



# DIVINE SONGS

CONNECTIONS AND EXCHANGES

BETWEEN SECULAR SONG AND SACRED MUSIC,

FEATURING THE MUSIC OF JOHANNES OCKEGHEM (C. 1420-1497)

SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 2013 • 8 PM First Church in Cambridge, Congregational

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# PROGRAM

Ma maistresse MN JM SM

Missa Ma maistresse

Kyrie

Gloria

Alius discantus super O rosa bella LJ SM

Fors seullement PD MN SM

Missa Fors seullement PD OM MS ST PG Credo

# INTERMISSION &

D'ung aultre amer / arr. Johannes Tinctoris (c. 1435-1511?) LJ SM

Presque transi OM JM DM  $\,$ 

Missa Mi mi Sanctus

De plus en plus / Gilles de Bins, dit Binchois (c. 1400-1460) MN LJ SM

Missa De plus en plus Agnus dei

# BLUE HERON cantus Pamela Dellal, Martin Near contratenor Owen McIntosh, Jason McStoots tenor Mark Sprinkle, Sumner Thompson

bassus Paul Guttry, David McFerrin

Laura Jeppesen, rebec & medieval fiddle Scott Metcalfe, director, harp & medieval fiddle

Pre-concert talk by Sean Gallagher (Boston University) sponsored in part by The Cambridge Society for Early Music.

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Title page: Illuminated opening from the Chigi Codex featuring the Kyrie of Ockeghem's Missa Ecce ancilla Domini.

# **DIVINE SONGS**

This concert concerns itself explicitly with a theme that has run through many of Blue Heron's programs over the years: the profound interpenetration and interconnectedness of sacred and secular, of spiritual and corporeal, in the cultures of our past and of our present. I use the plural, cultures, in order to emphasize the diversity of understandings conceived by individual human beings. I doubt that any two people alive today experience or interpret the world in precisely the same way, and I am equally certain that the individuality of human beings is not a recent development. Late medieval Christendom may appear relatively monolithic to us, but this impression is surely a faulty one attributable to our remove of several centuries, a lack of detailed evidence concerning the innermost thoughts of all but a very few, and our lamentable tendency to pass simplifying judgement on groups of people we do not know very well, including our own ancestors.

If I were to essentialize about our own culture for a moment, I might say that modern Americans tend to divide sacred and secular things into separate compartments: the soul in one box, the body in another. Seldom, in the public sphere at least, do we recognize that the two exist in one and the same place, indeed, are the same thing (or anyway, that's my feeling). But if we have any cultural practice in which the connection or identity of the spiritual and the corporeal is most manifest, it is perhaps music-making, and especially singing. The most abstract of all the arts, music creates meaning out of sound and is able to shake people to their core by means of the progression and combination of tones. Music-making is a physical act

(this is true for all musicians but even more so for singers, for whom the body is the only instrument), but what is brought into being by that physical act can have a direct spiritual force. The actions of a human body produce physical phenomena, sound waves, and the effect of those physical phenomena on the body and soul of a listener (including another musician participating in the music-making) can be intense.

How this happens is entirely mysterious and perhaps inexplicable, but a fifteenth-century European Christian musician, steeped in habits of allegory, metaphor, and analogy, might have interpreted it thus: All earthly phenomena correspond to heavenly ones. The music we produce on earth is analogous to the divine music of the angels and the spheres. Not only does the Sanctus we sing offer a rapturous preview of that sung by angelic choruses, but the love song of a courtier to his lady may symbolize one sung by the believer to the Virgin Mary. As Andrew Kirkman puts it in a recent book, "From the perspective of a late medieval worldview permeated by patterns of religious allegory...potentially spiritual content inhered already in the secular entity, awaiting, as it were, the appropriate context or mindset to activate its higher, spiritual meaning." Although the idea was not completely new, fifteenth-century composers incorporated secular melodies into sacred music with much greater frequency and freedom than did their predecessors, basing numerous Mass cycles and motets on preexisting music drawn from songs, which were often incorporated into the new composition in such a way as to be immediately recognizable to the listener. Far from violating propriety, the use of

song melodies was meant to offer enlightening parallels to the listener; the poetic texts they evoked in the memory, even if not sung, suggested metaphors by which humans might attempt to comprehend their relationship to God. Aquinas had stressed the utility of metaphor in conveying divine truth, which might not be directly apprehendable by all:

It is befitting Holy Writ to put forward divine and spiritual truths by means of comparisons with material things. For God provides for everything according to the capacity of its nature.... It is also befitting Holy Writ, which is proposed to all without distinction of persons... that spiritual truths be expounded by means of figures taken from corporeal things, in order that thereby even the simple who are unable by themselves to grasp intellectual things may be able to understand it.

The most obvious and most common analogy made available by courtly love was between the unattainable object of desire and Mary, and our concert opens with an exquisite example, Johannes Ockeghem's virelai Ma maistresse. The poem merits a rubric like that given by the Burgundian court chronicler and poet, Jean Molinet, to his Dame sans per: "Dictier qui se poeult adreschier soit a la vierge Marie ou pour un amant a sa dame" ("Poem that may be addressed either to the Virgin Mary or by a lover to his lady"). The text speaks of a lady "perfect in qualities, if ever woman was, she alone whom rumor and fame hold to be without peer," of the speaker's urgent desire to see her and his hope for her pity. The song itself, written as early as 1450 and perhaps the earliest we have from Ockeghem, is one of his most bewitching creations, and its soaring melodies lend an air of enchantment to his Mass based on it—a Mass that, according to

the allegorical interpretation, would have originally been intended for a Marian feast or for a Lady Chapel.

