
MUSIC APPRECIATION

NOVEMBER Report by Kathleen Howcroft

We had a good turnout for our last meeting of the year. The theme was Festive Music from the past. We had a wide range of CDs from Gregorian Chants to Acker Bilk.

We all know what kind of music Acker Bilk played but what is a Gregorian Chant? Monophonic or unison, liturgical music of the Roman Catholic Church, used to accompany the text of the Mass. Named after St Gregory 1, during whose papacy (590 – 604) it was collected and codified.

The oldest Christmas song: Corde natus ex Parentis (Of the Father's love begotten) isn't a popular Christmas song today. It is probably the oldest known Christmas song that is still performed by a few churches today. In fact, at least one of our members knew the tune. The song which is actually a Christmas Hymn was written by Roman Catholic poet Aurelius Prudentius.

Christians have been celebrating Christmas since at least AD 336. That is supposedly when the church first recognised 25th December as Christmas Day. Hark the Herald came around 1300 years later in 1739. Joseph Mohr wrote the lyrics to Silent Night in 1818 and Away in a Manger 1882.

So what did people sing before these classics? The first musical composition ever to be associated with Christmas was likely "Angels Hymn" AD129.

The first offering from our members was The Wexford Carol by Clare College Choir. A traditional religious Irish Christmas Carol originating from County Wexford Enniscorthy.

Unto us a Child is born from Handel's Messiah was the 2nd choice followed by a Welsh lullaby for Christmas Suo Gan written by an anonymous composer. A name that popped up a few times during the morning was John Rutter. We heard The Colours of Christmas and The Star Carol.

A man from Bradford who visited Boldron was our next composer Delius, with Sleigh Ride, followed by a Christmas Proclamation "God is with us" by John Taverner (1944 – 2013). The text is adapted from the Orthodox Service of Great Compline which is sung on Christmas Eve. An unusual title The Service of Venus and Mars by Gothic Voices, which is a collection of music by French and English Composers written between the mid 14th C and mid 15th C. They are loosely organized around the association of English noblemen established by King Edward 111 known as the Knights of the Garter.

Something completely different now and more up to date. A Royal Variety Performance by Acker Bilk of "Stranger on the Shore". A piece for Clarinet written by Acker Bilk (Bernard Stanley) for his young daughter and originally named "Jenny" after her.

So glad to have something from John Lennon included. Happy Christmas (war is over) by John & Yoko Plastic Ono Band.

Early Music: Christmas as a holiday goes back nearly 2 millennium. Music has changed over time, but the idea of celebrating with music hasn't. Much of our favourite Christmas Music date back to the Middle Ages or even earlier, and the best way to experience it is in the work of those groups dedicated to preserving centuries old music. Tudor polyphony, Medieval Chant, Medieval Carols, Renaissance motets, plainchant or more. Enjoy your Christmas Music and thank you to all who contributed to the morning.

Next Meeting

FRIDAY 17TH JANUARY 2020
MARALYN'S MUSICAL QUIZ & NIBBLES

Meeting at 10 am Millennium Room Cotherstone Village Hall

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