

JACKSONVILLE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Garrett Allman, Music Director & Conductor

MEMORIES OF HOLLY & IVY

PROGRAM NOTE & TRANSLATION:

“Jesus, may praise be sung to you”

Johann Kuhnau, attr. J.S. Bach

Recitative and Aria from Cantata *Unto Us a Child is Born*, BWV 142

Once attributed to J.S. Bach, the cantata *Uns ist ein kind geboren* (Unto Us a Child is Born) is now believed to have been composed by Johann Kuhnau, Bach’s predecessor at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, Germany. The cantata features eight movements for choir and Alto, Tenor, and Bass soloists; the recitative “Immanuel” and aria “Jesu dir sei Preis” are the sixth and seventh movements. First performed on Christmas Day in 1720, the cantata serves as an example of the long tradition of cantata performance at the Thomaskirche predating Bach’s tenure. While Kuhnau wrote over 100 vocal works, most of these have been lost and only a few of those extant have been published in modern editions. Though he is lesser known today, his works nevertheless demonstrate some of the same characteristics found in cantatas of the time – fugal writing in choral movements, lyrical arias – and anticipate the structure of Bach’s more famous works.

--Nichol DelGiorno

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

RECITATIVE:

Immanuel, it has been your pleasure to allow
my spirit and faith to grasp you;
even if I am not able wholeheartedly to reveal all the joy
that the day of your birth will inspire,
yet my feeble stammering will still
please you through giving praise and honor.

ARIA:

Jesus, may praise be sung to you
for it is through you that I have been redeemed.
Nothing troubles my soul
since my heart through your kindness
has been abundantly consoled.

CHRISTMAS MUSIC TRIVIA

DID YOU KNOW:

O Come Rejoicing invites the listener on a journey to the manger to visit the newborn King.

Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella came from the Provence region of France in the 17th century, and was originally dance music for the French nobility, and at one point was even a drinking song.

March of the Toys is music from the operetta *Babes in Toyland*. Composed in 1903, the operetta features various characters from Mother Goose nursery rhymes.

Deck the Halls dates back to the 1700's, and the melody was originally a traditional Welsh New Year's Eve carol.

The now beloved **O Holy Night** was criticized by French Catholic church authorities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, who urged that it be removed from churches because of some previous secular connotations.

The **Away in a Manger** text was once thought to have been written by Martin Luther, but is now considered to be of American origin, from the 19th century.

The text of **In the Bleak Midwinter** was written by English poet Christina Rossetti in 1872, and set to music by English composer Gustav Holst in 1906, in the hymn tune Cranham.

The tune of **Ding, Dong Merrily on High** dates from 1588, as a secular dance tune. The lyrics date from 1924, with contributions from Charles Wesley and George Whitehead.

The text of **Hark! The Herald Angels Sing** dates from 1739, and was set to music 100 years later, in 1840, by Felix Mendelsson.

The text of **O Little Town of Bethlehem** was written by Phillips Brooks, rector of Episcopal churches in Philadelphia and Boston, after being inspired by a visit to Bethlehem in 1865. The organist at his church, Lewis Redner, wrote the music in 1868.

Sing We Now of Christmas is one of the most popular French carols in the English-speaking world. The tune dates from the late 15th century.

The **Trepak** is a lively dance using Russian and Ukrainian folk melodies, performed by Cossack dancers. It was composed by Tchaikovsky in 1892.

The **Coventry Carol** is an English Carol from the 16th century, originally performed in the city Coventry, as part of a mystery play depicting the Christmas story. The carol refers to the Massacre of the Innocents, in which King Herod ordered the murder of all male infants under the age of two in Bethlehem. The carol is a lullaby of mourning sung by the mothers of the doomed children. In more modern times, the carol was sung in a British radio broadcast during World War II from the bombed-out ruins of Coventry Cathedral.

The music to **Silent Night** was hastily composed on Christmas Eve 1818 in a small church, St. Nicholas parish in Oberndorf, Austria, by the organist Franz Grüber to words by the parish priest Joseph Mohr, to a guitar accompaniment, when the organ was suddenly unplayable. Since then it has become one of the most famous and beloved of all Christmas carols around the world, and even prompted a now-famous Christmas ceasefire during World War I.

Of the Father's Love Begotten is based on a text by Roman poet Aurelius Prudentius (348-410 A.D.). The text was paired with a medieval plainchant melody from as early as the 10th century. It has been modified over the years, but this carol no doubt has the oldest origins of all the music on today's concert.

Adoration and its composer Felix Borowski have interesting Illinois connections. Borowski (1872-1956) was of Polish and English descent. Born in England to musical parents, he was educated in London and Cologne. An accomplished composer, pianist and violinist, he moved to the United States in 1896 to become director of the composition department at the Chicago Musical College (which later merged with Roosevelt University in 1954). He became the President of CMC in 1916, until 1925. He later taught at other Chicago area schools, wrote for several newspapers, and was program annotator for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for 48 years, from 1908 to 1956. A prolific composer, *Adoration*, published in 1898, is his most famous work.

Joseph's Lullaby was written and recorded by the Christian rock band MercyMe in 2005.

Jingle Bells is one of the oldest popular American carols, composed in 1857 by James Lord Pierpoint. It was also the first song broadcast from space, in a Christmas-themed prank by Gemini 6 astronauts Tom Stafford and Wally Schirra, while in space on December 16, 1965. The astronauts produced a smuggled harmonica and sleigh bells, and broadcast a rendition of "Jingle Bells". The harmonica was a Hohner "Little Lady", a tiny harmonica just one inch long and 3/8 of an inch wide.

A note of interest:

The historic Steinway concert grand piano formerly at home in Annie Merner Chapel at MacMurray College from 1959 to 2020, recently purchased by the Jacksonville Center for the Arts, and now residing at Centenary United Methodist Church, was played in three of today's performances, by Anna Ferraro, Terri Benz and Garrett Allman.