

# Mp3 The Pittsburgh Camerata - A Pittsburgh Wassail



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Christmas choral music from around the world, performed mostly a cappella (unaccompanied) by a 24 voice choir. 20 MP3 Songs in this album (56:58) ! Related styles: CLASSICAL: Choral Music, WORLD: Western European People who are interested in The Cambridge Singers Robert Shaw Chamber Singers Kings College Choir, Cambridge should consider this download. Details: About A Pittsburgh Wassail The title track developed from an inside joke which had circulated in the Camerata for some years before my arrival as Artistic Director. Jim Heinrich, tenor and writer for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, had reworked the chorus text of the traditional Wassail song to poke some gentle fun at Pittsburgh traditions and pronunciations. When I heard the Pittsburgh Wassail chorus, I thought it was delightful and was inspired to write several verses focusing on prominent Pittsburgh personalities (yes, the Parkway does have its own personality...). I hope you enjoy this affectionate tribute to a great city. The concept for this compact disc grew out of my growing awareness of Pittsburghs unique cultural heritage. I grew up in Los Alamos, New Mexico, a city that did not exist prior to the mid-1940s. Everyone living in the Atomic City was from somewhere else in the United States, making us all immigrants. There was little sense of heritage or cultural traditions, but it was a matter I never gave much thought. When we moved to Pittsburgh in 1995, I found its ethnic communities and strong sense of cultural diversity very attractive. I loved the feeling of traditions maintained, of culture and differences celebrated, of connecting with people from very different backgrounds than mine. I decided to find out where Pittsburghers came from, why they came, and to what extent their sense of tradition has survived. Being a musician, I was particularly attracted to the musical traditions and my search yielded a welcome discovery of Christmas music new to me, and I suspect to many of you. Why do people pull up stakes and leave their homes, family, and culture all that they hold dear? What compels someone to come to a place where the customs are unfamiliar, nothing

can be taken for granted and the language incomprehensible? Although the reasons can be as numerous as the people themselves, one common reason for immigration is the search for a better life. Whether it was the Harmonists, who came to Western Pennsylvania at the beginning of the nineteenth century to prepare for the millennial kingdom, or the Italian man, who immigrated in the 1950s in the belief that the streets of America were paved with gold, all came with a vision of a better future. These immigrants began the glassworks, worked in the boat yards, manned the steel mills, and fed the workers. The cultural and economic fabric of Pittsburgh is bound up in their lives. When immigration to Pittsburgh is discussed or written about, interest often centers on the Eastern Europeans who came at the end of the nineteenth century to work in the mills and mines. While this is a fascinating subject in itself, it is only a part of the story. We tend to think of the people already here at that point as native, but we should remember that their ancestors arrived around 1700. Many historians believe that the first non-Indian to see this area was the French explorer Ren Robert Cavelier, around 1670. In 1682 the French laid claim to all the tributaries of the Mississippi and the territory through which they flowed a pretty impressive chunk of real estate. Although the French quickly sent both missionaries and traders to the area, very few actually settled here. They were soon supplanted by Scotch-Irish settlers, who began coming to the region around 1700 in the push to settle the West, and by Germans, who began coming in relatively large numbers around 1709. German immigrants soon made up a large part of the population in Pennsylvania while they made up only 8.6% of the white population in the United States in 1790, they comprised 33% of the population of Pennsylvania. For many years Pennsylvania continued to be the destination of choice for German immigrants. As late as 1910, Germans were the largest ethnic group in Pittsburgh, making up nearly 14% of the population. A census taken at that time found that more Northside residents were native German speakers than were English speakers. Other ethnic groups came, too. Scandinavian, Syrian, and Lebanese immigrants arrived and peoples from the Mediterranean area, particularly Italy and Greece, came in large numbers. Immigrants from China appeared as well. Between 1890 and 1900, the number of immigrants from Slavic countries more than doubled. Lithuanians, Rumanians, Russians, Croatians, Serbians, Bosnians, Macedonians, Poles, Ukrainians and Bulgarians made up half of the workforce in the mills of Pittsburgh in the early 1900s. World events of the twentieth century created waves of immigration the Balkan Wars, Jews who left Germany, Poland, the Netherlands and other countries during the Third Reich, the Soviet annexation of Latvia, the Hungarian revolution. The constantly changing fabric

of ethnicity created Pittsburgh as we know it, and continues to make the city a vital and exciting place to live. I hope that this recording conveys a sense of the rich culture that is our heritage. by Rebecca Rollett

