
Program

Kingsport Symphony Orchestra

John Gordon Ross

Music Director and Conductor

A Concert of Christmas Music

Saturday, December 1, 1990, 8:15 p.m.

Eastman Employee Center

A Christmas Cantata Geoffrey Bush
(1920 -)

1. *Lullay, Jesu, Lullay*
2. *The first good joy that Mary had* — Penny Cox, alto
3. *When Jesus Christ was four years old*
4. *Little Jesus, sweetly sleep* — Penny Cox, alto
5. *Rejoice! O make we merry, both more or less*
6. *This endris night*
7. *I sing of a maiden* — Agnese Goin, soprano
8. *By by lullay, thou little tiny child* — Paula Webb, soprano
9. *I saw three ships come sailing in* — Epilogue
Jud Barry, oboe

INTERMISSION

Sleigh Ride, K. 605 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756 - 1791)

"Go Tell It on the Mountain" John Wesley Work
(1901 - 1967)

"Suscepit Israel" from Magnificat Johann Sebastian Bach
He hath holpen his servant Israel,
In remembrance of his mercy. (1685 - 1750)

"Carol of the Bells" Mykola Leontovich
(1877 - 1921)
arranged by Peter Wilhousky

"Pastoral Symphony" from Messiah Georg Frederic Handel
(1685 - 1759)

"Shepherd's Chorus and Dance" Gian Carlo Menotti
from Amahl and the Night Visitors (1911 -)
Charles Lindsey, tenor
Lewis Baumstark, baritone
Peyton Watson, bass

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Program Notes

Christmas Concert 1990

by Jud Barry

Have we made a mess of Christmas? Was a circus ever more littered with sideshow freaks than this manic season with its Santas, Rudolphs, Frosties and celebrity/cartoon television specials? Linus reading Luke, okay, but Chicago Bears coach Mike Ditka? What's he doing, dreaming of a Lite Christmas? Next thing you know, the Holy Trinity will be a backfield formation. It's little wonder that so many never make it through all these garish accretions to the stable door.

But if you run the gauntlet successfully and venture near the manger, you will find a congenial crowd of revelers, those who have come with the kings and the angels into the heart of Christmas, where a gift given in the right spirit is a blessing received. Glorification is the order of the day, with song and dance its ordained conveyance.

A flock of shepherds is there, having been jolted out of their pastoral placidity by regal and transcendental visitors. In the heady atmosphere, they are in a tizzy of joy.

One group has followed a young neighbor, Amahl, whose lameness was healed when he offered his crutch to the kings to take as a gift to the Christ child. These shepherds have given gifts of foodstuffs to the kings and, after a little coaxing ("they won't eat you"), danced for them. Now, stepping out to the sound of Amahl's reed pipe, they are here to do the same for Jesus.

A second group of shepherds has followed the angelic throng. Some, perhaps a little overawed, offer up the same bagpipe tune they were playing when the angels burst from the heavens. But now it sounds different — in the charmed air, the tune becomes a polished, Handelian pastorella, and their bagpipes sound like violins. Others send up a hearty “amen” to the angels: “Go, tell it on the mountains, over the hills and everywhere, that Jesus Christ is born.”

The shepherds stand out, but you will notice others with distinctive styles of glorification. There are the soothers, whose beautiful melodies (“*Little Jesus, sweetly sleep,*” “*This endris night,*” “*By by Lullay, thou little tiny child*”) prick us with the paradox of this fragile, infant God. There are the enumerators, of joys seven and ships all three. There are the poets of the “makeless” (matchless) maiden and the son she “ches” (chose) who “came all so still to his mother’s bower, as dew in April that falleth on the flower.” There are the merrymakers, for whom the ringing bells seem to say “throw cares away,” and there are even the enforcers of merriment, who will throw anyone into stocks who fails to bring song or “sport” to the occasion.

Inside the stable the Madonna remembers her song of praise, her *Magnificat* — “my soul doth magnify the Lord” — with the words “suscepit Israel puerum suum” (He has helped His servant Israel”). Trumpets flourish as the angelic host echoes Mary’s words.

Back outside, with the celebration winding down, a cluster of glorifying composers awaits W.A. Mozart’s sleigh to take them over the river and through the woods for a hot toddy and

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Kingsport Chapel

Fall Branch Chapel Colonial Heights Chapel

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some party mix. They are a cosmopolitan bunch: two Germans (Bach and Handel), a Russian (Leontovich), an Italian (Menotti), an American of African descent (Work) and an Englishman (Bush). With the halloo of the sleigh's posthorn approaching, Bush puts a gloss on the evening with a child's verse by compatriot Hilaire Belloc:
"When Jesus Christ was four years old
The angels brought Him toys of gold
Which no man ever had bought or sold.
And yet with these He would not play,
He made His small fowl out of clay,
And blest them till they flew away."



Next Concert

*Saturday, January 26, 1991
8:15 p.m.*

Eastman Employee Center

*Marcus Thompson
viola and viola d'amore*

*Music of Dvorak, Massenet,
Telemann and Vivaldi*