

1746-1800

William Billings

A VIRGIN UNSPOTTED
(JUDEA)

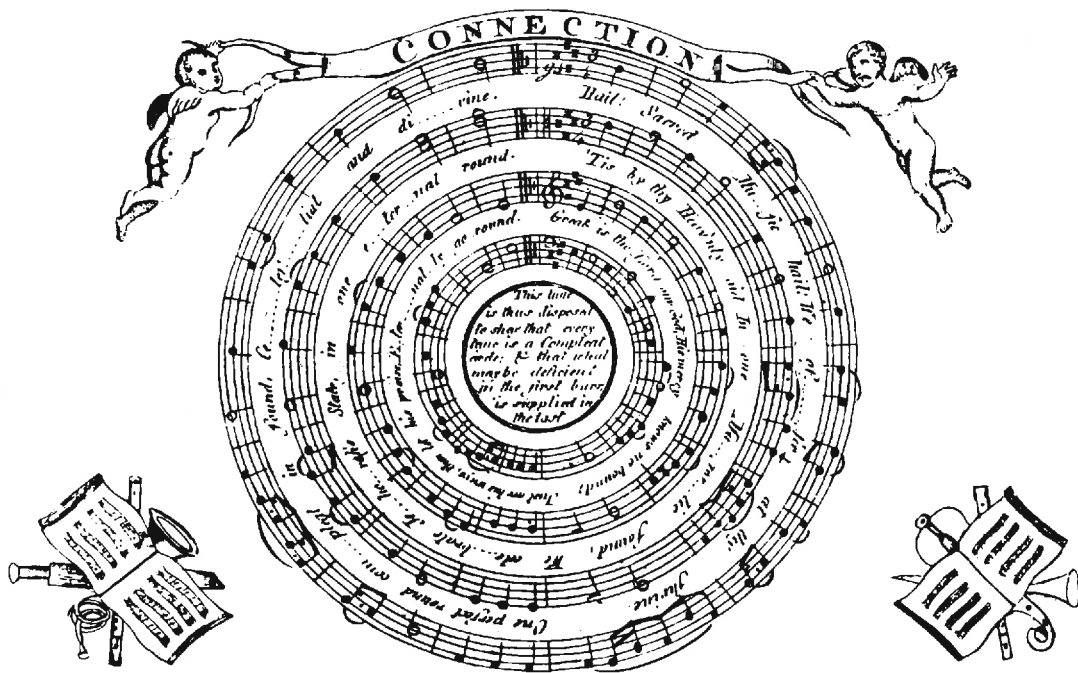
A Christmas Carol
for Four part Mixed Chorus

EDITED BY

Clarence Dickinson



MERCURY MUSIC CORPORATION
New York, N. Y.



A ROUND FROM THE FRONTISPIECE OF "THE CONTINENTAL HARMONY", 1794.

WILLIAM BILLINGS

Creator of the unique *fuguing tune*, a musician unrivalled in his day for spirit and originality, William Billings justly earns the title of America's leading 18th century composer. In 1770, the year of Beethoven's birth, Billings produced what has been called a "musical declaration of independence", a volume engraved in Boston by Paul Revere entitled "The New England Psalm Singer". Naive, full of vitality and gusto, this collection broke with the traditional English psalm books used in America since the publication of the "Bay Psalm Book" in 1640, and presented a fresh style that was Billings' own. Eight years later he produced "The Singing Master's Assistant", containing, to use his own words, music with "more than twenty times the power of the old slow tunes"—the first fuguing pieces.

These fuguing tunes were a new kind of hymn tune, containing within the usual homophonic structure sections in free fugal form, where the voices enter one at a time in polyphonic imitation. They were sung fast, with great conviction, and performed by church choirs and Revolutionary soldiers with equal enthusiasm. The words were frequently cheerful and in lively meters. The fuguing tune became one of the most popular forms of the period, and survived for seventy-five years, until superseded about 1850 by the more solemn and sentimental

hymns of the Victorian period and the growing supply of instrumental music from abroad.