Just the Kyrie and Gloria of the *Missa Ma maistresse* remain, although a complete cycle may once have existed. Both movements draw liberally and audibly on the discantus and tenor of his chanson. The bass of the Kyrie quotes the entire tenor line of the first section of the song, while in the Gloria both the first and second sections of the song's discantus melody are quoted complete by the tenor. At the last moment, at the words "In gloria Dei patris, Amen," the tenor reprises the opening gesture of the song. Besides these direct and extended quotations, the song's melodies are absorbed into all the lines of the Mass.

A pioneer both in the development of the cyclical Mass (that is, a setting, unified by various means, of the five movements of the Ordinary of the Mass) and in the use of borrowed material, Ockeghem composed thirteen extant cycles (three of which survive in partial form): six are known to draw from pre-existent secular songs and a seventh may well be based on a song that has been lost. Our program presents a complete, composite Mass Ordinary made up of movements from four of them; each section of the Mass is preceded by the song that inspired it. We also include a couple of instrumental renditions of songs whose texts might easily be read as allegories: Ockeghem's countermelody to the tune of O rosa bella ("O beautiful rose, O my sweet soul / Do not let me die, for courtesy's sake!"), and Johannes Tinctoris's embellished version of Ockeghem's D'ung aultre amer ("To love another my heart would demean itself"), a song which lent its melodies and presumed symbolism to a number of motets and Masses, a Sanctus, and one other song.

1. Andrew Kirkman, The Cultural Life of the Early Polyphonic Mass (Cambridge, 2010), p. 44

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2.</sup> Summa theologiae (Q. 1, art. 9), written 1265-74, quoted by Kirkman on p. 45

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3.</sup> See Kirkman, p. 49.

Although mass cycles are nowadays sometimes regarded as sacrosanct wholes, such an attitude was foreign to the fifteenth century, which, however much it valued complete masses, considered it perfectly seemly to extract and sing whatever was needed for the liturgy at hand. The numerous independent mass movements by fifteenth-century composers testify to the usefulness of single mass sections set polyphonically. In any case, only the Kyrie and Gloria of the Missa Ma maistresse survive, and the Credo of the Missa Fors seullement, another incomplete cycle, differs significantly in style, voice ranges, and voice designations from the Kyrie and Gloria which precede it, suggesting that it may have been conceived independently. The complete Mass, if it ever existed, "might have been an amalgamation of rather diverse movements."

While *Ma maistresse* offers a classic example of Marian analogy, *Fors seullement* presents the rather rarer case of a Christological application of a song, albeit with potential Marian implications. Here a woman, overwhelmed by grief, speaks to a man she is "sure of losing": the song might be read allegorically as a sort of *Stabat mater*, the 13th-century hymn that describes Mary weeping at the foot of the cross. (As so often with these songs, subsequent lines or stanzas do not seem to fit the allegory so gracefully, for it does not appear appropriate to speak of the Savior's "rigeur"—hardness, implacability, pitilessness—nor of Mary cursing her loyalty to her son.) In this interpretation, the *Missa Fors seullement* refers directly to Christ's Passion and is most appropriately sung during Holy

Week. In the Credo the tenor sings the entire melody of the song's upper voice, plus some of the second voice's melody from the B section.

The song *Presque transi* expresses a desperate desire for death and an end to a painful and wearisome life. It is in the Phrygian mode on E, the mode most alien to our sense of tonality, often used for laments, and like most Phrygian pieces spends much of its time in tonal regions (C and G) that feel distant from E, so that its final cadences feel like a surprising collapse from poignant yearning into bitter resignation.

That Ockeghem composed a Mass based on Presque transi went long unrecognized in modern times, and it may be that the scribes of the extant fifteenth century sources were also unaware of the connection, for they entitled it not Missa Presque transi but Missa Quarti toni or Missa My my, or nothing at all. Missa Quarti toni means "mass in the fourth mode" (i.e., Hypophrygian). As Ross Duffin has demonstrated, Missa My my (or Mi mi) means exactly the same thing, for each mode could be referred to in shorthand by means of a unique pair of solmisation syllables. We don't know what Ockeghem called the work (no such thing as an autograph exists for fifteenth-century music), although the name My my may have originated with him. The relationship of song model to Mass is much less obvious here than in a standard cantus firmus Mass, including the other three Masses represented on this program. There are no long, verbatim quotations from the song's melodies in the Mass's tenor or anywhere else, but material from all three voices of the song permeates the Mass, as shown by

