

Notes on Today's Music

As long as music has been around composers have, like the Roman god Janus, looked both backward and forward for inspiration. The earliest lines of melody were embellished with rhythms and chords to create new music from the old and, in turn this 'new' music was re-composed, changing the rules by which melody, harmony and rhythm were used in each era of music – Medieval, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and what we call Modern, 20th and 21st Century compositions that will become 'old' in the centuries ahead.

The music of today's service begins with the Baroque era and a composition by J.S. Bach. This piece began as a chorale *Jesus bleibet meine Freude* from a cantata, a piece written for voices accompanied by an orchestra. An English pianist, Dame Julia Myra Hess, transcribed this piece for piano in 1926 and renamed it. This morning's version morphs from this early transcription based on Bach's harmonization to one with jazzier chords provided by the living composer and arranger, Phillip Keveren. Bach's music returns at the end of the service in yet another iteration by George Winston and David Qualey.

The song we know as "Auld Lang Syne" is another example of music altered, from the original Scottish melody and lyrics by Robert Burns, to the tune and words we find familiar today. Except for the title words translated as "days gone by" or "for the sake of old times", it is seldom sung as written.

It can be fascinating to listen for snips of older music in the newer music of today. Check out Jon Batiste's jazzy take on Beethoven's famous 'Für Elise" in "Für Elise-Batiste"!

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