

THE BOSTON CAMERATA

ANNE AZÉMA ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

PRESENTS

A M E D I E V A L C H R I S T M A S

HODIE CHRISTUS NATUS EST



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original texts & translations.

HODIE!

Uterus hodie virginis floruit

Aquitania, 12th c.

Today the belly of the virgin has flourished, and the passion did not overwhelm her as she conceived and became a mother, she who refrained from knowing the man by remaining a virgin. O wonderful birth. This flower of which the writings of David speak, as a bridegroom coming out of the royal brain stem, anointed the world with heavenly balm. O wonderful birth.

SPONSUS

(From the "Sponsus" miracle play, Aquitania, 12th c.)

Adest Sponsus

He is here, the Bridegroom is at hand! Prepare for his coming, ye virgins!

Oiet Virgines

Hear ye virgins, you that are present, what I tell you. He is coming, the Bridegroom. Jesus the Savior is his name, therefore sleep not! He was born in Bethlehem, crucified, and rose from the dead, therefore sleep not! I Gabriel, say it unto you; therefore, sleep not!

Nos virgines

Alas, what shall we become? We have neglected the oil in our lamps. Sorrow and mourning, we have slept too long.

Amen dico

Verily, I say, I know you not. Begone, unfortunate ones, to be delivered to eternal pain.

LUX!

Verbum Patris Humanatur, O!

Aquitania, 11th c.

The word of the father is made man, while a maiden is greeted; the greeted one is fruitful without knowledge of man. Behold, new joys! A new manner of birth, but exceeding in power of nature, when the creator of all things is made creature. Behold, new joys!

Judea et Jerusalem

Chant

Judea and Jerusalem, do not fear; tomorrow, you shall stand forth, and the Lord will be with you.

Dominus veniet

Chant

The Lord will come; run to meet him, saying, His kingdom is great, and his reign shall be without end. He is God, Wonderful, Counselor, the Prince of Peace. Alleluia, alleluia.

Lux refulget

Aquitania, 12th c.

The Light is shining on this day, and the Church resounds with joy. Emmanuel! Emmanuel! The name shines bright in Israel.

PLEINE DE DUÇUR

Clara sonent organa

Aquitania, 12th c.

Instrumental

Mainte Chanson ait fait

Anonymous, 13th c.

I have made many songs, finely wrought, but I was never satisfied until God was as well. And to sing even better, I have to sing of the Queen, pure, who will lead us to the great eternal joy. Mary was pure and a virgin when the archangel approached her to announced that God would take nourishment from her breast. She lowered her eyes, then looked up and said: 'Friend, how may I give birth when I know no man?' 'Gabriel said to her: 'Friend, do not worry, you will carry God, for nine months!' And Mary said: 'Friend, when you will depart from me, tell God that I am his servant, and have great joy of it.'

Veine pleine de duçur

England, 13th c.

Source full of sweetness, True hope of life, Beloved Mother of the Creator, Help the needy. Ave Maria. You bore Jesus Christ within Yourself, Virgin, utterly pure, Ave Maria.

Edi be thu hevene quene

England, 13th c.

Happy be thou, Heavenly Queen, man's comfort and angel's bliss. My sweet Lady, hear me. I cry 'merci', I am bound to thee.

THE STORY

Angelus ad virginem - Gabriel fram heven-king

England, 13th c.

Instrumental

Dal ciel venne messo novello

Italy, 14th c.

From the heavens came a new messenger, it was the angel Gabriel... He began well, and saluted her: "Ave Maria; you have been chosen among all women, and the fruit who came out of your womb will save the world". The lady was disturbed and said: 'How could this be, I know no man, neither old nor young'. The angel said: 'Do not fear, you have found favor with God; he doesn't want any other mother, but you'. The lady said: 'I am his servant, since he is calling me'.

Maravillosos et piadosos

Based on a Cantiga attributed to King Alfonso X "el Sabio", 1221-1284

Instrumental

Sancta Maria graciae – Dou way, Robin

England, 14th c.