For the Agnus dei we turn to the Missa De plus en plus, based on a song not by Ockeghem but by one of the two most famous composers of the previous generation, Gilles Binchois. The song is celebrated both for the extraordinary loveliness of its tune and for its arrestingly strange harmonies. Binchois's songs betray a marked fondness for ending in a place one would not predict, and this final is certainly one of his most surprising. (The waywardness of Binchois's tonal strategies insbired David Fallows to devise "The Binchois Game": I give you the beginning, or indeed most of the song; you guess what the final will be.) The text of De plus en plus, though, is entirely unremarkable, expressing in generic terms a yearning to see the absent beloved, the "sweet lady, noble and fair," "she whom I wish to obey in everything." A Marian interpretation for the Mass seems inevitable. The way Ockeghem handles the source song is also pretty straightforward: the Missa De plus en plus treats the cantus firmus in the classic manner, with song tenor quoted in tenor in both strict and ornamented forms, often in longer note values, sometimes proportionally transformed. And Ockeghem deploys the song's tenor melody in such a way as to make the final of the Mass movements, in contrast to that of the song itself, completely predictable. The theorist Johannes Tinctoris considered such predictability the norm, writing that "out of fifty composed songs, there is scarcely one that does not begin on that place in which it finishes" (Liber de natura et proprietate tonorum, 1476, ch. 19).

Predictability is hardly the salient quality of Ockeghem's music, however. His melodies spill forth in ever-flowing streams; each voice pursues its own independent course within the contrapuntal texture, only occasionally imitating or even referring to the gestures of another line. Latterday writers have found it terribly challenging to account for Ockeghem's music, which has been characterized as mystical, irrational, cerebral, or arcane, beguiling the listener with (in Lawrence Bernstein's memorable phrase) an "aesthetics of concealment." But Tinctoris, in his Liber de arte contrapuncti (Book of the Art of Counterpoint) of 1477, placed Ockeghem at the head of a list of composers whose works were filled with divine "sweetness":

... at this present time, not to mention innumerable singers of the most beautiful diction, there flourish, whether by the effect of some celestial influence or by the force of assiduous practice, countless composers, among them Johannes Ockeghem, Johannes Regis, Antoine Busnoys, Firminus Caron, and Guillaume Faugues, who glory in having studied this divine art under John Dunstable, Gilles Binchois, and Guillaume Du Fay, recently deceased. Nearly all the works of these men exhale such sweetness that in my opinion they are to be considered most suitable, not only for men and heroes, but even for the immortal gods, Indeed, I never hear them, I never study them, without coming away more refreshed and wiser.

What did Tinctoris mean by sweetness? The word fell so easily off fifteenth-century tongues that it is extremely difficult to attribute any specific meaning to it, but it may suggest suavity of melody, richness of harmony, or smoothness of counterpoint. Tinctoris also singled out *Ma maistresse* as a model of *varietas*, which

Haruyo Miyazaki, the first scholar to identify the parent song. The allegorical potential of the song within the Mass is also mysterious; might it, too, be thought to refer to Christ's suffering on the cross, on the verge of death, a little less than dead, living in sorrow without receiving any comfort"?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> According to Jaap van Benthem, in the preface to his recent edition of the work.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5.</sup> The syllables indicate the solmisation of the species of fourth or fifth that constitutes the upper part of the mode's octave range; in mode 4, Hypophrygian, this is the second species of fifth, from B mi down to E mi. Those interested should read Duffin's article, "Mi chiamano Mimi… but my name is Quarti toni: solmization and Ockeghem's famous Mass," Early Music xxix (2001): 164-84.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Haruyo Miyazaki, "New light on Ockeghem's Missa 'Mi-mi," Early Music xiii (1985): 367-75.

he regarded as the greatest virtue of polyphonic music, specifying a number of contrapuntal techniques whereby such variety could be achieved.

The eighth and last rule is that variety must most accurately be sought for in all counterpoint for, as Horace says in his *Poetics*, "One who sings to the kithara is laughed at if he always wanders over the same string."

Wherefore, according to the opinion of Tullius [Cicero], as variety in the art of speaking most delights the hearer, so also in music a diversity of harmonies vehemently provokes the souls of listeners into delight; hence the philosopher [Aristotle], in his *Ethics*, does not hesitate to state that variety is a most pleasant thing and human nature in need of it.

Also, any composer or improviser... of the greatest genius may achieve this diversity if he either composes or improvises now by one quantity, now by another; now by one perfection [cadence], now by another; now by one proportion [vertical interval], now by another; now by one melodic interval [motive: coniunctio], now by another; now with suspensions [cum syncopis], now without; now with fuga [imitation], now without; now with pauses [rests], now without; now diminished [i.e. florid: contrapunctus diminutus], now plain [contrapunctus planus].

Sean Gallagher interprets *varietas* as a "mode of composing" in which "composers could work out a sequence of musical passages, each having its own localized sense of regularity and coher-

ence, the nature of which was continually changing." In *Ma maistresse*, you will hear shifts in contrapuntal texture, with imitation deployed in ever-varied ways; variation in the speed at which the melody moves forward, now urgent, now languidly suspended; and changes in tonal emphasis: note especially the way the harmonies in the second part of the piece create an entirely new mood. You will encounter many, many equally persuasive exemplars of *varietas* throughout this concert, of an ineffable sweetness, and I hope we will all come away refreshed and wiser.