William Billings was born in Boston in 1746 of humble parents, and apprenticed as a tanner. As young man he scribbled music on hides with chalk, and before long hung out his shingle "Billings, Music". A picturesque figure, blind in one eye, with a withered arm, legs of uneven length, and a rasping voice that in singing became a bellow, Billings had an energy and enthusiasm that made him a great influence. He was, in fact, the father of our American church choirs and singing schools today, a teacher and composer whose work provided the spark that set America's dormant musical life going. He died in poverty at Boston in 1800.

Until recently it has been generally assumed that New England was bare of musical art until the beginning of the 19th century. The music of William Billings is excellent evidence to the contrary. His six song collections, ending with "The Continental Harmony" of 1794, reveal a native talent of great originality. Whether it is his popular Revolutionary war song "Chester", his dissonant "Jargon" written to annoy his critics, or his lively fuguing pieces, this is American music of value and importance today.

CARLETON SPRAGUE SMITH

A VIRGIN UNSPOTTED

The text of this delightful Christmas carol will be found in several old English Collections; Billings made a few changes in the words of the first stanza, which was the only one he set in the music. It was one of his amusing peculiarities to put only part of

the text in the music, upon occasion, as, for example one Hallelujah or a few lines only of a Psalm, followed by Etc., etc., etc.

CLARENCE DICKINSON

A VIRGIN UNSPOTTED (JUDEA)

By
WILLIAM BILLINGS

From The Singing Master's Assistant, 1778.

Edited by CLARENCE DICKINSON

Andantino

Soprano

1. A vir-gin un-spot-ted by Pro-phet fore-told, should bring forth a Sa-viour which
2. God sent down an an-gel from hea-ven so high, To cer-tain poor shepherds in

Alto

1. should bring forth a Sa-viour which
2. To cer-tain poor shepherds in

Tenor

1. A vir-gin un-spot-ted by Pro-phet fore-told, should bring forth a Sa-viour which
2. God sent down an an-gel from hea-ven so high, To cer-tain poor shepherds in

Bass

1. should bring forth a Sa-viour which
2. To cer-tain poor shepherds in

Piano
For rehearsal only

Andantino

cresc.

now we be-hold, To be our Re-deem-er from Death, Hell and Sin, Which
fields as they lie, And made them no long-er in sor-row to stay, Be-

cresc.

now we be-hold, To be our Re-deem-er from Death, Hell and Sin, Which
fields as they lie, And made them no long-er in sor-row to stay, Be-

cresc.

now we be-hold, To be our Re-deem-er from Death, Hell and Sin, Which
fields as they lie, And made them no long-er in sor-row to stay, Be-

cresc.

* In Billings' original the melody was carried by the tenor, a common custom at that time. In accordance with modern usage this has been given to the soprano in the present edition, while the tenor sings the part originally sung by the soprano. If, however, any one desires to reproduce the old effect, it may easily be done by interchanging these two parts.

Allegro

poco rit. e dim.

A - dam's transgress-ions in - vol - ved us in. Then - let us be mer - ry, put

cause that our Sa - viour was born on this day.

poco rit. e dim.

A - dam's transgress-ions in - vol - ved us in. Then, let us be mer - ry, put

cause that our Sa - viour was born on this day.

poco rit. e dim.

A - dam's transgress-ions in - vol - ved us in. Then - let us be mer - ry, put

cause that our Sa - viour was born on this day.

poco rit. e dim.

A - dam's transgress-ions in - vol - ved us in. Then let us be mer - ry, put

cause that our Sa - viour was born on this day.

Allegro

poco rit. e dim.

sor - row a - way, Our Sa - viour, Christ Je - sus, was born on this day. Then

sor - row a - way, Our Sa - viour, Christ Je - sus, was born on this day. Then

sor - row a - way, Our Sa - viour, Christ Je - sus, was born on this day. Then

sor - row a - way, Our - Sa - viour, Christ Je - sus, was born on this day. Then

sor - row a - way, Our Sa - viour, Christ Je - sus, was born on this day. Then

let us be mer-ry, put sor-row a-way. Our Sa-viour, Christ Je-sus, was born on this day. *rit.*

let us be mer-ry, put sor-row a-way. Our Sa-viour, Christ Je-sus, was born on this day. *rit.*

let us be mer-ry, put sor-row a-way. Our Sa-viour, Christ Je-sus, was born on this day. *rit.*

let us be mer-ry, put sor-row a-way. Our Sa-viour, Christ Je-sus, was born on this day. *rit.*