UPPER VOICE: *Holy Mother of Grace, to whom Gabriel appeared, be with us.*

LOWER VOICE: *Dou way, Robin, the child will weep.*

In seculum viellatoris

France, 13th c.

Instrumental

Magi videntes stellam

Chant

When the magi saw the star, they rejoiced with great joy!

Pois que dos reys nostre Senhor

King Alfonso X "el Sabio"

After our God descended from heaven To allow the kings to see Him, It was right that he would do them this grace. It was in Bethlehem When he was born of the Virgin Mary, And on the thirteenth day Three kings appeared, Who saw in the star, the coming of the King God. After our God descended.....

It was from the islands of Saba and Tarsa Which are in the sea, and from Arabia, Where there are many lands to cross. But however far they might be, He made them arrive quickly to Bethlehem He, who has power on all things. After our God descended.....

In the star, He showed them How he was King and God; That is why all of them brought Him presents from their treasures. The star guided them To the land of the Jews, Where Herod asked them: 'Why are you here?' After our God descended.....

They answered so: "In the star we saw that a very powerful king was born here Lord of the Jews and of all". Herod said: "Listen to me I shall give you a charge: Go see him and come back here, So I can go and meet him as well". After our God descended...

They went on their way at once and saw the start going rapidly before them, and followed it. And when it reached Bethlehem, it shone directly over where Jesus was lying.

After our God descended...

...in the arms of his sorrowing Mother. Then they gave him their gifts: gold, befitting kings; frankincense, which is spiritual; and myrrh, to prevent the body's decay.

After our God descended....

Heu, heu, heu

France, 12th c.

Alas, alas, alas, how I was rejoicing Before I saw these bodies deprived of life Until I was shaken By the sight of these entrails strewn about, Oh, how these children will make me cry without end. Oh pain! Oh joy! Reduced to the silence of mothers and fathers! Let forth torrents of tears! Add these to affliction! Cry for the flowers of Judea And the pain of your country.

English Dance

England, 13th c.

Instrumental

Nolite timere

Normandy, 13th c.

Be not afraid, for behold, I bring to you tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David, the Savior of the world. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth let there be peace to men of good will.

Quem vidistis Pastores?

Chant

Whom did you see, shepherds, say, tell us, who has appeared? We saw the child new-born and choirs of angels praising the Lord, alleluia.

Salve, virgo singularis

France, 13th c.

Hail, wondrous virgin. Let us now adore God incarnate.

BENEDICAT DOMINO

Por nos virgen madre

King Alfonso X "el Sabio"

For us, virgin Mother, pray to your son and friend, Jesus Christ.

Hodie Christus natus est

Chant

Today, Christ is born; today, a Savior appears; today, angels and archangels rejoice, saying, "Glory be to God in the highest, Alleluia."

Campanis cum cymbalis/Honoremus Dominam

England, 14th c.

TRIPLUM: With bells and cymbals, Let the whole choir of mankind, praise the Lord with lyres and psalteries, let us praise the Lord of heaven.

DUPLUM: Let us honour the Lady, worthy of the court of heaven, chosen to be the royal mother of the King's glory, Let there be always jubilation, for the Mother after the son, and devoted prayer for those in weakness.

Gregis pastor

Aquitania, 12th c.

Tityrus, shepherd of the flock, herds asses too; he is a shepherd and an ass himself.

Ah, ah, Tityrus has invited us to a rich feast.

Crozier and officials and satyrs attend the feast given in honor of Tityrus.

Ah, ah...

Praises indeed to Tityrus with melodies on instruments and the resounding drum.

Ah, ah...

Now all of us give thanks to shepherd Tityrus and bless the Lord!

Ah, ah...



THE BOSTON CAMERATA

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Camila Parias VOICE

Deborah Rentz-Moore VOICE

Allison Monroe VIELLE, VOICE

Christa Patton HARP, WINDS

Our readings are excerpted from King James Bible.

One can hear this music on our recent Harmonia Mundi CD
A Medieval Christmas - Hodie Christus Natus Est.

Special thanks to David Levine for sponsoring
our December 3 concert in Newbury, MA.