WIGMORE HALL

Resonet in Laudibus

The Sixteen

Julie Cooper soprano	Daniel Collins alto	Tom Robson tenor
Alexandra Kidgell soprano	Stephanie Franklin alto	George Pooley tenor
Gwen Martin soprano	Edward McMullan alto	Jonathan Arnold bass
Charlotte Mobbs soprano	Kim Porter alto	Ben Davies bass
Emilia Morton soprano	Jeremy Budd tenor	Tim Jones bass
Ruth Provost soprano	Oscar Golden-Lee tenor	Stuart Young bass

Anon	Resonemus laudibus (by 1360)
Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c.1525-1594)	Kyrie from *Missa Hodie Christus natus est* (pub. 1601)
William Byrd (c.1540-1623)	Lulla, lullaby, my sweet little baby (1580)
Trad/Basque	Gabriel's Message
William Byrd	This day Christ was born (pub. 1611)
Jacobus Handl (1550-1591)	Resonet in laudibus (pub. 1586)
Trad/Irish	Wexford Carol
Jean Mouton (c.1459-1522)	Nesciens mater virgo virum
Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina	Hodie Christus natus est (pub. 1575)
Walter Lambe (c.1450-1504)	Nesciens mater (c.1500-20)
Trad/English	Sans Day Carol
Orlande de Lassus (c.1530-1594)	Resonet in laudibus (pub. 1569)
Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina	Gloria from *Missa Hodie Christus natus est*
Anon	Herrick's Carol (pub. 1623)
John Sheppard (c.1515-1558)	Reges Tharsis (pub. c.1575)

BBC RADIO 3 This concert is being broadcast on BBC Radio 3

The call to *resonet in laudibus* – 'let praises resound' – encapsulates the music of Christmas past and present as the birth of Christ is celebrated in song. Through a mix of traditional carols and Renaissance sacred music this programme connects us with Christmas musical traditions of centuries past, while also containing songs that remain popular in our festive repertory today.

The programme opens with the traditional 14th-century carol that inspired the programme title: *Resonemus laudibus*. This exuberant triple time carol is an exhortation to sing to the newborn king. Widely known in medieval times, this carol remained popular in the Renaissance, especially in Germany. In 1550, one of Martin Luther's contemporaries, Georg Witzel, described the carol as 'one of the chief Christmas songs of joy.'

Interspersed throughout the programme are two Renaissance arrangements of this carol. The first, by **Jacobus Handl**, was published in Prague in 1586. Handl's simple but effective chordal setting captures the carol's dance-like feel. By contrast **Orlande de Lassus** (c.1530-94) transforms the tune into a typical Renaissance motet, initially in duple time with the melody used imitatively throughout all voices. The announcements of Gabriel are declaimed by all voices together, while jaunty syncopations and cross rhythms within increasing scalic decoration characterise the recurring 'Eia' sections.

Music for Christmas Day itself often inspired Renaissance composers to their most jubilant music. **Palestrina**'s (1525/6-94) *Missa Hodie Christus natus est* is a parody mass designed for use on Christmas Day that reworks his motet of the same name (also performed during this programme). The motet *Hodie Christus natus est* begins with alternating exchanges between the two choirs which gather pace at the exclamations of 'noe, noe'. Soaring scales depicting angelic choirs build to a magnificent, eight-voice 'gloria in excelsis' and a final dance-like 'noe'. The 'Kyrie' from the Mass mirrors the motet's antiphonal opening, while the 'Christe' uses its rising angelic scales, and the final 'Kyrie' combines the falling scales and triple time of the motet's 'gloria'. The 'Gloria' of the Mass remixes the motet again, extending and recombining its motifs. The result is one of Palestrina's most exuberant masses for a stirring celebration of Christmas morning.

English composer **Byrd** (1540-1623) sets the same text *This day Christ was born*, subtitled as 'a Carol for Christmas Day', in his 1611 song collection. Byrd too captures the abundant rejoicing of Christmas morning in merry quavers, rising scales, pitch contrasts between the heights of heaven and the depth of earth, a dance-like 'alleluia'. By contrast, Byrd's *Lulla, lullaby* opens with a soothing rocking feel. Akin to the famous Coventry Carol, the lullaby also mourns Herod's slaughter of the children through its minor mode, poignant flattened sixths and dissonant false relations.

