



# CHRISTMAS IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

**Friday, December 18 & Saturday, December 19, 2015**

First Church in Cambridge, Congregational

**Sunday, December 20, 2015**

S. Stephen's Church, Providence



# CHRISTMAS IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

## I. Advent

Veni, veni, Emanuel DM & MEN  
13<sup>th</sup>-century French?

## II. Annunciation

Angelus ad virginem DT SM  
Arundel MS (late 13<sup>th</sup> century)

Gabriel fram Heven-King PD MB SM  
Cotton Fragments (14<sup>th</sup> century)

Gaude virgo salutata / Gaude virgo singularis MN / GP / SR JM / MB MS  
John Dunstaple (d. 1453) / *Isorhythmic motet for Annunciation*

Hayl Mary, ful of grace MN GP / SR JM / MB MS / SM  
Trinity Roll (early 15<sup>th</sup> century)

Quam pulcra es MN SR MB  
Dunstaple / *Processional antiphon for the Blessed Virgin Mary*

Gloria (Old Hall MS, no. 21) JM MS SR DM PG  
Leonel Power (d. 1445)

Ther is no rose of swych vertu DT MB PG SM  
Trinity Roll

Ibo michi ad montem mirre GP JM MS  
Leonel Power / *Antiphon for the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

## III. Christmas Eve

Veni redemptor gencium PG & MEN  
Sarum plainchant / *Hymn for first Vespers of the Nativity on Christmas Eve*

INTERMISSION

## IV. Christmas Day

- Dominus dixit ad me DM & MEN  
Sarum plainchant / *Introit for the Mass at Cock-Crow on Christmas Day*
- Nowel: Owt of your slepe aryse DT PD GP  
Selden MS (15<sup>th</sup> century)
- Gloria (OLD HALL MS, NO. 27) MN GP PD / SR JM / MB MS  
Pycard (?fl. 1410-20)
- Ecce, quod natura PD SR MB  
Selden MS
- Sanctus / *Missa Veterem hominem*  
Anonymous English, c. 1440
- Ave rex angelorum MB DM PG  
Egerton MS (15<sup>th</sup> century)
- Agnus dei / *Missa Veterem hominem*  
Anonymous English, c. 1440
- Nowel syng we bothe al and som  
Trinity Roll

## BLUE HERON

*cantus* Pamela Dellal, Martin Near, Gerrod Pagenkopf, Daniela Tošić  
*tenor & contratenor* Michael Barrett, Jason McStoots, Stefan Reed, Mark Sprinkle  
*bassus* Paul Guttry, David McFerrin

Scott Metcalfe, *harp, director*

*Pre-concert talk by Daniel Donoghue sponsored in part by The Cambridge Society for Early Music*



**Blue Heron is funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.**

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## CHRISTMAS IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

The medieval commemoration of Christ's nativity began with the preparatory and penitential season of Advent, beginning with the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day. After Christmas itself came a series of saints' days, including those of St. Stephen, St. John the Apostle, and St. Thomas of Canterbury. Ritual observances reached another climax on the feast of the Circumcision on January 1, the Octave or eighth day of Christmas, the traditional first day of the New Year and, until the thirteenth century, also the feast day of the Virgin Mary. Celebrations continued through Epiphany on January 6, marking the revelation to the Gentiles and the Adoration of the Magi, and its Octave, and extended to Candlemas on the fortieth day after Christmas, February 2, when Christians observed both the feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple and the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin.

Throughout the Christmas season, the official liturgy of the Church was embellished and expanded with tropes both textual and musical, adding color and ceremony to the festivities while establishing a closer connection between the universality of fixed ritual and the particularity of a specific sanctuary or congregation. Textual tropes included substitutes for items such as antiphons and versicles, or for parts of the Ordinary of the Mass; in England a troped Kyrie was the rule for all major feasts. A polyphonic setting of an item from the Ordinary such as the Gloria or Sanctus might be considered a purely musical trope, replacing the plainchant. Fifteenth-century England evolved its own unique repertoire of texts and music outside

or alongside the liturgy, carols, of which some 130 survive, many for Christmas. Carols are found mostly in manuscripts of church music and were clearly the province of professional musicians and learned clerics, as witness their sophisticated musical notation and frequent use of Latin alongside the vernacular. If not exactly popular music in our sense, however, they were at least popular in character—cast in strophic form and set to simple and highly memorable tunes—and “popular in destination” (in the words of the preeminent twentieth-century student of their texts, R. L. Greene). They might have provided entertainment and edification to educated cleric and uneducated congregant alike, within, around, and outside of the liturgy, for processions and banquets and celebrations of all kinds.

This program offers a small selection of music for the Christmas season that might have been heard in England in the 1440s, when the most modern of the works on the program were composed. We begin with the familiar Advent hymn *Veni, veni Emanuel*. Probably French in origin, the hymn could have made its way to England as early as the thirteenth century, when Franciscan friars in France and England maintained extensive connections and an evangelizing member of the order might have carried such a song across the Channel. The text is a metrical version of five of the seven so-called O-antiphons, which date back to the eighth century or earlier. One of the O-antiphons was sung before and after the Magnificat at Vespers on each of the seven days before the eve of Christmas, December 17-23. They address the Messiah to come in

his various attributes: O Sapientia (wisdom), O Adonai (Lord), O Radix Jesse (root of Jesse), O Clavis David (key of David), O Oriens (the morning star), O Rex (king), O Emanuel (“God with us”). The initial letters, after the O, spell out the promise of redemption in a reverse acrostic, SARCORE, *ero cras*: “Tomorrow I shall be there.” (Medieval English tradition began the series on December 16 and added an eighth antiphon, “O virgo virginum,” making the acrostic *vero cras*: “Truly, tomorrow!”)

