

Old Christmas Returned - New programme of 17th Century music, words and song

Monday 23 November, 2015

Early Music Ensemble Passamezzo present their new programme "Old Christmas Returned".

The festive programme of music, words and song, will take audiences back in time to the Christmases of the past, showing how Christmas was celebrated, banned & restored during the turbulent years of the 17th Century. The programme will explore the feasting & revels of the season, following the calendar through Christmas, St Stephen's Day, St John's Day, Innocents' Day, New Year (this was the time for gifts rather than Christmas Day) and Epiphany (including songs about wassailing and the crowning of the king of the bean), before reaching the Candlemas, the traditional end of Christmas, when evergreen decorations were taken down, with songs like 'Christmas has made an end'. Ballads, readings and songs will describe how during the Civil War, and under Cromwell, Christmas feasts and sports were reviled by the Puritans and banned by Parliament, but were restored with great rejoicing under Charles II.

The programme draws on research undertaken by Tamsin Lewis, on music which is either unpublished since the 17th Century or newly transcribed and reconstructed from manuscript sources. Songs like "Wassail, our jolly wassail", "This day our Saviour Christ was born" and "A Christmas song when the Rump was first dissolved", will be performed in public for what may be the first time in more than 300 years.

There is a wealth of little-known but accessible popular English Christmas music, and this period has some of the most evocative Christmas music of all, much of which has proved popular at Passamezzo's previous concerts. The concerts aim to put musical pieces into context within short extracts from contemporary writings, linking the whole by a commentary.

Carols, consort songs and lutesongs, dance melodies, viol and lute solos, ballads, readings, rounds and madrigals. Includes music by Attey, Bull, Dowland, Gibbons, Locke, Purcell and Wilson; readings by Herrick, Shakespeare, Prynn and Winstanley

Eleanor Cramer: Soprano, bass viol.

Alison Kinder: viols, recorders.

Robin Jeffrey/Richard Mackenzie: lute, guitar, tenor.

Tamsin Lewis: director, Renaissance violin, viols, alto.

Michael Palmer: actor, baritone.

Performed in period costume.

5 December, 7.30pm: St James the Less, Pangbourne, Berkshire

6 December, 7.30pm: St James' Church, Paddington, London

13 December, 7.30pm: All Saints' Church, Snodland, Kent 01634 243001

14 December, 7.30pm: Unitarian Chapel, Warwick

18 December, 7.30pm: St John the Baptist Church, Stoke by Clare, Suffolk

19 December, 7.30pm: Great St Mary's Church, Cambridge

21 December, 7.30pm: Priory Church of St John, Clerkenwell, London

Media:



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Early Music :: Lute :: Viol :: Research :: History :: Ballads :: Song :: Costume ::

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22 December, 7.30pm: St Mary's Church, Guildford, Surrey

31 December, 9.30pm: Wolverton Manor, Isle of Wight 01983 740609

9 January, 7.30pm: Boxgrove Priory, Sussex

Tickets available in advance from www.ticketsource.co.uk/passamezzo

or 0844 8700887 unless otherwise stated, or at the door

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