



9 December 2020 4.30 pm & 7.00 pm *National Centre for Early Music*
9 December 2020 7.00 pm *Live stream*

THE YORK WAITS

THE WAITS' WASSAIL

Proface, Welcome	Anonymous <i>c.1500</i>
Nowell, nowell: Dieu vous garde	Richard Smert <i>fl. 1435–77</i>
Veni, veni Emanuel	Anonymous <i>French, 13th century</i>
Mirie it is while sumer ilast	Anonymous <i>13th century, arr. E. Gutteridge</i>
Hayl, Mary ful of grace	Anonymous <i>Trinity College manuscript, 15th century</i>
Ther is no Rose	Anonymous <i>Trinity carol roll, 15th century</i>
Thys endere nyghth I saw a sight	Anonymous <i>British Library MS, 16th century</i>
Noël nouvelet	Traditional <i>French, words c.1500</i>
Picardy (La ballade de Jesus Christ)	Anonymous <i>French, 16th century</i>

Quem pastores laudavere	arr. Michael Praetorius 1571–1621
In dulci jubilo	Settings by: Praetorius Johannes Eccard 1553–1611 Bartholomäus Gesius c.1555–1613 Johann Walther 1496–1570
Magnum nomen Domini Emanuel Joseph, lieber Joseph mein Angelus ad pastores	arr. Praetorius Walther Orlande de Lassus 1532–94
Ninna, nanna, dormi figlio	Anonymous <i>Neapolitan, pub. Rome 17th century</i>
Piva Ferrarese	Giovanni Ambrosio Dalza fl. 1508
Personent hodie	Anonymous <i>Piae Cantiones, 1582</i> arr. T. Bayley
Verbum caro factum est Vom Himmel Hoch	Anonymous <i>Spanish, 16th century</i> Martin Luther 1483–1546 Settings by: Praetorius Gesius Hans Leo Hassler 1564–1612 Eccard
The seven joys of Mary	Traditional arr. T. Bayley
The Gloucestershire Wassail	Traditional arr. T. Bayley
The Waits' Wassail	Anonymous from <i>Cryes of London, c.1600</i>

At the close of the 1500s there was an ingenious and witty genre of composition in which the familiar street cries of London and the sounds of the countryside were woven into seamless cycles to be accompanied by instrumental consorts. They provide an evocative soundtrack to Elizabethan life. One of them is an anonymous five-part composition that incorporates the cries of mop, mackerel, eel, orange and ale sellers and a request for information about a child 'lost between the Standard and the pissing conduit'. It concludes with a wassail song – evidence that this ancient turning-year tradition ('wassail' derives from the Anglo-Saxon 'waes hael', meaning 'good health') was known in the towns and cities as well as the deep countryside.

It has been suggested that the wassail that concludes the *Cryes of London* is a rendition of a song hollered in the streets by the city's waits. Whether or not this is true – for the London Waits at this time were a highly respected instrumental ensemble – it does help to establish what would be a very long-standing association between waits and the Christmas season.

The official waits bands that were established by towns and cities were originally professional ensembles with a range of civic duties. In York these included patrolling the streets at Christmas. After local government reforms of 1836 finally abolished the centuries-old institution of salaried municipal musicians, the association of waits with Christmas continued for several generations, although now the term was applied to ad hoc ensembles of players and singers, sometimes welcome and proficient, sometimes regarded as a nuisance. Itinerant carol singers are one of the last vestiges of this.

The wassail song that concludes the *Cryes of London*, dating from about 1600, can be detached from the rest of the piece, and the present-day York Waits have made it a sort of seasonal signature tune, adding extra lyrics adapted from the many traditional wassail songs that have survived in England.

It concludes a portmanteau concert that draws on a wide range of Christmas season music from medieval and renaissance Europe. The popularity of Christmas stems from its capacity to accommodate music and rituals that range from the reverentially religious to simple folk sincerity and boisterousness at a dark time of year. The elaborate polyphony of the German composer Praetorius and his contemporaries can easily exist alongside folk noëls from France, lullabies from Italy and carols from medieval England.

The key instrumental ensemble in the concert is that of shawms and sackbut, the principal combination mustered by wind bands in towns, cities and court during the 1500s. The other wind consorts are the softer ensembles of crumhorns and recorders. Also featured are a variety of stringed instruments, including the renaissance violin, which was beginning to emerge as the main instrument for dance music by the early 1600s. The instruments of popular music-making in medieval and renaissance Europe included hurdy gurdy and bagpipes – an instrument that was almost invariably seen in depictions of shepherds surprised by angels with news of the Nativity.