Finally, a brief mention of pronunciation: We are experimenting with fifteenth-century pronunciations of Latin (more like French) and of French (rather more like Latin, with many more final consonants pronounced than is usual in the modern spoken language). In the Latin works the French vowels and consonants help to create a more specific and distinctive sound-world, perhaps akin to Ockeghem's own (he was born in the French-speaking province of Hainault, not far from Brussels, and spent most of his career in Tours in France). In the French, the heightened diction adds clarity and precision, aids comprehension, and underlines certain commonplaces of fifteenth-century French poetry such as the juxtaposition (not actually found in the texts sung this evening) of the verb "amer" (to love) with the adjective "amer" (bitter), which in this pronunciation sound identical, the final R pronounced.

—Scott Metcalfe

# Texts & Translations

# Ma maistresse et ma plus grant amye,

De mon desir la mortelle enemye, Parfaicte en biens s'onques maiz le fut femme, Celle seule de qui court bruit et fame D'estre sans per, ne vous verray je mye?

Helas, de vous bien plaindre me devroie, S'il ne vous plaist que brefvement vous voye, M'amour, par qui d'aultre aymer n'ay puissance.

Car sans vous voir, en quelque part que soye, Tout ce que voys me desplaist et ennoye, Ne jusqu'alors je n'auray souffisance.

Incessamment mon dolent cueur larmye Doubtant qu'en vous pitié soit endormye. Que ja ne soit, ma tant amée dame; Maiz s'ainsy est, si malheureux me clame Que plus ne quiers vivre heure ne demye.

Ma maistresse et ma plus grant amye...

Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison. Kyrie eleison.

Gloria in excelsis deo, et in terra pax hominibus bone voluntatis. Laudamus te. Benedicimus te. Adoramus te. Glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam. Domine deus, rex celestis, deus pater omnipotens. Domine fili unigenite, Jesu Christe. Domine deus, agnus dei, filius patris. Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram. Qui sedes ad dexteram patris, miserere nobis. Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus dominus, tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe, cum sancto spiritu in gloria dei patris. Amen.

My lady and my greatest friend, Mortal enemy of my desire, Perfect in qualities, if ever woman was, She alone whom rumor and fame hold To be without peer, will I never see you at all?

Alas! well should I complain of you
If it does not please you that I see you soon,
My love, because of whom I am powerless to love another.

For when I do not see you, wherever it might be, Everything I see displeases and vexes me, Nor until I see you will I be satisfied.

Ceaselessly my sorrowing heart weeps,
Fearing that in you pity might be asleep.
May that not be, my so-beloved lady!
But if so it is, I proclaim myself so unhappy
That I do not want to live one hour more, nor even one half.

My lady and my greatest friend...

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to all of good will. We praise you. We bless you. We adore you. We glorify you. We give thanks to you for your great glory. Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God the Father. Lord Jesus Christ, only begotten Son. Lord God, lamb of God, Son of the Father. Who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Who takes away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Who sits at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are holy, you alone are the Lord, the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

### Fors seullement l'atente que je meure

En mon las cueur nul espoir ne demeure Car mon malheur si tresfort me tourmente Qui n'est douleur que par vous je ne sente Pource que suis de vous perdre bien seure.

Vostre rigeur tellement me court seure Qu'en ce parti il fault que je m'asseure Dont je n'ay bien qui en rien me contente

Fors seullement l'atente que je meure En mon las cueur nul espoir ne demeure Car mon malheur si tresfort me tourmente.

Mon desconfort toute seulle je pleure En mauldisant sur ma foy a toute heure Ma loyaulté qui tant me fait dolente Las! que je suis de vivre mal contente Quant de par vous n'est riens qui me sequeure.

Fors seullement...

Credo in unum deum, patrem omnipotentem, factorem celi et terre, visibilium omnium et invisibilium. Et in unum dominum Jesum Christum, filium dei unigenitum: et ex patre natum ante omnia secula. Deum de deo, lumen de lumine. deum verum de deo vero. Genitum non factum, consubstantialem patri: per quem omnia facta sunt. Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de celis. Et incarnatus est de spiritu sancto ex Maria virgine: et homo factus est. Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato: passus et sepultus est. Et resurrexit tertia die secundum scripturas. Et ascendit in celum: sedet ad dexteram patris. Et iterum venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos et mortuos: cujus regni non erit finis. Et in spiritum sanctum dominum et vivificantem qui ex patre filioque procedit. Qui cum patre et filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur: qui locutus est per prophetas. Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum. Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi seculi. Amen.

Save only the expectation that I shall die, no hope remains in my weary heart, for my misery torments me so bitterly that there is no grief that I do not feel on your account, for I am full sure of losing you.

Your implacable pitilessness pursues me so surely that in this situation I can only be sure that I have nothing that comforts me at all

save only the expectation that I shall die; no hope remains in my weary heart, for my misery torments me so bitterly.

All alone I weep for my distress, ever cursing, by my faith, my loyalty, which makes me suffer so.
Alas! how unhappy I am to remain alive when I receive nothing from you to succor me.

Save only...

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God. Begotten, not made; of one being with the Father, through whom all things are made. For us and for our salvation he came down from Heaven. He was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and was made man. He was crucified for our sake under Pontius Pilate, died, and was buried. On the third day he rose again, in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge both the living and the dead, and his kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. And I believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. And I await the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

# Presque transi, ung peu mains qu'estre mort,

Vivant en dueil sans avoir nul confort, Veoir l'en me peut es liens de Fortune Qui sans cesser pis qu'autre me fortune Et me combat de plus fort en plus fort.