The Annunciation is formally commemorated nine months before Christmas, of course, but the miracle is remembered and celebrated at the Christmas season with retellings of the archangel Gabriel’s appearance to Mary, their conversation—brief, yet charged with import—and the divine conception. Our set of Annunciation music opens with one of the most famous songs of the English Middle Ages, *Angelus ad virginem*. The song figures in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, in the Miller’s Tale, where it is sung to a psaltery by a poor scholar at Oxford by the name of Nicholas:

And al above ther lay a gay sautrie,  
On which he made a-nyghtes melodie  
So swetely that al the chambre rong,  
And *Angelus ad virginem* he song,  
And after that he song the Kynges Noote.

(In the tale, a notably rude one, Nicholas goes on to cuckold his landlord, an elderly carpenter with an eighteen-year-old wife named Alison. A medieval reader would presumably have relished the ironic reference to a song about a virgin conceiving a son in the absence of her husband, also a carpenter.) Christopher Page has shown that the text of

*Angelus ad virginem* is probably by the poet and theologian Philippe (d. 1236), chancellor of Paris, nearly all of whose Latin lyrics survive with music. Text and tune probably came to England with travelling Franciscans in the thirteenth century, just as we have imagined happened with *Veni, veni Emanuel*. The song quickly became popular in England: all of the extant sources are British and there are two thirteenth-century versions in English verse, *Gabriel fram Heven-King* and *The angel to the Vergyn said*. We sing the former in a two-voice setting from the next century, inserted between verses of the monophonic Latin song.

The polyphonic carols on our program are drawn from three manuscripts whose contents overlap somewhat, despite the two decades between their likely dates of copying, from after 1415 to the 1440s. With the exception of the more ambitiously contrapuntal Epiphany carol *Ave rex angelorum*, the carols are written in a robust popular style with graceful melody and simple harmonies and generally take the form of a three-voice refrain with a two-voice verse. The rollicking *Nowel: Owt of your slepe aryse* inverts the normal pattern, with a brilliant three-voice verse and a refrain whose two parts roll from voice to voice. For *Nova nova*, transmitted as a monophonic song, I have added two parts to the refrain and one to the verse.

“Isorhythmic motet” is a prickly modern term for a medieval compositional technique that was extensively cultivated in the fourteenth century. The form was mostly abandoned after 1400 but was exceptionally used in the fifteenth century by John Dunstaple and his contemporary Guillaume Du Fay. The term “isorhythm” means that the tenor part (or parts—

*Gaude virgo* has two: a tenor whose melody is taken from a plainchant, and a contratenor or part written “against the tenor”) is constructed on a rhythmic pattern that repeats exactly: this is called a *talea*, meaning a slice or a measure. The tenor’s melody is also constructed from a repeating pattern of pitches, the *color*, usually a fragment of plainchant. Typically the *talea*, the isorhythmic unit, starts out in long note values which diminish proportionally as the motet proceeds. In *Gaude virgo* the *color* contains twice as many notes as the *talea*; the *color* occurs three times, each over two runs of the *talea*, in the accelerating proportion 3:2:1, creating an irresistible, yet almost subliminal forward momentum.

The amazing thing about an isorhythmic motet in the hands of a master like Dunstaple is that such an elaborately mechanized structure undergirds such compelling music. It is at once rigorously mathematical in conception and deeply sensuous in realisation, glorying in sheer beauty of sonority and exuberant melodic invention. One of the pleasures offered by *Gaude virgo* is the constant alternation of G minor and G major sonorities produced by different signatures in the two lower parts, one with a B flat, the other without. The tenor is the fifth stanza of the plainchant sequence “Ave mundi spes Maria,” while each of the other three voices—including the contratenor, which moves at the speed of the tenor and takes on some of its contrapuntal functions—carries a separate poetic text meditating on the Annunciation. The meanings conveyed by such an artistic construction cannot possibly be apprehended in a single hearing. The attentive listener, however, may perceive the interplay of key words in the upper two parts: “Gaude

*virgo salutata*” is juxtaposed with “Gaude *virgo singularis*” in the opening measures, for instance, “Angelus” with “Mater heres Dei” at the beginning of the third and final section.

Another technique of construction underlies the Gloria by Pycard (whoever he may have been). Here two of the upper three voices sing in canon at the distance of five breves (or measures). The canon is complicated and partially obscured by the third voice moving at the same speed and in the same range. Towards the end, when the three upper voices trade hockets (the term, related to the English *hiccup*, describes a rapidfire back-and-forth exchange of single notes), the entire ensemble locks into a regular pattern of five measures, like waves rising and breaking on the shore.

The decades between the 1410s and the 1440s saw striking changes in the compositional style of learned polyphony. In some instances we can hear the change in the works of a single composer. Listen to the craggy dissonances and bristly cross-rhythms of Leonel Power’s astonishing Gloria from the Old Hall manuscript of c. 1415, for two, four, and finally five voices—Christopher Page likens the effect to sticking your head into a beehive—and compare it to his *Ibo michi ad montem mirre*, transmitted in a continental manuscript from the 1440s. The latter work is fluid, tuneful, and almost entirely consonant—sweeter, a fifteenth-century musician would probably say, just as *Ecce quod natura*, *Hayl Mary*, or *Ther is no rose* are sweet. Power’s later music has lost none of its ability to dazzle with complex cross-rhythms, as the dancing Alleluia demonstrates, but the effect is suave and sensual rather than glittering and prickly. The canonic example

of this quintessentially English sweetness is another motet addressing the Virgin Mary in the words of the Song of Songs, Dunstaple's rapturous *Quam pulcra es*; here a change in the mensuration (the time signature, more or less) sets off an exuberant gallop to the end.

