

Shine Jesus shine – The Unauthorised Version

The well-known worship song “Lord the light of your love is shining”, commonly known by its chorus “Shine Jesus shine” is now a mature 30 years old. I'm not a fan of most worship songs, but this one works well as a hymn because of its strong imagery and its very singable music, especially the chorus. Kendrick's “Servant King” is another that has stood the test of time. By contrast many current worship songs seem to have weak words and dull tunes.

But did SJS spring fully formed from the pen of Graham Kendrick, or is there a pre-history to be 'discovered'? The Pythagoras Institute of Indisciplinary Studies (PIIS) has been investigating!;-)>

Analysing the text of “Shine, Jesus shine”, it seems clear that two earlier works have been combined sometime around the 16th century.

The famous Pechester Codex Dinhamensis contains an early medieval Latin poem “Domine lux tui amoris lucet, In mediis tenebris lucet...”

attributed to Ricardus de Barnes, remarkably similar to the verses of this worship song.

It uses sombre, medieval imagery – in mediis tenebris lucet, in the midst of the darkness shining; Domine venio ad faciem tuam terribilem, Lord I come to your awesome presence; per sanguinem intrabo splendorem, by the blood may I enter your brightness – reminiscent of the Psalmist in his darker moods. They appear alongside the familiar Tonus Kendrickus plainsong.

The leitmotifs of the Antiphon or Chorus – Shine, Blaze, Flow, Send – by contrast are in the Christus Victor style of the Patristic period. They echo the great Feasts of Jesus's Transfiguration & Baptism, and of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. It is perhaps contemporaneous with one of the earliest Christian hymns “Phos Hilaron” - “Hail gladdening light”.

However the ideas of inundation and worship of Sun and River suggest to me an origin way, way back many centuries earlier in Ancient Egypt. Some New-Age devotees have suggested various pagan origins in river cults such as Tyne Geordie Tyne or Rhein Mädchen Rhein, but like many 'ancient' New-Age ideas, these probably derive from post-Enlightenment Romanticism.

In Autumn 2013, St Michael's choir was privileged to give the first modern performance of the 16th century polyphonic motet “Domine lux tui amoris lucet” composed around the time of the Council of Trent by the little known 16th century composer Giovanni di Kendrika, from the Italian city of Apiclapi, using an edition reconstructed by our then Music Director Alex West.

Divers forms of these lyrics and music have surfaced over the centuries since; a Lutheran Chorale by Schein, Johann Schein, a Restoration Anthem by Kendrick Purcell, the more reflective “Lead kindly light” by John Kendrick Newman – I’m sure you can think of others.

With this understanding of its illustrious pre-history, I’m sure we will all be much more willing to raise our hands & voices and sing,

“Fulge Jesu Fulge, reple hanc terram gloria patris. Flagra spiritu flagra, incende corda nostra.

Flue flumen flue, inunda gentes gratia et misericordia. Emitte verbum tuum Domine, et fiat lux.”

PIIS is now taking a look at the song “Meekness and Majesty” to ask whether its imagery is inspired by the 'wisdom unsearchable' of Colonel White and the Men & Angels of Gerry Anderson’s “Captain Scarlet”. Phrases like 'O what a Mysteron', 'in perfect Harmony', Love indestructible' and 'the heights of his throne' have a certain resonance. SIG



Richard Barnes – 22/9/18

Domine, lux tui amoris lucet
An anthem in the Missolydian mode

Giovanni di Kandraka
(1597 - 1576)

SOPRANO
Do - mi - ne, lux tu - a - mo - ris lu - cet, lu

ALTO
Do - mi - ne, lux tu - a - mo - ris lu - cet, lu - cet, lu -

TENOR

BASS
Do - mi - ne lux tu

cet in me - di - is te - ne -
cet in me - di - is te - ne - bris, in me - di - is
Do - mi - ne lux tu - a - mo - ris lu - cet in me - di - is te -
a - mo - ris lu - cet, lu - cet, in me - di -