Helas! je suis contre mon vueil en vie, Et si n'est riens dont tant j'aye d'envie Que de povoir veoir ma fin bien prouchaine.

Morir ne puis et tousjours m'y convie, Et m'est bien tart que du tout je desvie A celle fin que soie hors de paine.

Il m'est advis que la mort me tient tort, Quant autrement elle ne fait son effort De moy vengier de ma vie importune, Car je languis sans avoir joye aucune Par mon malheur qui me dévoure et mort.

Presque transi...

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, dominus deus sabaoth.
Pleni sunt celi et terra gloria tua.
Osanna in excelsis.
Benedictus qui venit in nomine domini.
Osanna in excelsis.

On the verge of death, a little less than dead, living in sorrow without any comfort: one sees me in the bonds of Fortune, who without cease treats me worse than any other and wars against me harder and harder.

Alas! I remain alive against my will, and there is nothing I long for so much as to see my end draw near.

Die I cannot, and yet always I seek to, and it is high time that I turn away from everything towards that end where I shall be free of pain.

It seems to me that Death does me wrong when otherwise she makes no effort to relieve me of my wearisome life, for I languish without any joy whatsoever because of the unhappiness that devours and gnaws at me.

On the verge of death...

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

# De plus en plus se renouvelle,

Ma doulce dame gente et belle, Ma volenté de vous veir. Ce me fait le tres grant desir Que j'ay de vous ouir nouvelle.

Ne cuidiés pas que je recelle, Comme a tous jours vous estes celle Que je vueil de tout obeir.

De plus en plus se renouvelle, Ma doulce dame gente et belle, Ma volente de vous veir.

Helas, se vous m'estes cruelle, J'auroie au cuer angoisse telle Que je voudroie bien morir, Mais ce seroit sans desservir En soustenant vostre querelle.

De plus en plus...

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem. More and more is renewed—
my sweet lady, noble and fair—
my urge to see you:
this creates in me the very strong desire
I have to hear news of you.

Do not imagine that I am hiding, for at all times you are she whom I wish to obey in everything.

More and more is renewed my sweet lady, noble and fair my urge to see you.

Alas, if you are cruel to me, I shall have such anguish of heart that I should surely wish to die, but would do so without failing to serve by sustaining your cause.

More and more...

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

Translations from the French by Scott Metcalfe

# BLUE HERON

The vocal ensemble Blue Heron has been acclaimed by The Boston Globe as "one of the Boston music community's indispensables" and hailed by Alex Ross in The New Yorker for the "expressive intensity" of its interpretations. Combining a commitment to vivid live performance with the study of original source materials and historical performance practices, Blue Heron ranges over a wide and fascinating repertoire, including 15th-century English and Franco-Flemish polyphony, Spanish music between 1500 and 1600, and neglected early 16th-century English music, especially the rich and unique repertory of the Peterhouse partbooks, copied c. 1540 for Canterbury Cathedral. Blue Heron's first CD, featuring music by Guillaume Du Fay, was released in 2007. In 2010 the ensemble inaugurated a 5-CD series of *Music from the Peterhouse* Partbooks; two discs have been released so far, of music by Hugh Aston, Robert Jones, Nicholas Ludford, John Mason, and Richard Pygott, and volume three will be released next season. All the recordings have received international critical acclaim and the first Peterhouse CD made the Billboard charts.

Blue Heron presents subscription series in Boston and in New York City. The ensemble has appeared at the Boston Early Music Festival; in New York City at The Cloisters, the 92nd Street Y, and Music Before 1800; at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C., at Festival Mozaic in San Luis Obisbo, California, and at the Berkeley Early Music Festival. Last September Blue Heron was appointed ensemble in residence at the new Center for Early Music Studies at Boston University. Highlights of the 2012-13 season include performances for the visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in October, an appearance at the new Shalin Liu Performance Center in Rockport, the presentation of North American premieres of music from the Peterhouse partbooks by Ludford and Mason, and a collaboration with the viol consort Parthenia from New York.



Pamela Dellal, mezzo-soprano, is an acclaimed soloist and recitalist whose singing has been praised for her "exquisite vocal color," "musical sensitivity," and "eloquent phrasing." She has been featured in leading roles in operas of Purcell, Mozart, Britten,

and others. With Sequentia, Ms. Dellal has recorded the music of Hildegard von Bingen and toured the US, Europe, and Australia. Passionate about chamber music, early music, and contemporary music, she performs frequently with Dinosaur Annex, Boston Musica Viva, Ensemble Chaconne, Blue Heron, and the Musicians of the Old Post Road. She has been a regular soloist in the Emmanuel Music Bach Cantata series for twenty-five years and has performed almost all 200 of Bach's extant sacred cantatas. Recent appearances include the premiere of a new John Harbison work, *The Seven Ages*, at Merkin Concert Hall in New York City, followed by performances in San Francisco, Boston and London.