Andantino

3. Then, pre-sent-ly aft-er, the shepherds did spy A num-ber of an-gels that
4. To teach us hu-mi-li-ty all this was done, To learn us from hence haughty

3. A num-ber of an-gels that
4. To learn us from hence haughty

3. Then, pre-sent-ly aft-er, the shepherds did spy A num-ber of an-gels that
4. To teach us hu-mi-li-ty all this was done, To learn us from hence haughty

3. A num-ber of an-gels that
4. To learn us from hence haughty

Andantino

cresc.

stood in the sky; They joy - ful - ly talk - ed and sweet - ly did sing "To
 pride for to shun. The man - ger his cra - dle who came from a - bove, The

cresc.

stood in the sky; They joy - ful - ly talk - ed and sweet - ly did sing "To
 pride for to shun. The man - ger his cra - dle who came from a - bove, The

cresc.

stood in the sky; They joy - ful - ly talk - ed and sweet - ly did sing "To
 pride for to shun. The man - ger his cra - dle who came from a - bove, The

cresc.

stood in the sky; They joy - ful - ly talk - ed and sweet - ly did sing "To
 pride for to shun. The man - ger his cra - dle who came from a - bove, The

cresc.

poco rit. e dim.

God be all glo - ry, our Hea - ven - ly King! Then let us be mer - ry, put
 great God of mer - cy, of peace and of love.

poco rit. e dim.

God be all glo - ry, our Hea - ven - ly King! Then let us be mer - ry, put
 great God of mer - cy, of peace and of love.

poco rit. e dim.

God be all glo - ry, our Hea - ven - ly King! Then let us be mer - ry, put
 great God of mer - cy, of peace and of love.

poco rit. e dim.

God be all glo - ry, our Hea - ven - ly King! Then let us be mer - ry, put
 great God of mer - cy, of peace and of love.

Allegro

poco rit. e dim.

Allegro

sor - row a - way. Our Sa - viour, Christ Je - sus, was born on this day. Then

sor - row a - way. Our Sa - viour, Christ Je - sus, was born on this day. Then

sor - row a - way. Our Sa - viour, Christ Je - sus, was born on this day. Then

sor - row a - way. Our Sa - viour, Christ Je - sus, was born on this day. Then

let us be mer-ry, put sor-row a - way. Our Sa - viour, Christ Je - sus, was born on this day. *rit.*

let us be mer-ry, put sor-row a - way, Our Sa - viour, Christ Je - sus, was born on this day. *rit.*

let us be mer-ry, put sor-row a - way. Our Sa - viour, Christ Je - sus, was born on this day. *rit.*

let us be mer-ry, put sor-row a - way, Our Sa - viour, Christ Je - sus, was born on this day. *rit.*

Christmas Choral Selections



FOUR MOUNTAIN CAROLS

by Harold Abbey

These carols have been written in an intimate folksong style. **SLEEP, SWEET JESUS, SLEEP** and **BEHOLD A STAR** have a devotional spirit. **JOHNNY BRING THE PINE TREE IN** is gaily festive, and the fourth, **SUSAN BELLE**, expresses the sentimental aspect of the Holiday Season.

Arranged by Harold Ake, piano, (e) 20c each.
Sleep, Sweet Jesus, Sleep—SATB (191); SSA (285)

Johnny Bring the Pine Tree In—SATB (192); TTBB (278)

Susan Belle—SATB (193); TTBB (277)

Arranged by Jack Litten:

Behold A Star (274)—SATB, organ or piano, (m) 20c.

