



Rhodes College Singers
Christmas Concert 1990



Tony Lee Garner, Conductor
David Ramsey, Associate Conductor
and Accompanist

Sunday, December 2
Hardie Auditorium, Rhodes College
6:00 p.m.
Marc Baker, Accompanist

Monday, December 3
St. Peter's Catholic Church
8:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 4
St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral
8:00 p.m.

The December 4 concert will be taped by WKNO-FM 91
for broadcast on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

PROGRAM

Here We Come A-Wassailing (English) - Arr. John Rutter

This is probably the best known of the "wassail" songs. The word means "Good health to you". (Within the word is the root of "hail" which we have in "health", "hale", and "Hallo"). The practice of the tenants being granted the right at Christmas to beg in a good humoured way for alms and food (which were surely to be provided anyway) from the Lords and Ladies in the Great House dates from feudal times. Note especially the verse:

We have got a little purse,
Of stretching leather skin;
We want a little (of your) money
To line it well within.

There Is No Rose (English) - Shirley McRae

This medieval carol, like the well known German carol "Es ist ein' Ros' entsprungen", has Isaiah XI as its source: "There shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse". The figure of "the rose" is found often in the imagery of medieval literature when the subject is our Lord or our Lady. The medieval period was a time, according to Erik Routley, when the metaphysics of doctrine came to the common man through images rather than through concepts. The juxtaposition of English and Latin text classifies this carol as a "macaronic" carol. Shirley McRae is a Memphis composer.

Thou Whom Shepherds Worshipped (*Quem Pastores*) (German, 14th c.) Arr. Desmond Ratcliffe

Both text and tune were first observed in the Hohenfurth Abbey ms 20. The tune is described by Erik Routley in "English Carol" as a "late medieval German carol tune, dance-like and gracious, like so many." The following translation is from "Hymns Ancient and Modern" and by C.S. Phillips.

He whom joyous shepherds praised,
When the angel's song was raised
Bidding them be not amazed,
Heaven's all-glorious King is born.

He whom sages, westward faring,
Myrrh and gold and incense bearing,
Worshipped, bowing low before him,
Reigns as King this happy morn.

Sing to Christ, the King who reigneth,
Yet of Mary manhood gaineth,
Born our God; let us adore him:
Glory be to God on high.

Away In A Manger (Traditional Normandy) - Arr. Reginald Jacques

The text of this carol is American, published in Philadelphia in 1885 with a tune written by Gospel-song composer, W.J. Kirkpatrick. The popular text has been set to many different tunes (one scholar estimates as many as forty-one). We have chosen to sing the text set to a tune from Normandy.

O Leave Your Sheep (French) - Arr. Kenneth Leighton

The original text and the tune of this carol are French. The English translation is by Alice Raleigh. Kenneth Leighton was an English composer, primarily of church music.

Zither Carol (Czech) - Arr. Malcolm Sargent

Sir Malcolm Sargent is best known as a conductor and champion of English music. He has set a text which he wrote to a charming traditional Czech folk melody.

The Angels And The Shepherds (Bohemian) - Arr. C.H. Trevor

The majority of carols, which were created during an approximate period of two hundred years, are from England with Germany making the second largest contribution. This beautiful carol, however, is from Bohemia.

Lully, Lulla, Thou Little Tiny Child (English) - Arr. Kenneth Leighton

Soprano: Victoria Holland

From the Pageant of the Shearmen and Tailors, 15th century, this song is sung by the women of Bethlehem, just before Herod's soldiers come in to slaughter their children. The text is by Robert Croo, 1534, reprinted by E. Rhys, "Everyman and other Plays". The Coventry plays were witnessed by Margaret, Queen of Henry VI, in 1456, by Richard III in 1484, by Henry VII in 1492. The tune appears in 1584.

Blessed Be That Maid (English) - Arr. David Willcocks

It is a traditional English tune with words by G.R. Woodward. It, too, is a macaronic carol and the Latin words are:

Eya! Jesus hodie Natus est de virgine

Jesus is born today of a virgin.

Pro peccante homine

On behalf of sinful man.

In excelsis gloria.

Glory in the highest.

Stelle ducti lumine.

Led by the light of the star.

In quo Christus natus est.

In which Christ was born.

The word "Eya" is translated according to Dr. Tom Jolly as something like "whoopie".

In Dulci Jubilo (Old German) - Arr. R.L. Pearsall, Ed. Reginald Jacques

Soprano: Victoria Holland, Heather Lindsey

Alto: Kate Goodrich, Kerry Wilks

Tenor: Chris Gaskill, Chris Getman

Bass: Don Price, Ric Crowder

Probably the most famous carol on our program is this carol. It is one of the most popular "macaronic" carols, though the translator John Mason Neale declined to leave any of the Latin text for us in our hymnals.

The text, we learn from a fourteenth-century writer, was to have been sung by angels to Henry Suso (ca.1366), the mystic, who was drawn in thereby to dance with his celestial visitors.

The fourteenth century melody, with the words, occurs in a MS at Leipzig University library. The developed form of the melody is in Michael Vehe's *Gesangbuch*, Leipzig, 1537, and in Witzel's *Psaltes Ecclesiasticus*, Cologne, 1550. In

Babst's *Gesangbuch*, Leipzig, 1545, the last hymnbook produced for Luther, the third stanza, doubtless by Luther himself, is substituted for an earlier one. The melody and versions of the text are found in the *Piae Cantiones*, 1582. It was from this source that subsequent translations were made into English.

It was first translated into English by John Wedderburn in his *Gude and godly ballates* about 1540. The version known best (other than Neale's) is by Percy Dearmer.

In dulci jubilo
(In sweet shouting, or jubilation)
Now sing with hearts aglow!
Our delight and pleasure
lies in *praesepio*,
(in a manger)
Like sunshine is our treasure
Matris in gremio
Alpha es et O!
(In his mother's lap thou art
Alpha and Omega)
O Jesu, parvule,
(O tiny Jesus)
For thee I long alway;
Comfort my heart's blindness,
O puer optime
(O best of boys)
With all thy loving-kindness
O princeps gloriae
trahe me post te!
(O prince of glory,
draw me after thee.)

Attributed to Martin Luther
O Patris caritas!
O Nati lenitas!
(O love of the Father,
O gentleness of the son)
Deeply were we stained (ed)
Per nostra crimina:
(through our crimes)
But thou for us hast gained (ed)
Coelorum gaudia.
(the joys of the heavens)
O that we were there!
Ubi sunt gaudia
(Where are joys?)
In any place but there?
There are angels singing
Nova cantica,
(new songs)
And there the bells are ringing
In regis curia.
(in the court of the King)
O that we were there!

A Merry Christmas (Trad. West Country) - Arr. Arthur Warrell

The relationship of the text and spirit of this carol to the "wassail" carols is obvious. In the midst of wishing for a merry Christmas we hear:

"We all like figgy pudding so bring some out here."

"We won't go until we get some, so bring some out here."

The Rhodes College Singers and the Memphis Symphony Chamber Orchestra will perform W.A. Mozart's "Requiem" at Evergreen Presbyterian Church Saturday, May 11, 1991. On the Monday following, the Singers will depart for their third tour of Great Britain where they will perform the "Requiem" in Edinburgh and at the Royal Naval College in Dartmouth. Your contributions toward the presentation of this great work would be most welcome. You may make that contribution tonight or you may send it to the Rhodes College Singers, 2000 North Parkway, Memphis, TN 38112.