Paul Guttry, bass-baritone, enjoys the variety of opera, oratorio, and a specialization in early music. A former member of Chanticleer, Paul has performed throughout the USA and internation-

ally with Sequentia, the Boston Camerata, and New York's Ensemble for Early Music. In Boston he has appeared as soloist with Emmanuel Music, the Handel & Haydn Society, the Boston Early Music Festival, the Tanglewood Music Center, Cantata Singers, Boston Cecilia, Prism Opera, Intermezzo, Boston Revels, and Collage. This summer he sang the role of Osmin in the

Connecticut Early Music Festival's production of Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and in the spring will appear as the Father in Britten's *The Prodigal Son* with Intermezzo. In addition to Blue Heron's discs, Paul can be heard on recordings of medieval music by Sequentia, Kurt Weill's *Johnny Johnson* and French *airs de cour* with the Boston Camerata, and music of Bach by Emmanuel Music.



Laura Jeppesen is a graduate of the Yale School of Music. She is the principal violist of Boston Baroque and gambist of the Boston Museum Trio, and plays in many early music groups, including the Handel & Haydn Society, The Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra, Aston Magna,

and the Carthage Consort. She has been a Woodrow Wilson Designate, a Fellow of Radcliffe's Bunting Institute, and a Fulbright Scholar. In 2006 the Independent Critics of New England nominated her for an IRNE award for the score she produced as music director of the American Repertory Theater's staging of Christopher Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage.* She has performed as soloist under conductors Christopher Hogwood, Edo de Waart, Seiji Ozawa, Martin Pearlman, Grant Llewellyn, and Bernard Haitink. Her extensive discography includes music for solo viola da gamba, the gamba sonatas of J. S. Bach, Buxtehude's trio sonatas opus 1 and 2, Telemann's Paris Quartets, and music of Marin Marais. She teaches at Boston University and Wellesley College.

Praised by *The New York Times* for his "appealingly textured sound," baritone **David McFerrin** is building a critically acclaimed career across a variety of genres. This season he is a featured Emerging Artist with Boston Lyric Opera, appearing in *Madama Butterfly* and



the American premiere of James MacMillan's Clemency. Other upcoming engagements include reprise performances of Aeneas in Dido and Aeneas with Seraphic Fire in Miami, and the Elder Son in Britten's The Prodigal Son with Intermezzo Opera. Concert highlights have included Monteverdi's Vespers at St.

Mark's Basilica in Venice, a Carnegie Hall debut with Maestro Gustavo Dudamel and the Israel Philharmonic, and performances with the Boston Pops. He has also sung at the Blossom, Caramoor and Ravinia Festivals, and completed two summer residencies at the Marlboro Music Festival in Vermont. A resident of Boston, Mr. McFerrin sings regularly with the Handel & Haydn Society and is bass section leader in the Trinity Church Choirs.



Tenor **Owen McIntosh** is the recipient of a master's degree from the New England Conservatory of Music. Heralded by critics as "stylistically impeccable," "he sings with vocal energy and rhythmic bite" and his "strong yet sweet tenor voice" produces the "clearest lines and most nuanced performances."

Recent performances include the title role in Helios Early Opera's production of *David et Jonathas* by Charpentier, Bach's *B Minor Mass* with Tucson Chamber Artists, the Evangelist in Telemann's *St. Luke* and *St. John Passions*, soloist in Opera Boston's production of *The Nose*, and a Jordan Hall performance of Benjamin Britten's *Serenade for Tenor and Horn*. Mr. McIntosh is also a member of various ensembles, including

Blue Heron, Exsultemus, Emmanuel Music, Boston Baroque, the Handel & Haydn Society, Harvard Baroque, Tucson Chamber Artists, and Seraphic Fire.



Tenor **Jason McStoots** has performed around the world. Critics have described him as "light and bluff, but neither lightweight nor bland,

and with exemplary enuciation" and as having "a silken tenor voice" and "sweet, appealing tone." His recent appearances include Bach's Christmas Oratorio and a Japanese tour of the St. Matthew Passion under the direction of Joshua Rifkin, Monteverdi's 1610 Vesbers and The Return of Ulysses in Seattle under Stephen Stubbs, and Handel's Acis and Galatea with the Boston Early Music Festival. He has appeared with such groups as Boston Lyric Opera, Pacific MusicWorks, Boston Camerata, Handel Choir of Baltimore, New Haven Symphony, Tragicomedia, and the Tanglewood Music Center, and in annual Monteverdi performances by New York's Green Mountain Project, directed by Scott Metcalfe. He can be heard on recordings with Blue Heron and Cut Circle, as well as on the Grammy-nominated recording of Lully's Psyché and on recordings of Charpentier and John Blow with the Boston Early Music Festival on the CPO label.