222 **LOWLY IN A MANGER**—Decorative alleluias give an exciting effect against the carol-like melody in this number by David S. York, the composer of the favorite "Lord Make Me Thine Instrument". SATB, a cappella, (e) 20c

269 **NO ROOM IN THE INN** — A touching and melodious setting by Harold Abbey of the Christmas Day text from Luke 2:7. SSATB, organ or piano, (me) 20c

217 **O COME, IMMANUEL**

219 **LO, HOW A ROSE E'ER BLOOMING**

The original simplicity of these two familiar Yuletide songs has been carefully maintained in these accompanied arrangements by George Lynn. 2-part mixed, organ (e).ea. 20c

161 **A LOVELY ONE IS HE**—Arranged by Carl Parrish, this Flemish carol is joyful praise of the Nativity. SSAA, a cappella, (e) 20c

64 **A VIRGIN UNSPOTTED** by William Billings has become virtually a symbol of early American music. SATB, a cappella, (me) 20c

183 **AWAY IN A MANGER**—Julius Hijman's different and impressive setting of this beloved Yuletide text. SATB, organ or piano, (md) 20c

CHRISTMAS MUSIC OF MICHAEL PRAETORIUS

ed. Fritz Rikko

167 **PSALLITE (Sing We Clear!)** — Vigorous contrapuntal texture. English translation as well as the original text in alternate Latin and German. SATB, a cappella, (e) 20c

190 **EN NATUS EST EMANUEL (To Us Is Born Emanuel)**—A fine example of Praetorius' smooth vocal writing. Latin and English. SATB, a cappella, (e) 20c

244 **THREE CHORAL SONGS FOR CHRISTMAS** (Good Christian Men, Rejoice; Praise Him Who Watches O'er Us All; Unto Us Is Born a Child). Original texts in Latin and German with an excellent English translation. SATB, a cappella, (e) 30c

240 **ON CHRISTMAS NIGHT**—The traditional Sussi carol in a joyful arrangement by Ronald Arnatt with tenor and soprano solos. SSATBB, a cappella, (m) 20c

129 **SCENES FROM THE HOLY INFANCY** — Virgil Thomson has formed a short cantata with tenor, baritone and Bass solos from three texts of St. Matthew: **Joseph and the Angel**; **The Wise Men**; and **The Flight Into Egypt**. In a simple, yet eloquent style. SATB, a cappella, (m-md) 25c

160 **SING FOR JOY**—This Flemish carol arranged by Carl Parrish is suitable for the entire holiday season. SATB, a cappella, (e) 20c

265 **SHEPHERD'S AWAKE** — A lyric pastorella by Max Di Julio. SATB, organ, (me) 20c

238 **SHEPHERDS IN THE FIELD** — Cecil Effinger's modal treatment creates an interesting archaic atmosphere. 2-part mixed, organ, (e) 20c

268 **SHEPHERDS, SHAKE OFF YOUR DROWSY SLEEP** —A sparkling arrangement by Walter Ehret of a traditional French carol. SSA, piano, (e) 25c

59 **TEN CHRISTMAS CAROLS FROM ANCIENT SOURCES** ed. Ernest White. These short pieces are a simple but profound expression of musical piety. Unison or mixed voices, a cappella, (me) 30c

249 **THE KING SHALL COME**—Normand Lockwood's majestic and triumphant fanfare of Christmas. SATB, organ or piano, (e) 20c

106 **JOLLY WAT and CAROL** — Arthur Shepherd's two happy carols, based on texts from the 15th century, are fun to sing and hear. 2 equal voices — 2 solo voices, organ or piano, (m-md) 25c

THREE MADRIGALS

by Arthur Harris

208 **THE BOAR IS DEAD**—An exciting description of spirited preparations for the yuletide feasts. Secular, SSATB, (m) 20c.

209 **THE CHRISTMAS CHANTERS**—a joyful carol of Christmas time. Sacred, SATB, (m) 20c.

210 **REJOICE**—Jubilant praise of the birth of the infant Jesus. Sacred, SATB, (m) 20c.

194 **EARLY AMERICAN CAROLS.** Ed. Sidney R. Cowell — Eight carols taken from a collection of "Spiritual songs for social worship" used in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The songs are arranged for descant, melody and bass, with men's and women's voices sharing the parts as desired. These carols are not 'arranged' but appear in the original form. Exciting 'different' music. 3-part, a cappella, (e) 40c

184 **HERE IS JOY**—An exultant and jubilant carol by Julius Hijman for mixed voices with a descant. SATB, organ or piano, (md) 20c

242 **I SING OF A MAIDEN**—Louie L. White's beautiful new setting of this ancient poem. Soprano solo over an interesting choral background. SATB, a cappella, (md) 20c

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