The Virgin Mary was another focal point for these resounding praises. *Gabriel's Message* is a Basque carol itself based on an older medieval Latin one, *Angelus ad Virginem*. The carol tells the story of the angel Gabriel's visit to Mary and her acceptance of the honour of bearing Christ. The angel's parting address to Mary 'Most highly favour'd lady, Gloria' becomes the carol's refrain.

Renaissance Christmastide tributes to Mary are represented in this programme through two settings of *Nesciens mater*. Both songs are based on the plainchant antiphon of the same name which is heard several times in the Christmas liturgy and recounts Mary's immaculate conception, birth, and nurturing of the Christ child. **Mouton** (c.1459-1522), a composer at the French court, places the chant in the tenor voice and builds around it a quadruple canon in which the first choir of four voices are imitated four beats later and a fifth higher by a second choir of four voices. The result is a rich tapestry of interweaving voices. By contrast **Lambe** (1450/1-1504) alternates intricate and highly decorated trios and duos with passages for all six voices in which the chant is heard in sustained notes in the tenor. Lambe's *Nesciens mater* is preserved in the Eton choirbook, one of the few surviving pre-Reformation English illuminated music manuscripts. Long melismas extend the text syllables over several lines, yet Lambe takes a moment to slow the rhythms at *dolore* ('pain') to give the listener time to register his poignant flattening of the harmony.

Sheppard's *Reges Tharsis* marks the end of the Christmas season with the arrival of the Three Wise Men at Epiphany, and dates from the brief restoration of the Catholic Latin rite in England during the reign of Mary I. Although incomplete, it can be reconstructed because the missing tenor sang the chant. As a Respond for liturgical use, *Reges Tharsis* is begun by the cantor and then taken up by the choir, whose interlacing melodies alternate with plainchant verses.

Starkly contrasting with the complex Renaissance textures of composers like Sheppard, Lambe and Mouton are the other traditional carols interspersed throughout the programme. Many have specific regional origins, such as the *Wexford Carol* from Enniscorthy in Ireland or the *Sans Day Carol* from St Day in Cornwall. The *Wexford Carol* tells the Christmas story from the search for lodgings in Bethlehem through the visits of shepherds and kings. The *Sans Day Carol* is closely related to the better-known *The Holly and the Ivy* and combines Christan and pagan imagery to situate the Christmas story in the wider gospel narrative of Christ's birth, death and resurrection.

Herrick's carol was originally performed for Charles I at Whitehall Palace. Poet and clergyman, Herrick (1591-1674) inverted the traditional wintery imagery of Christmas, comparing the coming of Jesus with the transformation of winter to spring, and associating Christ with sunlight, warmth and flowers. Herrick's opening line, however, fittingly sums up the long tradition of Christmas festive songs of praise:

> *'What sweeter music can we bring
> than a carol for to sing?'*

Anon

Resonemus laudibus
Let us make the church resound

(by 1360)
Anonymous

Resonemus laudibus	Let us make the church resound
Cum iucunditatibus	with the merry praises
Ecclesiam fidelibus:	of the faithful:
Apparuit quem genuit Maria.	He whom Mary bore has appeared.
Deus fecit hominem	God made man
Ad suam imaginem	in his own image
Et similitudinem:	and likeness:
Apparuit quem genuit Maria.	He whom Mary bore has appeared.
Deus fecit omnia,	God made all things,
Caelum, terram, maria,	the heavens, the earth, the seas,
Cunctaque nascentia:	and all that has been brought to birth:
Apparuit quem genuit Maria.	He whom Mary bore has appeared.
Ergo nostra concio	Therefore let our company
In chordis et organo	bless the Lord
Benedicat Domino:	with strings and organ:
Apparuit quem genuit Maria.	He whom Mary bore has appeared.
Et Deo qui venias	And let us give thanks
Donat et leticias	to the same God,
Nos eidem gracias:	who gives us pardon and joys:
Apparuit quem genuit Maria.	He whom Mary bore has appeared.

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina
(c.1525-1594)

Kyrie from *Missa Hodie Christus natus est*
(pub. 1601)
Liturgical text

Kyrie eleison.	Lord have mercy on us.
Christe eleison.	Christ have mercy on us.
Kyrie eleison.	Lord have mercy on us.

William Byrd (c.1540-1623)

Lulla, lullaby, my sweet little baby (1580)
Anonymous

Lulla, lullaby, lullaby,
My sweet little baby:
What meanest thou to cry,
Lulla, lullaby, lullaby,
My sweet little baby.