Scott Metcalfe has gained wide recognition as one of North America's leading specialists in music from the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries and beyond. Musical and artistic director of Blue Heron since its founding in 1999, he is also music director of New York City's Green

Mountain Project (Jolle Greenleaf, artistic director),

whose performances of Claudio Monteverdi's 1610 Vespers and a "1640" Vespers of Metcalfe's own devising have been hailed by The New York Times as "quite simply terrific" and by The Boston Globe as "stupendous." Metcalfe has been a guest director of TENET (New York), Emmanuel Music (Boston), the Tudor Choir and Seattle Baroque, Pacific Baroque Orchestra (Vancouver, BC), Quire Cleveland, and the Dryden Ensemble (Princeton, NJ), and he conducted Early Music America's Young Performers Festival Ensemble in its inaugural performance at the 2011 Boston Early Music Festival. Metcalfe also enjoys a career as a baroque violinist and currently plays with Les Délices (dir. Debra Nagy), Les Boréades (dir. Francis Colpron), L'Harmonie des Saisons (dir. Eric Milnes), and other ensembles in Boston, Montreal, and elsewhere. He teaches vocal ensemble repertoire and performance practice at Boston University and is codirector (with Victor Coelho) of BU's new Center for Early Music Studies. In his spare time he is at work on a new edition of the songs of Gilles Binchois (c. 1400-1460). Metcalfe received a bachelor's degree in 1985 from Brown University, where he majored in biology (perhaps uniquely in the early music world, he was lead author of an article published in the Annals of Botany), and in 2005 he completed a master's degree in historical performance practice at Harvard.



Countertenor Martin Near began his professional singing life at age ten in the choir of men and boys at Saint Thomas Fifth Avenue in New York City, advancing to Head Chorister. He now enjoys a varied career, exploring his twin passions for early music and new

music. This past April Mr. Near sang in the Evangelist quartet of Arvo Pärt's Passio with Boston Modern Orchestra Project, and together with soprano Margot

Rood was noted for producing "an ear-boggling array of close-harmony sonorities...seemingly generating overtones and wave-interference patterns that not even dogs could hear." In November 2011 he was countertenor soloist in the premiere performance of Dominick DiOrio's Stabat mater with Juventas New Music Ensemble. In March 2011 Mr. Near took the role of Hamor in Handel's Jephtha with Boston Cecilia, and was noted for his "fine work" in Buxtehude's Heut triumphieret Gottes Sohn with Boston Baroque. He also relishes ensemble work and sings regularly with Emmanuel Music, Boston Baroque, and the Handel & Haydn Society. Mr. Near served as a producer for Cut Circle's CD, "De Orto and Josquin: Music in the Sistine Chapel around 1490," and as Music Director of Exsultemus from 2009 to 2012.



Tenor Mark Sprinkle's singing has been described as "expressive," "very rewarding," "outstanding," "vivid," and "supremely stylish." He has collaborated with the Boston Early Music Festival, the Boston Camerata, the Mark Morris

Dance Group, Emmanuel Music, Boston Baroque, the Handel & Haydn Society, and many others, performed at festivals in Bergen (Norway), Vancouver, Edinburgh, and Aldeburgh (UK), and worked as a soloist and ensemble singer with Seiji Ozawa, Christopher Hogwood, William Christie, Roger Norrington, John Nelson, Andrew Parrott, Grant Llewellyn, and Craig Smith. He has appeared as a soloist with Concerto Palatino, with the Handel & Haydn Society in Bach's St. Matthew Passion and Monteverdi's 1610 Vespers, and in concerts of Handel's Chandos Anthems with Christopher Hogwood in Jordan Hall. Mr. Sprinkle has sung the Evangelist in Bach Passions with the

Handel & Haydn Society, the Boulder Bach Festival, the Oriana Singers of Vermont, Seraphim Singers, Boston's Chorus Pro Musica, and the Andover Choral Society, among others. This season he will appear in concerts with Exsultemus and as the tenor soloist in Bach's Cantata 106 with Boston Baroque in Jordan Hall. Mr. Sprinkle was a founding member of the Cambridge Bach Ensemble and a fellow of the Britten-Pears School and has recorded for Dorian, Koch, Harmonia Mundi, Decca, Arabesque, and Telarc.



Sumner Thompson is praised for his "elegant style" (Boston Globe), and is one of today's most sought-after tenors. His appearances on the operatic stage include roles in the Boston Early Music Festival's productions of Conradi's Ariadne (2003) and Lully's Psyché (2007)

and several European tours with Contemporary Opera Denmark as Orfeo in Monteverdi's L'Orfeo. He has performed across North America as a soloist with Concerto Palatino, Tafelmusik, Apollo's Fire, Les Boréades de Montréal, Les Voix Baroques, Pacific Baroque Orchestra, the King's Noyse, Mercury Baroque, and the symphony orchestras of Charlotte, Memphis, and Phoenix. Recent highlights include Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610 and the new Vespers of 1640 with the Green Mountain Project, Buxtehude's Membra Jesu Nostri with Les Voix Baroques and Houston's Mercury Baroque, Mozart's Requiem at St. Thomas Church in New York City, a tour of Japan with Joshua Rifkin and the Cambridge Concentus, a return to the Carmel Bach Festival, and Britten's War Requiem with the New England Philharmonic and several guest choruses.