The most modern of the works on our program are the *Sanctus* and *Agnus dei* from the *Missa Veterem hominem*. Composed in the 1440s by an anonymous English composer, this Mass was part of the great wave of English works that crashed onto the European continent in the mid-fifteenth century, inspiring a host of imitations by French and Flemish composers. It, like Power's *Ibo michi* and Dunstaple's *Gaude virgo salutata* and, indeed, most mid-century English music, survives only in continental copies, the English originals having disappeared almost without exception. The *Missa Veterem hominem* takes as its cantus firmus an antiphon for Lauds at the Octave of the Epiphany ("The Savior comes to baptism, bringing renewal to old man"), and its Kyrie (not recorded here) sets the trope *Deus creator omnium*, which was sung on all principal and major double feasts, like Christmas, in the Sarum rite. These features make it a perfect choice for a festive Mass during the Christmas season, while its vigorous rhythms, dashing melodies, and clangorous harmonies offer an apt musical counterpart to the blazing candles, the bright colors of festal vestments, the flashing gold, silver, and jewels of the ceremonial vessels, the swirling smoke and intoxicating odor of frankincense, and all the rest of the liturgical drama of High Mass on one of the most glorious feast days of the Christian year.

—Scott Metcalfe

## ABOUT THE HARP

The strings on a harp clang by striking the lower nail where they are connected to the body... In common parlance this is called "harping" the string.

Heinrich Glarean, *Dodecachordon* (1547)

The fifteenth-century harp sounds rather different from its modern counterparts due to the presence of brays, small wedges set atop the pins in the sound board: when the string is plucked, it vibrates against the narrow end of the wedge, creating a buzzy or snappy sound which is both louder and more sustained than that of a harp without brays. The harp played today was made by Lynne Lewandowski of Bellows Falls, Vermont, from Vermont cherry, and is based on various surviving originals and paintings, especially the tall and slender harps portrayed in the paintings of Hans Memling. Its 26 gut strings are tuned diatonically with both B-natural and B-flat.



## TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

### **VENI, VENI, EMANUEL!**

Captivum solve Israel,  
Qui gemit in exilio,  
Privatus Dei filio.

*Gaude! gaude! Emanuel  
nascetur pro te, Israel.*

Veni, O Jesse Virgula!  
Ex hostis tuos ungula,  
De specu tuos tartari  
Educ, et antro barathri.

Veni, veni, O Oriens!  
Solare nos adveniens,  
Noctis depelle nebulas,  
Dirasque noctis tenebras.

Veni, Clavis Davidica!  
Regna reclude celica,  
Fac iter tutum superum,  
Et claude vias inferum.

Veni, veni, Adonai,  
Qui populo in Sinai  
Legem dedisti vertice  
In maiestate glorie.

*13th century French?*

### **ANGELUS AD VIRGINEM**

subintrans in conclave,  
virginis formidinem  
demulcens, inquit: —Ave!  
Ave Regina Virginum!  
Celi terreque Dominum  
conciplies, et paries intacta  
salutem hominum;  
tu porta celi facta,  
medela criminum.

### **GABRIEL, FRAM HEVEN-KING**

Sent to the maide sweete,  
Broute his blisful tiding  
And fair he gan hir greet: —  
—Heil be thou, ful of grace aright!  
For Godes Son, this Heven-Light,  
For mannes love will man bicomme and take  
Fles of thee, Maide bright,

Come, O come, Emmanuel!  
Redeem captive Israel,  
who laments in exile,  
deprived of the son of God.

*Rejoice! rejoice! Emanuel  
shall be born to you, O Israel.*

Come, O Rod of Jesse!  
From the enemy's claws,  
from the pit of hell  
lead your people, and from the maw of the abyss.

Come, come, O Morning Star!  
Console us with your coming,  
dispel the gloom of night,  
and pierce the nocturnal shadows.

Come, Key of David!  
Open wide the heavenly kingdom,  
make safe the road above,  
and bar the ways to hell.

Come, come, Adonai,  
who on the mount of Sinai  
gave your people the Law  
in glorious majesty.

The angel, coming secretly  
to the Virgin,  
calming the Virgin's  
fear, said: —Hail!  
hail, Queen of Virgins!  
You shall conceive the Lord of Heaven and Earth  
and give birth, remaining a virgin,  
to the salvation of mankind;  
you are made the gateway of heaven,  
the cure for sin.

Gabriel, sent from the King of Heaven  
to the sweet maiden,  
brought her happy news  
and greeted her courteously:  
—Hail be thou, full of grace indeed!  
For God's Son, this Light of Heaven,  
for love of man will become man and take  
human form from thee, fair Maiden,



Manken free for to make  
Of sen and devles might.

Mildelich him gan andswere  
The milde maide thanne:  
—Wichewise sold ich bere  
A child withute manne?  
Th'angel hir seid: —Ne dred tee nout:  
Thurw th'Oligast sal ben iwroun  
This ilche thing warof tiding ich bringe;  
Al manken wurth ibout  
Thurw thine sweet childinge  
And ut of pine ibroun.

Wan the maiden understood  
And th'angels wordes herde,  
Mildelich, with milde mood,  
To th'angel hie andswerde:  
—Ure Lords thewe maid iwis  
Ich am, that heer aboven is;  
Anentis me fulfurthed be thi sawe,  
That ich, sith his wil is,  
A maid, withute lawe,  
Of moder have the blis.

Angelus disparuit  
et statim puellaris  
uterus intumuit  
vi partis salutaris.  
Qui, circumdatus utero  
novem mensium numero,  
hinc exiit et iniit conflictum  
affigens humero  
cruce[m], qua dedit ictum  
hosti mortifero.