Be still my blessed babe,
Though cause thou hast to mourn,
Whose blood most innocent to shed,
The cruel king has sworn:

And lo, alas, behold
What slaughter he doth make,
Shedding the blood of infants all,
Sweet saviour for thy sake.

A king is born, they say:
Which king this king would kill:
O woe, and woeful heavy day,
When wretches have their will.

Lulla, lullaby, lullaby,
My sweet little baby;
What meanest thou to cry,
Lulla, lullaby, lullaby,
My sweet little baby.

Trad/Basque

Gabriel's Message
Traditional, trans. Sabine Baring-Gould

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
His wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
'All hail' said he, 'thou lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favour'd lady, Gloria!'

'For know a blessed Mother thou shalt be,
All generations laud and honour thee,
Thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold.
Most highly favour'd lady, Gloria!'

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
'To me be as it pleaseth God,' she said,
'My soul shall laud and magnify his holy Name.'
Most highly favour'd lady, Gloria!

Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ was born
In Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say
Most highly favour'd lady, Gloria!

Please do not turn the page until the song and its accompaniment have ended.

William Byrd

This day Christ was born (pub. 1611)
Liturgical text

This day Christ was born, this day our Saviour did appear.
This day the angels sing in earth. The archangels are glad.
This day the just rejoice, saying: Glory be to God on high.
  Alleluia.

Jacobus Handl (1550-1591)

Resonet in laudibus   Let praises resound
(pub. 1586)
Anonymous

Resonet in laudibus	Let praises resound
Cum iucundis plausibus	with the joyous acclaim
Sion cum fidelibus:	of Sion's faithful:
Apparuit quem genuit Maria.	He whom Mary bore has appeared.
Sunt impleta quae praedixit Gabriel: eia.	Gabriel's prophecies have been fulfilled: O joy!
Virgo Deum genuit,	A Virgin has given birth to God,
Quod divina voluit Clementia.	as divine mercy willed it to be.
Hodie apparuit In Israel,	Today he has appeared in Israel:
Ex Maria virgine Est natus Rex.	a King is born of the Virgin Mary.

Trad/Irish

Wexford Carol
Traditional

Good people all, this Christmas time,
Consider well and bear in mind
What our good God for us has done,
In sending his beloved Son.
With Mary holy we should pray
To God with love this Christmas Day;
In Bethlehem upon that morn
There was a blessed Messiah born.

The night before that happy tide,
The noble Virgin and her guide
Were long time seeking up and down
To find a lodging in the town.
But mark how all things came to pass:
From ev'ry door repell'd, alas!
As long foretold, their refuge all
Was but a humble ox's stall.

Near Bethlehem did shepherds keep
Their flocks of lambs and feeding sheep;
To whom God's angels did appear,
Which put the shepherds in great fear.
'Prepare and go', the angels said,
'To Bethlehem, be not afraid;
For there you'll find, this happy morn,
A princely babe, sweet Jesus born.'

With thankful heart and joyful mind,
The shepherds went the babe to find,
And as God's angel had foretold,
They did our Saviour Christ behold.
Within a manger he was laid,
And by his side a virgin maid,
Attending on the Lord of life,
Who came on earth to end all strife.

There were three wise men from afar
Directed by a glorious star,
And on they wandered night and day
Until they came where Jesus lay.
And when they came unto that place
Where our beloved Messiah was,
They humbly cast them at his feet,
With gifts of gold and incense sweet.

Jean Mouton (c.1459-1522)

Nesciens mater virgo virum   Knowing no man, the virgin mother
Liturgical text

Nesciens mater virgo virum,	Knowing no man, the virgin mother
Peperit sine dolore Salvatorem saeculorum,	bore, without pain, the Saviour of the world.
Ipsum regem angelorum	Him, the king of angels,
Sola virgo lactabat, ubere de caelo pleno.	only the virgin suckled, breasts filled by heaven.

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

Hodie Christus natus est (pub. 1575)   Today was Christ born
Liturgical text

Hodie Christus natus est: noe.	Today was Christ born, noe.
Hodie Salvator apparuit: noe.	Today the Saviour appeared, noe.
Hodie in terra canunt Angeli,	Today on earth the angels sing
Laetantur Archangeli: noe.	and archangels rejoice, noe.
Hodie exultant iusti, dicentes:	Today the just exult saying:
Gloria in excelsis Deo: noe.	Glory be to God in the highest, noe.

