



Sacred Christmas Music: The Stories Behind the Most Beloved Songs of Devotion

Ronald M. Clancy

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Take a musical journey in time—from the dawn of the Church’s liturgical song through the Baroque’s great choral and instrumental works to representative pieces of the 20th century. This is the sacred tradition of Christmas music, explored here in a stunningly illustrated book and a magnificent CD. It covers vocal and instrumental pieces from a variety of national and historical periods and styles, all of which have earned a place in the canon of great musical masterpieces. Not only will musicians and non-musicians alike find this an easily accessible guide, but they’ll feast on a sumptuous gallery of thematically and historically corresponding full-color art (including a 14th century manuscript illumination and a nativity scene by Fra Angelico), and revel in some of the best recordings of the music ever made. There’s rich, interesting background on every work, from Latin hymns and liturgical chants to Bach’s cantatas to contemporary carols. The CD includes the Vienna Boys’ Choir performing “Anima Nostra”; Arcangelo Corelli’s “Christmas Concerto”; The Trappist Monks of the Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani singing Gregorian Chants; excerpts from Handel’s “Messiah”; and the beloved “Silent Night.” No other collection brings together all these elements in such an aesthetically pleasing and educational way.

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