Eya, Mater Domini,  
que pacem reddidisti  
angelis et homini  
cum Christum genuisti,  
tuum exora filium  
ut se nobis propiciam  
exhibeat et deleat peccata,  
prestans auxilium  
vita frui beata  
post hoc exilium.

*Latin by Philip the Chancellor? (d. 1236),  
English version anonymous 13th century*

to free mankind  
of sin and the devil's might.

The gentle maiden then  
gently answered him:  
—In what manner should I bear  
a child without a husband?  
The angel said to her: —Fear nothing:  
through the Holy Ghost shall be done  
this very thing of which I bring news;  
all mankind shall be redeemed  
through thy sweet child-bearing  
and brought out of torment.

When the maiden understood  
and heard the angel's words,  
gently, with gentle spirit  
she answered the angel:  
—I am indeed the bond-maid  
of our Lord, who is above:  
concerning me may thy words be fulfilled,  
that I, since it is His will,  
may, as a maiden, outside natural law,  
have the joy of motherhood.

The angel disappeared,  
and at once the girl's  
womb swelled up  
by the power of the birth of salvation.  
He, having been contained in the womb  
for nine months,  
came out from it and entered the conflict,  
taking on his shoulder  
the cross, by which he gave a blow  
to the mortal enemy.

O Mother of the Lord,  
who restored peace  
to angels and men  
when you gave birth to Christ,  
beg of your son  
that he may show himself favorable to us  
and wipe away our sins,  
offering help  
to enjoy the blessed life  
after this exile.

*Translations from  
The New Oxford Book of Carols*

*TRIPLUM*

**GAUDE VIRGO SALUTATA** angelicore latu,  
mox es gravida libera omni reatu;  
in te deitas humanata celesti flatu,  
virgo manens illibata re et cogitatu.

Quod mirum si paveas, dum conceptus pandit,  
quanto magis caveas, cum ad partum scandit.  
Dum virgo permanens, mens hec verba pandit;  
dicens “Ne timeas,” te mulcendo blandit.

Nondum contentaris, cum dicit parituram:  
quomodo miraris fietque curam;  
nescisse virum flaris, sed semper esse puram,  
credo, quod miraris, mutasse naturam.

Angelus: “Concipies de superis celestem  
deum et tu paries filium terrestrem.  
In te non est caries, natum habes testem.  
Leviatan insanies, hic fert tibi pestem.”

*MOTETUS*

**GAUDE VIRGO SINGULARIS**, mater nostri salvatoris,  
radix vite popularis, germen novi floris.  
Ex te sumpsit hinc tu paris ampullam liquoris  
que virtute aquas maris tenes stilla roris.

Dic, quo verbo concepisti, angeli vultui  
“dominus tecum” audisti dicens, “fui tui.”  
Presentem conclusisti, tunc naturam sui,  
messiam invenisti de natura tui.

O celestis armonia, in hac junctioe,  
caro nostre cum sophia in unum persone;  
qualiter ex qua via studeas colone,  
hec sola mater novit pia et tu Jesu bone.

Mater heres dei mundi redemptoris,  
pia tu memento mei in extremis horis;  
ne coartent mei rei, secum suis horis  
et presentas faciei mei plasmatoris.

*TRIPLUM*

Hail virgin, greeted by the angel’s report,  
pregnant yet free of all sin:  
in you deity is made human by heavenly inspiration,  
virgin undiminished by act or thought.

And if you tremble at the miracle while the child develops,  
how much warier are you when it comes to be born.  
While you remain a virgin, the mind offers these words,  
and saying “Be not afraid,” charms and eases you.

You do not contest it when he says you will bear a child,  
however much you wonder and are troubled.  
You are proclaimed not to have known a man, but to be  
ever pure,  
and—a thing to wonder at, surely—to have changed nature.

The angel: “You shall conceive the heavenly god  
from the realms on high, and bear a child of earth.  
There is no fault in you, as your son is witness.  
You shall torment Leviathan, and he will plague you.”

*MOTETUS*

Rejoice, unique maiden, mother of our savior,  
Root of the people’s life, seed of the new flower.  
He drew from you, you then bear, the flask of nectar,  
by your virtue you hold the sea’s waters in a drop of dew.

Say by what word you conceived! You heard,  
“The Lord is with you,” and answered the angelic  
countenance, “I am yours.” You contained his presence,  
then his nature; you found the Messiah in your own nature.

O heavenly harmony in this joining,  
flesh of our person united with Wisdom:  
how and by what path you are so zealous,  
these things only the pious mother knew, and you, good Jesus.

Mother and heir of God, world’s redeemer,  
recall me faithfully in my last hours,  
let my acts not constrain me with them in their hours,  
as you show me to the face of my maker.

CONTRATENOR

Virgo mater comprobatis, matrem partus indicat,  
claustrum ventris virginalis intactam te iudicat.  
Virginem cum divinalis natus ille benedicat,  
celum, tellus, unda maris laudes tuas predicat.  
Non est partus hic penalis qui matrem letificat.  
Christus factus fraternalis sic ut exemplificat.

TENOR

Ave gemma celi luminarium.  
Ave sancti spiritus sacrarium.

**HAYL MARY, FUL OF GRACE,**  
*moder in virgynyte.*

The Holi Goste is to the sent  
from the Fader omnipotent;  
now is God withyn the went  
Whan the angel seide "Ave."

Whan the angel "Ave" byganne,  
flesh and blode togedre ranne;  
Mary bare bothe God and manne  
throw vertu and throw dyngnyte.

So seith the Gospel of Syn Johan:  
God and man is made but one  
in flesch and blode, body and bone,  
O God in personys thre.

