



Note Worthy

A publication of The Wednesday Morning Music Club (Austin) Website: musicclubaustin.org Dec. 21, 2016

Ex parte SANTA CLAUS

by Judge John Henry Hatcher (Carolyn McColloch's grandfather)

[Editor's Note: The following "unjudicial opinion" was handed down by Judge John H. Hatcher of Charleston on Dec. 23, 1927, when he was president judge of the West Virginia Supreme Court.]

History says we acquired Santa Claus from the Dutch. It also purports to trace him across Europe to Nicholas, a bishop of Asia Minor, who lived about 300 A.D. and is the patron saint of children. But what know our little ones of history? They believe in the actual physical existence of Santa Claus--the Santa Claus of their parents and grandparents! They thrill at the story oft told, of the jolly old man who labors so diligently throughout the year at his home near the North Pole, who on the night before Christmas, clothed in garments of fur, piles high his sleigh with gifts, and drawn by marvelous reindeer which are swifter than the albatross, encompasses our sphere in one wild ride and yet pauses long enough at each home to leave his presents for the good children. In this kindly gentleman is no harm, and no guile--except perhaps in his manner of entering houses by way of the chimneys. The very thought of him inspires attendance at Sunday school and good behavior generally--for a few weeks before Yuletide. He suits the children's fancy. He is *comme il faut*.

Yet despite these points of excellence, there are some who criticize Santa Claus. They claim that he is too old fashioned. They say, for example, that his mode of traveling is antiquated, that sleigh and reindeer were all right for the transportation prior to this mechanical age, but now Santa Claus should have an automobile or airplane. They also insist that he should now have a passkey, and enter houses in the usual way. In short, they would modernize him until he would be just like a Foxy-Grandpa, out for a joy ride. Alas, they do not realize that a Foxy-Grandpa would not make a dependable Santa Claus--that the spirit which makes him foxy is not the Christmas spirit.

As modern chimneys are much smaller than those of yore, abandonment of the chimney entrance is worthy of consideration, but a substitute for the reindeer is out of the question. Children know an airplane will crash without a landing place and are unsuitable for mountain deliveries. They know that even "The Spirit of St. Louis" is choicy about where it comes down. They also know the ills to which an automobile is heir. These would-by reformers have purely not considered the blow to juvenile expectations should the plane of Santa Claus or his Ford fail in its visitation the night before Christmas. The children could not conceive of or accept a vehicle for Santa Claus which might not make the trip on time. I point with pride to the sleigh and reindeer. Man, they go just anywhere! They have never been known to crash, run out of gasoline, develop engine trouble, puncture a tire, get stuck in the mud, freeze a radiator or skid over a bank. They have never been reported late on the Christmas Eve schedule. They were good

Continued on page 2

"Christmas Bells"

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

(written on Christmas Day in 1863 and first published in February 1865)

I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
Till ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime,
A chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
Then from each black, accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
And with the sound
The carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearth-stones of a continent,
And made forlorn
The households born
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
And in despair I bowed my head;
"There is no peace on earth," I said;
"For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"
Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The Wrong shall fail,
The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men."

enough for the generations that have preceded us, and like the old-time religion, which was good for Paul and Silas, they are good enough for me.

Were these thoughtless people permitted to meddle to any extent with our old-time Santa Claus, they would likely make such innovations that the children would not recognize him as the Santa Claus of their fathers. He might even receive rude treatment at their hands. Changes in appearance are sometimes dangerous, as a certain little boy found out upon his return home on the first day of the new school. That night at supper his father asked him if he liked the new school. He replied, "Naw, they made me wash me face, and when I got home de dorg bit me, cause he didn't know me."

But worse than the reformers even are those who would abolish Santa Claus altogether. I am glad their number is few. I warn them to keep out of our court. And why forsooth would they do this unkindly deed? Because they are literal minded. They will have none of make-belief. They demand proof of everything. Proof! Why, what very small child is there among the millions of children but has heard, or thought he heard, or, well, almost heard the sharp crack of the driver's whip, the merry jingle of the reindeers bells, the swish of the sleigh on the snow and the chuckle of Santa himself when the child peeped and almost caught him before he escaped up the chimney! Proof! Why, the well-filled stockings on Christmas morning, which were hung up empty the night before, is proof enough to satisfy any jury of our very youthful peers on the issue of Santa Claus, or no Santa Claus. *Res ipsa loquitur.*

If the opportunity arises I shall enjoin the realists somewhat in this fashion: Let William Tell's archery be disproved; let the Boy on the Burning Deck be rescued; let Washington's mutilation of the cherry tree be questioned; but let not the myth of Santa Claus be quashed. Let it be to succeeding generations what it has been to ours; a joyous faith of childhood, a pleasant indulgence of parenthood, a happy memory of old age.

