

'A MUSICAL FEAST FOR ADVENT' ANDREW MARIES

Advent is a rich and evocative season in the life of the church. What fresh musical possibilities are there to make a musical feast for Advent?

Advent (from the Latin word *adventus* meaning 'coming') is a season of expectant waiting and preparation for the birth of Christ, opening the liturgical year on the fourth Sunday before December 25th. The Latin *adventus* is in turn, a translation of the Greek word *parousia*, commonly used in reference to the Second Coming of Christ.

The season of Advent reminds us, both of the original waiting that was done by the Jews for the birth of their Messiah, as well as the waiting of Christians for Christ's return.

Traditionally, the days between December 17–24, are marked by the singing of the Great Advent 'O antiphons'. These are the antiphons for the Magnificat at Vespers, or Evening Prayer (in the Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches) and Evensong in Anglican churches each day, and mark the forthcoming birth of the Messiah. They form the basis for each verse of the popular Advent hymn, "O come, O come, Emmanuel".

Advent can provide many opportunities to be creative in the way we use music for worship. It's not tainted by the sentimentalism and superficiality that has come to surround Christmas.

WISDOM:

Dec 17: O Sapientia: 'O Wisdom, proceeding from the mouth of the Most High, pervading and permeating all creation, mightily ordering all things: Come and teach us the way of prudence.'

Isaiah had prophesied, "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord, and his delight shall be the fear of the Lord." (11:2-3), and "Wonderful is His counsel and great is His wisdom." (28:29).

1. Magnificat plainsong with Advent antiphon 'O wisdom...' College of the Resurrection Mirfield 'Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus' CD recording

JUDGEMENT

Dec 18: O Adonai 'O Lord and ruler of the house of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the burning bush and gave him the Law on Sinai: Come with an outstretched arm and redeem us.'

Isaiah had prophesied, "But He shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the land's afflicted. He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips." (11:4-5); and "Indeed the Lord will be there with us, majestic; yes the Lord our judge, the Lord our lawgiver, the Lord our king, he it is who will save us." (33:22).

2. Jesus is Lord the cry that echoes Townend/Getty Mission Praise 1078
3. Word of justice - Bernadette Farrell

COMING MESSIAH

Dec 19: O Radix Jesse: 'O Root of Jesse, who stands for an ensign before the people, Before whom kings are mute and to whom the nations will do homage: Come quickly to deliver us.'

Isaiah had prophesied, "But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom." (11:1), and 'On that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious' (11:10). (cont...)

Remember also that Jesse was the father of King David, and Micah had prophesied that the Messiah would be of the house and lineage of David and be born in David's city, Bethlehem (Micah 5:1).

4. O Child of promise come – tune: Andrew Maries (wds RSCM Sing Praise 14)
5. Song of Simeon – Andrew Maries

DELIVERER

Dec 20: O Clavis David: 'O Key of David and scepter of the house of Israel, You open and no one can close, You close and no one can open: Come and rescue the prisoners who are in darkness and in the shadow of death.'

Isaiah had prophesied, 'I will place the Key of the House of David on His shoulder; when he opens, no one will shut, when he shuts, no one will open.' (22:22), and "His dominion is vast and forever peaceful, from David's throne, and over His kingdom, which he confirms and sustains by judgment and justice, both now and forever." (9:6).

6. I waited, I waited on the Lord – Wild Goose Songs Vol 1
7. Heaven shall not wait Hymns Old & New (One Church, One Faith, One Lord) 255

DAYSPRING

Dec 21: O Oriens: O Dayspring, splendour of light everlasting: Come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.:

Isaiah had prophesied, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone." (9:1). (Dayspring = first light of dawn)

8. All earth was dark – Mission Praise 8
9. Christ be our light – Bernadette Farrell

SAVIOUR

Dec 22: O Rex Gentium: 'O King of the nations, the ruler they long for, the cornerstone uniting all people: Come and save us all, whom You formed out of clay.'

Isaiah had prophesied, "For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace." (9:5), and "He shall judge between the nations, and impose terms on many peoples. They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again." (2:4) .

10. People walking in the dark – Mark Cheeseman, Chris Jeffrey (Carol Praise)
11. Song of Zechariah – (Carol Praise 1st ed.)

GOD WITH US

Dec 23: O Emmanuel: O God with us, our king and our Lord, the anointed for the nations and their Saviour: Come and save us, O Lord our God.

Isaiah had prophesied, "The Lord himself will give you this sign: the Virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel." (7:14)

12. God with us – G.Kendrick