Masses are documented as based on L'Homme Armé, most of them produced between about 1450 and 1500. But one of the most recent is from 1999, in his 'Mass for Peace' composed for the Millennium by Welshman Karl Jenkins. Jenkins' Mass opens with a modern choral-orchestral arrangement of the old song, and he also incorporates in his "Kyrie" section part of one of Palestrina's "L'Homme armé" Masses. Before Palestrina's time, Josquin des Pres, from Flanders, also wrote two, very different, Masses using L'Homme armé. For it wasn't a matter of *quoting* from the original, but using the music line in many different ways and variations, almost in a mathematical framework. It's from the second of Josquin's Masses that I've chosen the "Credo" for today. But first let's hear the old tune itself, sung by member of the Tallis Scholars

MUSIC: Josquin des Prés : Credo fr. Missa L'Homme armé CD 21527 # 1, 9 9:58

KANE: The Creed, from the second of Josquin des Pres' two L'Homme Armé Masses first printed in 1502. Next week, the Sanctus and Agnus Dei from another of these so-called "parody" Masses, one by Orlando Lassus. The song it's based on is forgotten, but was popular in its day as a good biblical morality story, and providing a model heroin for religious instruction: the story of Susanna one day in her garden. Also in next week's programme, the pilgrimage to Compostela and music to celebrate St James. And for a poem, a birthday ode by Henry Purcell for Queen Mary in 1692, "Love's goddess sure was blind". Join me for that at the same time next week. I'm Ciaran Kane: and I leave you today with the ending of Bach's motet "Jesu meine Freude"

MUSIC: Bach : Jesu meine Freude 96R06 # 6 prefade to end 52:00

Music timings: 42:18

Text wordcount 1020