Moche joye to us was graunt  
and in erthe pees yplaunte  
whan that born was this faunte  
in the londe of Galile.

Mary, graunte us the blys  
ther thy Sonys wonynge ys;  
of that we han ydone amys  
pray for us, pur charite.

CONTRATENOR

You are proved the virgin mother: the birth shows the mother,  
the seal of your virginal womb judges you untouched.  
When your divine child blesses you as virgin,  
then heaven, earth, and ocean waves preach your praises.  
This birthing is no penance, it gladdens the mother.  
Christ is made our brother, as his example teaches.

TENOR

Hail, jewel of the lights of heaven!  
Hail, sacred place of the Holy Spirit!

*Translation by Larry Rosenwald*

*the thee*

*throw through*

Saint John

and peace planted on earth  
*faunte* infant

*wonynge* dwelling  
for what we have done wrong  
*pur charite* "pour charité," out of love

**QUAM PULCRA ES ET QUAM DECORA**, carissima, in deliciis. Statura tua assimilata est palme, et ubera tua botris. Caput tuum ut Carmelus, collum tuum sicut turris eburnea. Veni, dilecte mi, egrediamur in agrum, et videamus si flores fructus parturierunt, si floruerunt mala punica. Ibi dabo tibi ubera mea. Alleluia.

How beautiful you are, and how fair, dearest, in your delights! Your stature is like to a palm tree, and your breasts the clusters of its fruit. Your head is like Mount Carmel, your neck a tower of ivory. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field, let us see if the blossoms have budded, if the pomegranates are in flower. There I will give you my love. Alleluia.

**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.

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.

**THE IS NO ROSE OF SWYCH VERTU**

*as is the rose that bare Jhesu.*

Alleluia.

*swych such*

For in this rose conteynynd was  
Heven and erthe in lytyl space,  
*res miranda.*

*a marvellous thing*

Be that rose we may weel see  
that he is God in personys thre,  
*pari forma.*

*be by means of*

The aungelys sungyn the shepherdes to:  
"Gloria in excelsis Deo!"  
*Gaudeamus.*

*of the same form*

Glory to God in the Highest!  
Let us rejoice.

**IBO MICH I AD MONTEM MIRRE** et ad colles libani, et loquar sponse mee: Tota speciosa es et macula non est in te. Veni de Libano; venies et transibimus ad montem Seir et Hermon, a cubilibus leonum et a montibus leopardorum. Alleluia.

I will go into the mountain of myrrh and to the hills of Lebanon, and say to my bride: You are all beautiful, and there is no flaw in you. Come from Lebanon; you will come and we will cross to Mount Senir and Mount Hermon, from the dens of lions and the mountains of leopards. Alleluia.

*Antiphon for the Nativity of the  
Blessed Virgin Mary; Song of Songs 4:6-8*

**VENI, REDEMPTOR GENCIUM,**  
Ostende partum virginis.  
Miretur omne seculum;  
Talis decet partus Deum.

Non ex virili semine  
Sed mistico spiramine  
Verbum Dei factum caro,  
Fructusque ventris floruit.

Alvus tumescit virginis,  
Claustra pudoris permanent;  
Vexilla virtutum micant;  
Versatur in templo Deus.

Procedens de thalamo suo,  
Pudoris aula regia,  
Gemine gigas substancie  
Alacris ut currat viam.

Deo Patri sit gloria,  
Eiusque soli Filio,  
Cum Spiritu Paraclito,  
Et nunc et in perpetuum. Amen.

Come, savior of the gentiles,  
And manifest your birth to a virgin.  
All the world shall marvel:  
God decreed such a birth.

Not of man's seed  
But of the Holy Spirit  
Is the word of God made flesh,  
And the fruit of the womb flowers.

The womb of the virgin did swell,  
Yet remained a cloister of chastity;  
The banners of virtue shine forth:  
God dwells in his temple.

He goes forth from his chamber,  
A royal hall of purity,  
A giant of twofold substance,  
Eager to run his course.

Glory be to God the Father  
And to his only Son,  
With the Holy Spirit,  
Now and forevermore. Amen.

*St. Ambrose (c. 340-97)*

**DOMINUS DIXIT AD ME** filius meus es tu: ego  
hodie genui te.  
Quare fremuerunt gentes: et populi meditati sunt  
inania?  
Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto: sicut erat  
in principio et nunc et semper, et in secula  
seculorum. Amen.

*Introit, First Mass at Christmas  
(Sarum rite); Hebrews 1:5, Psalm 2:1*

**NOWEL, NOWEL NOWEL!**

Owt of your slepe aryse and wake,  
For God mankynd nowe hath ytake,  
Al of a maide without eny make;  
Of al women she bereth the belle.

And thorwe a maide fair and wys  
Now man is made of ful grete pris;  
Now angelys knelen to mannys servys,  
And at this tyme al this byfel.

Now man is bryghter than the sonne,  
Now man in heven an hye shal wone;  
Blessyd be God this game is begonne,  
And his moder emperesse of helle.

That ever was thralle, now ys he fre;  
That ever was smalle, now grete is she;  
Now shal God deme bothe the and me  
Unto hys blysse, yf we do wel.

Now, blessyd brother, graunte us grace  
A domesday to se thy face  
And in thy courte to have a place,  
That we mow there synge Nowel!

**GLORIA** (see above)

The Lord said to me, Thou art my Son: this day  
have I begotten thee.  
Why do the nations rage, and the people imagine a  
vain thing?  
Glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy  
Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and  
forever shall be, world without end. Amen.