[Ed. Note: Judge Homer B. Woods wrote a concurring opinion:]

The profane hand of the iconoclast, who would interfere, will be stayed by this court. I would not have trusting hearts lose the spirit voiced by Dickens' Tiny Tim... "God bless us every one."



President's Message

Marcia Edwards

Happy Holidays to all! And best wishes for a prosperous New Year!

Please join us for our festive holiday coffee and music program beginning at 9:30 AM on Wednesday, Dec. 21. Guests are welcome. Bring a favorite holiday treat to share if you'd like.

Thought for the Day

May Peace be your gift at Christmas and your blessing all year through! (Author Unknown)

About the Performers



Asako Crystal, piano

Asako was born in Japan and began studying piano at age 5. She earned her teacher's certification from Yamaha Musical Instrument Corporation at 18. She is a graduate of the Otani Music Conservatory in Sapporo where she majored in piano. She emigrated to the U.S. in 1991. Some of her accomplishments include working in the Yamaha International Music Teaching Program, serving as a piano judge throughout Japan, planning international concerts in Sapporo, performing in numerous solo and chamber music concerts, performing with the Yale University male chorus and the Whiffenpoofs and touring with classical guitarist Kokichi Akasak. She was a featured performer at the John Lennon Memorial Aid for Children Concert in Tokyo where she accompanied famed performer Yoko Ono. She has had a large number of students compete at the NFMC festivals each year from 2007 through 2016 with more than 5100 participants competing annually. Her students have received 194 All-State Awards.

Tony Morris, Guitar

Classical Guitarist Tony Morris is the executive director and host for "Classical Guitar Alive," a long running radio program on KMFA that broadcasts to over 250 stations across the United States and reaches over one million public listeners each week. Between 2006 and 2011, he was a guitar professor at Texas Lutheran University. He received his Master of Music degree from the University of Texas at Austin and his Bachelor of Music degree from the University of South Carolina. Tony is also a highly sought after adjudicator and master class teacher at NFMC music festivals and competitions. Among numerous public performances, he has been invited to perform at the White House on three separate occasions.

Darrel Mayers and Thom the World Poet

Darrel Mayers (from the U.K.) led Mundi – a group which based its sound on medieval music of Spain - for 15 years. The group toured Spain three times and released 5 CDs in its career. During this time he also worked with Thom the World Poet on a project called Bucolics Anonymous, which focused on the poetry of Thomas Hardy. Most recently they have been working together presenting musical settings of Thom's poetry at community picnic celebrations of gardeners, farmers and nature. Thom, acclaimed by poet Usha Akela as "a truly iconic Austin poetry phenomenon," grew up in Australia, and he has distinguished himself in many parts of Texas as well as the United Kingdom for his unique brand of performance poetry. In addition, each year Thom and Darrel work together to present Wassail, a variety show at the Scottish Rite celebrating the arrival of Christmas and the turn of the seasons. They have presented selections of the Wassail poems at Live Oak Unitarian Church in Austin as a special New Year sermon.

Klaus Bichteler, bass

Klaus Bichteler was born in Leipzig in Germany, (Bach's city) at the beginning of WWII and has been growing older steadily ever since. He got his PhD in physics, got called to the U.S. to help ward off the Russians through science, and ended up teaching mathematics at U.T. He started singing madrigals with friends during his college days, and he is still getting much joy from singing in several choirs in this fair city. Lately, after much coaching from a teacher, and assistance from a handy pianist, he has added a little solo singing to his musical résumé.

Mary Parse began playing hymns for Sunday school in the fourth grade, and she was full-time organist at her church from eighth grade through high school. During undergraduate school at Austin College, she was the pianist for the vocal studio and the college choir. She has continued to play for churches, singers and instrumentalists ever since, and she loves collaborative music-making.