Walter Lambe (c.1450-1504)

Nesciens mater
(c.1500-20)
Liturgical text

Knowing no man

Nesciens mater virgo virum	Knowing no man, the virgin mother
Peperit sine dolore	bore, without pain,
Salvatorem saeculorum.	the Saviour of the world.
Ipsum regem angelorum	Him, the king of angels,
Sola virgo lactabat,	only the virgin suckled,
Ubere de caelo plena.	breasts filled by heaven.

Trad/English

Sans Day Carol
Anonymous

Now the holly bears a berry as white as the milk,
And Mary bore Jesus, all wrapped up in silk:
And Mary bore Jesus Christ our Saviour for to be,
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly.

Now the holly bears a berry as green as the grass,
And Mary bore Jesus, who died on the cross:
And Mary bore Jesus Christ...

Now the holly bears a berry as black as the coal,
And Mary bore Jesus, who died for us all:
And Mary bore Jesus Christ...

Now the holly bears a berry, as blood is it red,
Then trust we our Saviour, who rose from the dead:
And Mary bore Jesus Christ...

Orlande de Lassus (c.1530-1594)

Resonet in laudibus
(pub. 1569)
Anonymous

Let praises resound

Resonet in laudibus	Let praises resound
Cum jucundis plausibus	with the joyous acclaim
Sion cum fidelibus:	of Sion's faithful:
Apparuit quem genuit Maria.	He whom Mary bore has appeared.
Sunt impleta quae predixit Gabriel.	Gabriel's prophecies have been fulfilled:
Eia, eia, Virgo Deum genuit	O joy! A Virgin has given birth to God,
Quem divina voluit clementia.	as divine mercy willed it to be.

Hodie apparuit in Israel:	Today he has appeared in Israel:
Per Mariam virginem est natus Rex.	from the Virgin Mary is born a King.
Magnum nomen Domini Emmanuel	Great is the name of the Lord Emmanuel,
Quod annuntiatum est per Gabriel.	as was announced by Gabriel.

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

Gloria from *Missa Hodie Christus natus est*
Liturgical text

Gloria in excelsis Deo.	Glory be to God on high.
Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.	And on earth peace to men of good will.
Laudamus te, benedicimus te,	We praise Thee, we bless Thee,
Adoramus te, glorificamus te.	we worship Thee, we glorify Thee.
Gratias agimus tibi	We give thanks to Thee
Propter magnam gloriam tuam.	for Thy great glory.
Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,	Lord God, heavenly King,
Deus Pater omnipotens.	God the Father almighty.
Domine Fili unigenite, Iesu Christe.	O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ.
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.	Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,	Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
Miserere nobis.	have mercy upon us.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,	Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
Suscipe deprecationem nostram.	receive our prayer.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,	Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father,
Miserere nobis.	have mercy upon us.
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus,	For Thou only art holy,
Tu solus Dominus,	Thou only art the Lord,
Tu solus Altissimus Iesu Christe.	Thou only art the most high, Jesus Christ.
Cum Sancto Spiritu	With the Holy Spirit
In gloria Dei Patris. Amen.	in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Please do not turn the page until the song and its accompaniment have ended.

Anon

Herrick's Carol (pub. 1623)
Robert Herrick

What sweeter music can we bring,
Than a carol, for to sing
The birth of this our heav'nly King?
Awake the voice! Awake the string!

We see him come, and know him ours,
Who with his sunshine and his showers
Turns all the patient ground to flowers.

Dark and dull night, fly hence away,
And give the honour to this day,
That sees December turned to May.
If we may ask the reason, say:
We see him come…

The darling of the world is come,
And fit it is we find a room
To welcome him. The nobler part
Of all the house here, is the heart.
We see him come…

Which we will give him; and bequeath
This holly and this ivy wreath,
To do him honour who's our King,
And Lord of all this revelling.
We see him come…

John Sheppard (c.1515-1558)

Reges Tharsis   The kings of Tharsis
(pub. c.1575)
Liturgical text

Reges Tharsis et insulae	The kings of Tharsis and of the isles
Munera offerent:	shall give presents:
Reges Arabum et Saba	the kings of Arabia and Sheba
Dona Domino Deo adducent,	will bring gifts to the Lord God,
Et adorabunt eum omnes reges,	and all kings will adore him,
Omnes gentes servient ei.	all nations will serve him.
Gloria Patri et Filio	Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
Et Spiritui Sancto.	and to the Holy Spirit.