For God has now taken on human nature  
*eny* make any spot  
*bereth the belle* is the most excellent

*thorwe* through  
*pris* worth

*this tyme* i.e. Christmastime

in heaven on high shall dwell  
*game* action, sequence of events

He who was in thrall forever is now free

*deme* judge  
*do wel* act righteously

*blessyd brother* i.e. Christ  
*A domesday* At Judgement Day

*mow* may

**ECCE, QUOD NATURA**

*Mutat sua jura:  
Virgo parit pura  
Dei filium.*

Ecce novum gaudium,  
Ecce novum mirum:  
Virgo parit filium  
Que non novit virum.  
Que non novit virum,  
Sed ut pirus pirus,  
Gleba fert saphirum,  
Rosa lilium.

Mundum Deus flebilem  
Videns in ruina,  
Florem delectabilem  
Produxit de spina;  
Produxit de spina  
Virgoque regina,  
Mundi medecina,  
Salus gencium.

Nequivit divinitas  
Plus humiliari,  
Nec nostra fragilitas  
Magis exaltari:  
Magis exaltari  
Quam celo collocari  
Deoque equari  
Per conjugium.

**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.

**AVE REX ANGELORUM**,  
Ave rexque celorum,  
Ave princepsque polorum.

Hayl, most myghty in thi werkyng,  
Hayl, thou Lord of all thing,  
Y offer the gold as to a kyng.

Ave rex angelorum...

Behold, Nature  
changes her laws:  
a pure virgin gives birth  
to the son of God.

Behold, a new joy,  
behold, a new wonder:  
a virgin gives birth to a son,  
she who knew not man.  
She knew not man,  
but bore as the pear tree bears a pear,  
a clod of earth a sapphire,  
the rose a lily.

Seeing the wretched world  
in ruin, God  
brought forth a delightful flower  
from a thorn;  
from a thorn  
a virgin and queen brought forth  
healing for the world,  
the salvation of the peoples.

Divinity could not have been  
more humbled,  
nor our fragility  
more exalted:  
more exalted  
than to be raised to Heaven  
and made equal to God  
through this union.

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.

Hail, King of Angels,  
Hail, King of Heaven,  
Hail, Prince of the poles of the earth.

Hail, most mighty in thy deeds,  
Hail, thou Lord of every thing,  
I offer thee gold, as to a king.

Hail, King of Angels...

**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.

**NOWEL SYNG WE BOTHE AL AND SOM,**  
*Now Rex Pacificus is ycome.*

Exortum est in love and lysesse:  
Now Cryst hys grace he gan us gysse,  
And with hys body us bought to blysse,  
Bothe al and sum.

De fructu ventris of Mary bright,  
Bothe God and man in here alyght:  
Owte of dysese he dyde us dyght,  
Bothe al and sum.

Puer natus to us was sent,  
To blysse us bought, fro bale us blent,  
And ellys to wo we hadde ywent,  
Bothe al and sum.

Lux fulgebit with love and lyght,  
In Mary mylde hys pynon pyght,  
In here toke kynde with manly myght,  
Bothe al and sum.

Gloria tibi ay and blysse:  
God unto his grace he us wysse,  
The rent of heven that we not mysse,  
Bothe al and sum.

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.

Let us sing Noel, each and every one,  
Now the King of Peace is come.

He is arisen in love and joy:  
now Christ has prepared his grace for us  
and with his body redeemed us unto bliss,  
each and every one.

From the fruit of the womb of radiant Mary  
both God and man alight in her:  
from disease he rescued us,  
each and every one.

A boy-child was sent to us,  
redeemed us unto bliss, turned us aside from evil,  
and else to woe we would have gone,  
each and every one.

The light will shine with love and light;  
in gentle Mary he raised his banner,  
in her assumed humanity with manly boldness,  
each and every one.

Glory to Thee always, and bliss:  
may God guide us to his grace,  
that we shall not lose the reward of heaven,  
each and every one.





## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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 repertoire, including 15th-century English and Franco-Flemish polyphony, Spanish music between 1500 and 1600, and neglected early 16th-century English music, especially the unique repertory of the Peterhouse partbooks. 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*, featuring music by Hugh Aston, Robert Jones, Nicholas Ludford, John Mason, Robert Hunt, and Richard Pygott, including many world premiere recordings; four discs have been released to date and Volume 5 will follow in 2016. Blue Heron has also recorded a CD of music from circa 800-1400 to accompany Thomas Forrest Kelly’s book *Capturing Music: The Story of Notation*, and the live recording *Christmas in Medieval England*, released this fall. Jessie Ann Owens (University of California, Davis) and Blue Heron have won the 2015 Noah Greenberg Award from the American Musicological Society; the prize will help fund the preparation and a world premiere recording of Cipriano de Rore’s complete first book of madrigals (1542).

Founded in 1999, Blue Heron presents a concert series in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and has appeared at the Boston Early Music Festival; in New York City at Music Before 1800, The Cloisters (Metropolitan Museum of Art), and the 92nd Street Y; at the Library of Congress and Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C., in

California at Festival Mozaic in San Luis Obispo and at the Berkeley Early Music Festival; in Seattle, St. Louis, Chicago, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia; and for a visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Blue Heron has been ensemble in residence at the Center for Early Music Studies at Boston University and at Boston College. In 2015 the ensemble embarked on a long-term project to perform the complete works of Johannes Ockeghem (c. 1420-1497); entitled *Ockeghem@600*, it will wind up around 2020, just in time to commemorate the composer’s circa-600th birthday.