16

# BLUE HERON'S 5-CD RECORDING PROJECT: Music from the Peterhouse Partbooks

BLUE HERON is in the midst of a recording project of international musical significance: a five-disc series of *Music* from the Peterhouse Partbooks – a glorious collection of music from the golden age of English church music by the greatest composers working in England c. 1510-1540. The music for Volume III was recorded in October, for release next season, while Volumes I and II have been hailed by critics at home and abroad:

"Blue Heron...produces a spectacularly rich and accurate sound, with beautifully delineated articulation.... I was transported by the exquisite beauty of this Mass, and found myself sitting in semi-darkness luxuriating in the genius of Ludford's intertwining vocal lines. Pygott's enormous Salve regina, running in this recording to almost 23 minutes of intricate polyphony... is given an equally intelligent and exquisitely unhurried performance. I cannot recommend this superb CD highly enough ..." (D. James Ross, *Early Music Review* (UK), October 2012)

The Peterhouse partbooks, copied in 1540 for Canterbury Cathedral, are the largest and most important extant source of pre-Reformation English sacred music, but the repertoire has gone unsung, unheard, and unregarded, largely on account of the disappearance, centuries ago, of one of the five partbooks and a portion of another. For providing a remedy to this situation we are indebted to the English musicologist Nick Sandon, retired from the University of Exeter, who has devoted the greatest part of his professional life to the Peterhouse music and by now has published brilliant and idiomatic reconstructions of nearly all of the incomplete music. Blue Heron has been involved with the Peterhouse repertoire since its founding in 1999 and is deeply steeped in the particularities of its richly melismatic style; the ensemble is thus ideally suited to act as an ambassador on behalf of this wonderful music and Doctor Sandon, its devoted restorer, who has joined Blue Heron as an advisor in this undertaking.

A set of five CDs will surely help restore the Peterhouse repertoire to the central position in music history and in concert life that it merits. This is an expensive and ambitious undertaking, and we thank those who have provided seed money in this early phase. Please consider providing a significant gift in support of our plans for a 5-CD Peterhouse set, which will help expose more and more of this important repertoire to the world. Please contact John Yannis (jy@blueheronchoir. org) to discuss plans for a special recording fund.

Blue Heron's series of recordings of music from the Peterhouse Partbooks is made possible by our Peterhouse Partners, a leadership group of donors who pledge support for the complete 5-disc series, enabling Blue Heron to bring this extraordinary and neglected repertoire to a wider modern audience. We are deeply grateful for their vision, commitment, and generosity.

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# **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

BLUE HERON is much more than an ensemble of musicians. Only the devotion, hard work and financial support of a community of board members, staff, volunteers, donors, and concertgoers makes our existence possible, and we offer most grateful thanks to all those who join us in this endeavor of creating, nurturing and sustaining an organization dedicated to making the music of the 15th and 16th centuries come alive in the 21st.

Special thanks to the Center for Early Music Studies, Boston University, which this year welcomes Blue Heron as resident ensemble, and to Michael Noone and the Department of Music at Boston College for inviting us to a residency for the third year. Sue Ladr (Ladr Design) designed the postcard and the program. Evan Ingersoll (Angstrom Images) built our website and designed our programs for many years, Erik Bertrand maintains the website, Chris Clark (Cave Dog Studio) designed various publicity materials and our program covers, and Philip Davis records our concerts. We are most fortunate to have all this expertise on our side.

Thanks to The Cambridge Society for Early Music for supporting the pre-concert talks.

Many thanks to all our volunteers for their help this evening and throughout the year.

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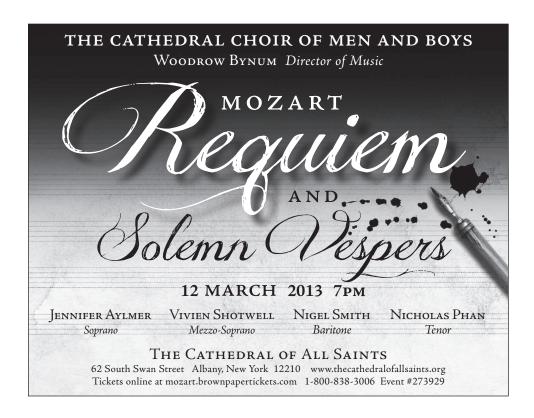
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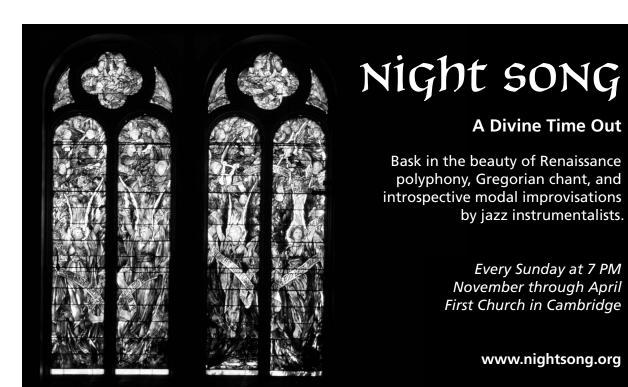
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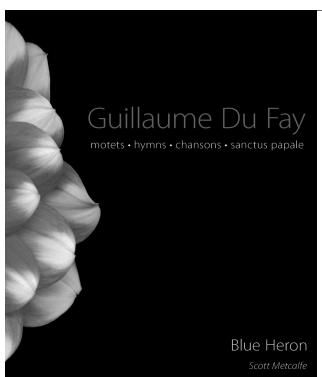
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J. F. Weber | Fanfare, September/October 2007

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Fabrice Fitch | Goldberg, August/September 2007

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