The Pittsburgh Camerata The Pittsburgh Camerata, under the direction of Rebecca Rollett is a professional chamber choir dedicated to performances of sacred and secular music distinguished by imaginative programming in intimate settings. Founded in 1974, the group specializes in the entire choral repertory with a unique focus on Renaissance/Baroque and 20th century works. The ensembles ongoing activities include a 9-concert public subscription series presented throughout the greater Pittsburgh area. The group also records and produces compact discs and tours in the tri-state region. Rebecca Rollett A native of New Mexico, Rebecca Rollett studied organ and composition with David N. Johnson, accompanying with Jean Barr, and choral conducting with Douglas McEwen at Arizona State University. She completed her degree in Organ Performance at Oral Roberts University, where she studied organ and voice, and she holds an Associate Certificate with the American Guild of Organists. While resident in New Mexico, Mrs. Rollett performed with the Orchestra of Santa Fe, the Santa Fe Desert Chorale, and the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, directed the Chamber Singers of the Chorus of Santa Fe, and served as Principal Keyboard of the Santa Fe Symphony Orchestra. She was also Chorus Director for the Santa Fe Symphony for three seasons. As part of Serenata of Santa Fe, a chamber music group, she was selected for both the Artists-in-Residence and the New Mexico Touring artists programs. For seven seasons, she was Artistic Director of Coro de Cmara, a chamber vocal ensemble. During her tenure, the ensemble earned a reputation for unusual programming (even Tom Lehrer said that his music had never before shared a program with Henry Purcell) as well as fine singing. In the spring of 1994, the ensemble toured Great Britain with performances in London, Oxford, Edinburgh, and the Newberry Spring Festival. In 1995 Mrs. Rollett moved with her husband and four children to Pittsburgh, and in 1998 she earned a Masters degree in Choral Conducting under Robert Page at Carnegie Mellon University. That same year she was chosen as the new Artistic Director of the Pittsburgh Camerata. Under her baton the Pittsburgh Camerata has developed a reputation for unusual collaborations and creative programming. Their collaboration with Chatham Baroque and The Renaissance Baroque Society of Pittsburgh was declared "an overwhelmingly gratifying evening" by Pittsburgh Post-Gazettes David DeAngelo, and it earned a place in the 10 Best Classical Concerts of 2000. The Christmas CD, A Pittsburgh Wassail with the Pittsburgh Camerata, was dubbed "one of the richest and loveliest albums of the year by the Pittsburgh

Post-Gazette. The Pittsburgh Camerata was an invited performer at the Chorus America National Conference in June of 2004. Mrs. Rollett resides in Squirrel Hill with her husband Anthony, a faculty member at Carnegie Mellon University's renowned College of Engineering, who is also a popular organist-about-town. She is currently an adjunct faculty member at Duquesne University, where she teaches Baroque Performance Practice, Sacred Choral and Vocal Literature, and harpsichord. In 2005 Mrs. Rollett decided to resume organ performance, after a hiatus of almost 10 years. Besides numerous concerts at Duquesne University, she has performed in Pittsburgh at St. Pauls Cathedral and St. Andrews Episcopal church, at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., and at First Presbyterian Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico. During 2006 she gave recitals in England at Queens College, Oxford, and Clare College, Cambridge, and in France at San-Martin-aux-Champs, Metz. Upcoming organ performance sites include the Cathedral in Metz and St. Thomas Church, New York.

James Gorton, Co-Principal Oboist of the Pittsburgh Symphony, joined the orchestra in 1971. He was formerly a member of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Eastman-Rochester Orchestra, and Principal Oboe of the Rochester Chamber Orchestra. He has also been Principal Oboe of the Pittsburgh Opera and Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Principal Oboe and soloist with the Colorado Philharmonic and the New Hampshire Music Festival, and oboist and English hornist of the Bethlehem (PA) Bach Festival, Lake George Opera (NY) Opera Festival, and Sun Valley (ID) Summer Symphony. Mr. Gorton has appeared as soloist with the Eastman-Rochester Orchestra, the Johnstown Symphony, and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra on the subscription series and chamber music series at Heinz Hall and the Jewish Community Center. He has performed as a chamber musician throughout the U.S. with the New Pittsburgh Quintet among others and has given recitals and master classes in America and Taiwan. He is currently a faculty member at Duquesne University.

The Pittsburgh Camerata  
 Artistic Director Soprano Susan T. Barclay 3 Eileen Murray\* 3 Linda Shaw\* Kristen Watson\* 5  
 Mezzo-Soprano Kara Cornell\* 3 Gail Luley Mary Ramm Cecily Rollett Yvonne Sterrett 14 Piano Rebecca Rollett Alto Rose Dorsey\* 13 Joy Jenko Lee Ann Pokego\* 3 Audrey Unger Tenor Joseph Haughton\* 20  
 James R. Heinrich 3 Jim Means 3 Organ Oboe, English Horn Anthony Rollett James Gorton Tenor II /  
 Baritone Gary Koehler\* Tony Mauro Walter Perz Adrian Rollett\* Anthony Rollett Henry St. George Tucker  
 Bass Gordon Kirkwood 3 Kenn Kumpf\* Roy Matway Paul Nicolaysen 3, 14 Soloists indicated in italics  
 with track number \*Camerata Core

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