**MICHAEL BARRETT** has collaborated with the Boston Camerata, Huelgas Ensemble, Blue Heron, Vox Luminis, Netherlands Bach Society, L’Académie, Seven Times Salt, and Exsultemus, and can be heard on the harmonia mundi and Blue Heron record labels. Mr. Barrett directs Convivium Musicum, a chamber choir for Renaissance music. He has taught courses at Boston



University and the Cambridge Center for Adult Education and served as a choral director at Bridgewater State University. With his wife Anney he is co-owner of The Green Room, a multi-purpose arts studio in Union Square, Somerville, where he teaches voice, piano, and music theory. Mr. Barrett earned an AB in music from Harvard, an MM in choir conducting from Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, and a diploma in Baroque and Classical singing from the Royal Conservatory in The Hague, and he recently received a DMA in choral conducting from Boston University.



**PAMELA DELLAL**, mezzo-soprano, has enjoyed a distinguished career as an acclaimed soloist and recitalist. She has appeared in Symphony Hall, the Kennedy Center, Avery Fisher Hall, and the Royal Albert Hall, and premiered

John Harbison's chamber work *The Seven Ages* in New York, San Francisco, Boston, and London. 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 over twenty-five years and has performed almost all 200 of Bach's extant sacred cantatas. She has recorded for Arabesque, Artona, BMG, CRI, Dorian, Meridian, and KOCH. She serves as faculty at the Boston Conservatory and at the Longy School of Music of Bard College.

Bass-baritone **PAUL GUTTRY** has performed throughout the USA and internationally with Sequentia, Chanticleer, the Boston Camerata, and New York's Ensemble for Early Music. A founding member of Blue Heron, he has also appeared in and around Boston as soloist with



Emmanuel Music, the Handel & Haydn Society, the Boston Early Music Festival, the Tanglewood Music Center, Cantata Singers, Boston Cecilia, Prism Opera, Boston Revels, Collage, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project,

and Intermezzo. Paul can be heard on all Blue Heron's recordings, on discs of medieval music by Sequentia, Kurt Weill's *Johnny Johnson* and French *airs de cour* with the Boston Camerata, and on Emmanuel Music's Bach CDs.

Baritone **DAVID MCFERRIN** has achieved critical acclaim in a wide variety of repertoire. On the opera stage this season he sings three roles with Boston



Lyric Opera, including the Officer in Phillip Glass's two-character drama *In the Penal Colony*. Past opera credits include Santa Fe Opera, Seattle Opera, Florida Grand Opera, and the Rossini Festival in Germany. Earlier this fall Mr. McFerrin was a

soloist on the Handel & Haydn Society's California tour, made his debut with the Vermont Symphony in Schubert's Mass in G, and performed a program of Praetorius with New York's early music ensemble TENET. Past concert highlights include a Carnegie Hall debut with Gustavo Dudamel and the Israel Philharmonic, Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610 at St. Mark's Basilica in Venice, and appearances with the Boston Pops. Mr. McFerrin has also performed at the Blossom, Caramoor, and Ravinia Festivals and completed four summer residencies at the Marlboro Music Festival in Vermont.

**JASON MCSTOOTS** has performed around the world and the US with such groups as Boston Lyric



Opera, Pacific MusicWorks, Les Délices, The Boston Camerata, TENET, San Juan Symphony, Pablo Casals Festival, Tragicomedia, and the Tanglewood Music Center. He has recently appeared as Tabarco in Handel's *Almira* and Apollo

in Monteverdi's *Orfeo* with the Boston Early Music Festival and he can be heard on BEMF's 2015 Grammy-winning recording of Charpentier, their Grammy-nominated recording of Lully's *Psché*, and a disc of music by John Blow. Also a voice teacher and stage director, he teaches at Brandeis University, where he recently restarted the opera workshop project.

**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, he is also music director



of New York City's Green Mountain Project (Jolle Greenleaf, artistic director) and has been guest director of TENET (New York), the Handel & Haydn Society (Boston), Emmanuel Music (Boston), the Tudor Choir and Seattle Baroque, Pacific Baroque Orchestra (Vancouver, BC), Quire Cleveland, the Dryden Ensemble (Princeton, NJ), and Early Music America's Young Performers Festival Ensemble. Metcalfe also enjoys a career as a baroque violinist, playing with Les Délices (dir. Debra Nagy) and other ensembles. He teaches vocal ensemble repertoire and performance practice at Boston University and is at work on a new edition of the songs of Gilles Binchois.

Countertenor **MARTIN NEAR** enjoys a varied career exploring his twin passions for early music and new music. Mr. Near recently sang in the solo quartet of Arvo Pärt's *Passio* with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, was the countertenor soloist in the premiere performance of Dominick DiOrio's *Stabat mater* with Juventas New Music Ensemble, sang the role of Hamor



Mr. Near was Music Director of Exsultemus from 2009 to 2012.

Countertenor **GERROD PAGENKOPF**, a native of rural Wisconsin, received a Bachelor's degree in Music Education from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a Master's of Music in



Voice Performance from the University of Houston. He made his professional operatic debut in October 2008 with Amarillo Opera. As a concert soloist, Gerrod has performed with Mercury Baroque, Masterworks Chorale of Boston, Exsultemus, Blue Heron, La Donna Musicale, Cape Symphony, and the Rhode Island Civic Chorale and Orchestra, as well as ensembles throughout Wisconsin and Texas. Pagenkopf also sings frequently with the Handel & Haydn Society and is a member of the Choir of the Church of the Advent. He has been praised by the *Boston Musical Intelligencer* for his "gorgeous mellifluousness" and is at home performing baroque opera, cantatas, and oratorios.

