

ADVENT ANTIPHONS

by *William B. Jones*

respondent to

Ave Maria! Images of Mary

in Medieval and Renaissance Music, Art and Sculpture

presented by The Memorial Art Gallery and *Musica Spei (Music of Hope)*

December 4 & 7, 2003 Rochester, New York

Memorial Art Gallery Fountain Court

“Advent Antiphons” Copyright © 2004 by William B. Jones

“Prelude” on *“Madonna and Child with Four Saints,”* School of Nardo di Cione, late 14th century

Original concert program available at www.musicaspei.org

ADVENT ANTIPHONS

William B. Jones

Prelude

Gathered to sample “Images of Mary,”
music to parallel works of art,
a two-hour drive to dare the evening,
an hour before concert with carved-out scenes.

Dusting off snow I find on entry
St James’ statue offering welcome,
as to road-weary pilgrims before,
and give myself to rest, receive.

Centermost Mary, on gold-painted panels,
bears forth Jesus into creation,
sided by Peter and John the Baptizer,
and they by Francis and Dominic.

How did she know to meet me here,
the frozen river to course beneath?
with these, their lists and prayers and speech
fallen to silence, the light incipient.

Hushing now, we wait arrival,
gallery guides folded quiet in hand
when into muted hall voices enter
and oh! my God, the Song!

ADVENT ANTIPHONS

William B. Jones

“Glorious Queen, rose shining with the light of Christ’s noble birth, rejoice! Bring forth a dazzling splendor, and be the dark night, since the sun deigns to be born in you.”

- ***Regina gloriosa***, Johannes Ciconia (c. 1335-1411)

Become Night

Become night,
Queen of Heaven,
that true light may come.

Be dark night
that God-light flood
our ravaged, scattered home.

Be dark night
that Son may break
into the wine-dark soul.

Become night
to us, God-bearer,
that we be borne in you.

ADVENT ANTIPHONS

William B. Jones

*"Today a closed door has been opened for us
because the serpent has suffocated in a woman.
Therefore, the flower from the Virgin Mary shines forth in the east."*

-Hodie aperuit, Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179)

Portal

Raptured, I cannot advance
yet am stolen,
taken.

Frozen find I have not entered
heaven's song
before.

Singer, though I may not take you
in your singing
finish me.

Virgin of a thousand Advents,
now your prayer
to me.

ADVENT ANTIPHONS

William B. Jones

*“Exalt Mary, the Virgin Mother. Exalt Jesus Christ with her.
Mary, shelter of generations, protect us; Jesus, refuge of all, hear us.
For you are, in truth, the succor and preserver of the whole world.”*

***Mariam matrem**, anon. Pilgrim Song, *Llibre Vermell* (14th century)*

SUCCOR (< *sub* + *currere*, “to course beneath”)

Shelter of the generations,
shelter always this my son

out the nursery of holding,
newly robed and sized for cross.

Bearing carefully Your Light,
acolyte into “grown-up” church,

hearing now our deepest prayers
(at seven young our hearts to learn);

the ones we make from our great fear,
the ones we bare each other and You,

hurting, healing, endings estranged,
longings, losings, turnings away.

Make this place, God, Sanctuary;
liberation into joy,

make us faithful in your keep,
lean compassion into trust.

Preserve and succor
him, me, them, us.

ADVENT ANTIPHONS

William B. Jones

“Shining star, like the sun’s own ray on a mountain, cleft with miracles, hear your people.

Rich and poor, great and lowly, all gather rejoicing, enter the mountain, see with their own eyes, and come back filled with grace.”

-Stella splendens , anon. Pilgrim Song, *Llibre Vermell* (14th century)

Horizon

Mary, was there once horizon
where the world fit all your view;

every prayer and heartache longing,
every ending caught in you?

Struck in innocence and joy,
admixed all with guilt and grief,

each loss bent to infant crying;
is it somehow yet to be?

ADVENT ANTIPHONS

William B. Jones

*Pray for us, Virgin never-ending,
from whom a light has arisen in the darkness
for the righteous of heart, hear us in our troubles...*

Ora pro nobis (Loco Deo gratias)
Josquen des Prez (c. 1450-1521)

Sought

Not the God chased-after, grasping,
nor the one whose whisper we shout.

Not the Lord so fiercely defended,
nor the one we argue, avenge.

Not even the God I most hope might be,
but You, the One whose prayer seeks me.