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THE YORK WAITS

Tim Bayley *shawm, curtal, harp, bagpipes, recorder, hurdy gurdy, crumhorn, portative organ*

Anna Marshall *sackbut, recorder, crumhorn*

Lizzie Gutteridge *shawm, curtal, recorder, violin, bagpipes, crumhorn*

Susan Marshall *rebec, violin, viola*

William Marshall *sackbut, recorder, guitar, flute, bagpipes, crumhorn*
with

Deborah Catterall *voice, recorder*

theyorkwaits.org.uk

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Some spellings and vocabulary in early English carols and songs have been modernised.

Nowell, nowell: Dieu vous garde

Nowell, nowell.
Who is there that singeth so: Nowell?
'I am here. Sire Christemas.'
Welcome, My Lord, Sire Christemas!
Welcome to us all, both more or less.
Come near, Nowell.
God keep you, good sir, tidings you bring:
A maid hath born a child full young,
the which causeth you to sing:
Nowell, nowell.

Mirie it is while sumer ilast

It is merry while summer lasts and the birds sing.
But now windy blasts and fierce weather draw near.
Oh, but this night is long.
I suffer so much from sorrow, mourning and hunger.

Thys endere nyghth I saw a sight

This endere [recent] night, I saw a sight
A star as bright as day,
And ever among, a maiden sung:
By, by, baby, lullay!

This Virgin clear
Without peer,
Unto her son did say:
'My Son, my Lord, my Father dear,
Why lies thou in hay?
Me thinks by right,
Thou king and knight,
Should lie in rich array;
Yet nevertheless, I will not cease
To sing, "By, by, lullay!"'

This babe full bayne [disobedient]
Answered again,
And thus me thought he said:
'I am a King, above all thing,
Although I be laid;
For you shall see
That kings three
Shall come on Twelfth Day;
For this behest,
Give me thy breast
And sing, "By, by, lullay!"

'My son, I say, without a nay,
Thou art my darling dear;
I shall thou keepe while thou does sleep
And make good cheer.
And all thy will, I will fulfil,
You know it well in truth,
Yet more that this, I will thee kiss
And sing, "By, by, lullay!"

'My mother sweet,
When I have sleep,
Then take me up at last
Upon your knee that you set me
And handle me full soft.
And in your arm, keep me right warm
And keep me night and day
And if I weep and cannot sleep
Sing, "By, by, lullay!"

Noël nouvelet

Christmas comes anew, let us sing Noel!
Glory to God! Now let your praises swell!
Sing we Noel for Christ, the newborn King,
Christmas comes anew, let us sing Noel!

Angels did say, 'O shepherds come and see,
Born in Bethlehem, a blessed Lamb for thee.'
Sing we Noel for Christ, the newborn King,
Christmas comes anew, O let us sing Noel!

In the manger bed, the shepherds found the child;
Joseph was there, and the Mother Mary mild.
Sing we Noel for Christ, the newborn King,
Christmas comes anew, let us sing Noel!

In dulci jubilo

In sweet jubilation
now let us sing and be happy,
for he who makes our hearts blissful
lies in a manger
shining like the sun in his mother's lap.
You are Alpha and Omega!

Oh tiny Jesus,
I yearn for you to comfort my soul,
oh best of boys,
with all your blessings.
Oh Prince of Glory,
come close to me.

Oh love of the Father!
Oh love of the Son!
We would all be lost
because of our sins,
but you gained for us
the joy of heaven.
If only we were there!

Where are these joys?
They are only to be found
where the angels are singing new songs
and the bells are ringing
in the court of the king.
If only we were there!

Joseph, lieber Joseph mein

Joseph, my dear Joseph,
help me rock my little child.
God will recompense you
in heaven, the Virgin Mary's child.

Hey, hey! The Virgin has given birth to God
whom the divine mercy willed.

Now let all sing together,
sing to the new-born king,
saying with devout voice:
'Glory be to Christ our babe!'

Today the one whom Gabriel predicted
has appeared in Israel, has been born king.

Angelus ad pastores

An angel appeared to the shepherds.
'I bring you tidings of great joy.
Born to us this day is the saviour of the world. Alleluia.'

Ninna, nanna, dormi figlio

Sleep my Darling, sleep my Baby.
Your notes of sorrow anticipate the Cross.
But now it is time for sleep.
Do not weep and look ahead to a time of sadness.

Vom Himmel hoch

From heaven above to earth I come
To bear good news to every home;
Glad tidings of great joy I bring
Of which I now will say and sing.

To you this day is born a Child
Of a chosen virgin mild.
That blessed Child, sweet and kind
Shall bring both joy and peace of mind.

It is Christ, our Lord and God indeed,
Your help and stay in every need.
Your Saviour he is come to be
From every sin to set you free.