**STEFAN REED** is delighted to join Blue Heron once again. Originally from Glasgow, Virginia, Mr. Reed is currently based in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts and is enjoying an active career in chamber music, oratorio, and recording, with performances and projects in New England and



throughout the country. Mr. Reed has been characterized as an “intense, focused, lyric tenor” (*Miami Herald*) and his performances have been described as “dramatically expressive and technically impressive” (*Boston Musical Intelligencer*). He performs

regularly with Boston Baroque, Blue Heron, Conspirare, the Handel & Haydn Society, and Seraphic Fire. Recent and upcoming solo engagements include performances with the Vermont Symphony Orchestra, Coro Allegro, the Handel & Haydn Society, Boston Baroque, and Boston Cecilia. Mr. Reed spent two summers as a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Festival and holds performance degrees from the New England Conservatory and George Mason University.

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 under 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 and 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. Mr. Sprinkle was a 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.

Mezzo-soprano **DANIELA TOŠIĆ**, praised for her “burnished and warm sound” (*Boston Musical Intelligencer*), is a soloist and chamber musician who specializes in early, contemporary, and



world music repertoires. She has performed in concerts throughout the U.S., Europe, and South America. Ms. Tošić is a founding member of the internationally renowned vocal ensemble Tapestry, winners of the Echo Klassik and Chamber

Music America Recording of the Year awards. Most recently she has joined Rumbarroco, a Boston-based Latin-Baroque fusion ensemble using period, folk, and contemporary popular instruments. Ms. Tošić can be heard on Telarc, MDG, and several independent labels.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Blue Heron's existence as a performing ensemble is made possible by the devotion, hard work, and financial support of a community of board members, staff, volunteers, donors, and concertgoers. We offer our grateful thanks to all those who join us in creating, nurturing and sustaining an organization dedicated to making the music of the 15th and 16th centuries come alive in the 21st.

Our programs, postcards, season brochure, advertisements, and CD booklets are designed by Melanie Germond and Pete Goldlust. Erik Bertrand maintains and recently rebuilt our website; the site was originally built by Evan Ingersoll (Angstrom Images), who also designed our programs for many years.

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

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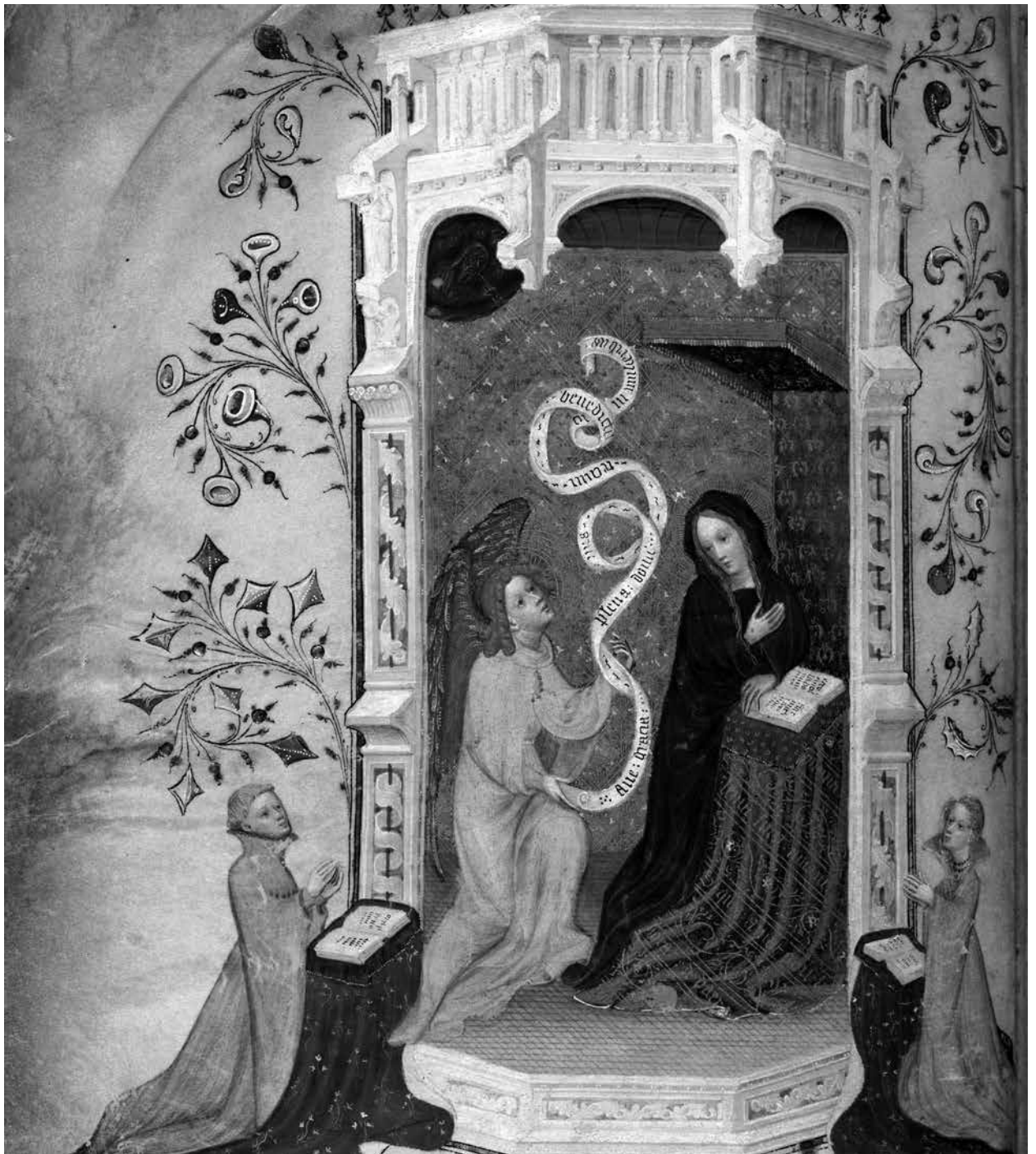
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