Charles Palmer, baritone

Charles Palmer is a native Austinite, former Peace Corps volunteer, and retired government employee. He holds BA and MA degrees from the University of Texas at Austin and a PhD in Latin American geography from The University of Florida. He has lived in Bolivia, Colombia, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Charles' musical experience includes singing in church choirs and in several of Austin's civic choruses. He studies voices with Professor David Small of the University of Texas Butler School of Music and performs regularly with his pianist friend and colleague Kathryn Govier at retirement homes and similar venues in the Austin area.

Kathryn Govier, piano

I started music lessons at age 4 and "cut my eye-teeth on Bach." I was lucky to have a piano teacher who stressed the classics. I earned a Bachelor of Music, piano major (1971), and I've used my skills as accompanist and collaborator, as well as soloist. I work with Charles Palmer through the Butler School of Music Outreach program giving retirement home programs. My profession was teaching the handicapped. I spent 3 years in Marrakesh, Morocco, working with handicapped children as Peace Corps Volunteer (1987-1990). I love living in Austin with many wonderful cultural events to attend and participate in.



Event Calendar

Chorus Austin – chorusaustin.org

On a Winter's Eve holiday concert featuring new songs of the season and a chance to sing along. All three Chorus Austin ensembles join to present this family friendly concert.

Dec. 17 – 4:00 PM – St. Matthews Episcopal Church, 8134 Mesa Drive

Austin Symphony Orchestra – austinsymphony.org

Broadway by Request. The Austin Symphony Orchestra performs the songs chosen by the audience and performed by some of Broadway's biggest artists: Jennifer Hope Wills, Sean MacLaughlin and Edward Watts. Enjoy in a cabaret style setting.

Dec. 29 and Dec. 30 – 8:00 PM – Palmer Events Center – 900 Barton Springs Road

Opera at the Movies, The Met - www.amctheatres.com/programs/the-met or fandango.com

Nabucco by Giuseppe Verdi. Features Plácido Domingo, tenor, as Nabucco.

Jan. 7 – 11:55 AM

La Follia Austin Baroque – lafollia.org

Tell Me a Story. The La Follia String Ensemble presents music that tells a story. Featured are Stephen Redfield, violin, in Vivaldi's "Winter;" Stephanie Raby, gamba, and Valerie Chaussonet, narrator, in Marais' "Gall Bladder Operation;" and Keith Womer, harpsichord, in Bach's "Capriccio on the departure of a dear brother."

Jan. 7 – 8:00 PM – First Presbyterian Church, 8001 Mesa Drive

Jan. 8 - 4:00 PM – First Presbyterian Church, 8001 Mesa Drive

Gilbert and Sullivan – gilbertsullivan.org

Musical Revue and Sing-Along.

Jan. 8 – 3:00 PM – Genesis Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall, 1507 Wilshire Blvd.

Austin Chamber Ensemble – austinchamberensemble.org

Ladies Who Lunch. This innovative program weaves the lives of three women - a seasoned socialite, a business woman and a young bride. An attentive, meddling and haughty waiter delivers commentary on the "ladies who lunch." Repertoire includes operatic arias, art songs and musical theatre.

Jan. 13 – 7:00 PM – Open Dress Rehearsal, Bishop's Hall, 203 East 10th Street - \$10

Jan. 14 – 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM – Performance and brunch, The Gallery at Chez Zee, 5406 Balcones Drive

Austin Classical Guitar Society – austinclassicalguitar.org

The International Series presents Thibaut Garcia who just won the world's most prestigious international classical guitar competition.

Jan. 14 – 8:00 PM – Austin AISD Performing Arts Center – 1500 Barbara Jordan Blvd.

Artisan Quartet – artisanquartet.com

The quartet: Richard Kilmer, 1st violin; Caleb Polashek, 2nd violin; Bruce Williams, viola; and Doug Harvey, cello, will be performing both Mozart quartets, K. 465 "Dissonance" and K. 458 "Hunt." They will be joined by Rick Rowley for this free concert.

Jan. 15 – 3:00 PM – Tarrytown Methodist United Church – 2531 Exposition Blvd.