

## **Christmas in Medieval England**

**Friday & Saturday, December 22 & 23, 2017  
First Church in Cambridge, Congregational**

# 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)

Alma redemptoris mater JA OM MS  
John Dunstaple (d. 1453) / *Antiphon for the Blessed Virgin Mary from Advent to Candlemas*

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

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

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

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

Ibo michi ad montem mirre MN OM 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 JA PD DT  
Selden MS (15<sup>th</sup> century)

Gloria (Old Hall MS, no. 27) MN PD JA JM MS  
Pycard (?fl. 1410-20)

Ecce, quod natura PD OM 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*

Nowel syng we bothe al and som  
Trinity Roll



*cantus* Jennifer Ashe, Pamela Dellal, Martin Near, Daniela Tošić  
*tenor & contratenor* Michael Barrett, Owen McIntosh, Jason McStoots, 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*

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## Christmas in Medieval England

The medieval commemoration of Christ's nativity was introduced by the preparatory and penitential season of Advent, beginning on 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, which was 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 extended to Candlemas on February 2, the fortieth day after Christmas, 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 liturgy of the Church was embellished and expanded with textual and musical tropes which added color and ceremony to the festivities while establishing a closer connection between the universality of 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, replacing the plainchant, might be considered a purely musical trope. Fifteenth-century England also evolved its own unique repertoire of texts and music outside or alongside the liturgy, carols, of which some 130 survive. 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—plainchant, carols, and polyphonic antiphons and settings of the Mass—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 may 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 Christmas Eve. 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 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...

(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 fourteenth 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.

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 sensuous 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*. Nearly as sweet is Dunstaple's setting of the antiphon *Alma redemptoris mater*, which was sung at Vespers during the entire Christmas season from Advent to Candlemas. At least, the piece is probably by Dunstaple. It survives in five sources, all of them continental: three lack any ascription, one attributes it to Dunstaple, and in the fifth a later hand has cancelled the original ascription to "Binchois" and replaced it with "Leonelle" (i.e. Power).

The Gloria by Pycard (whoever he may have been) is another work from the Old Hall manuscript, like Power's Gloria, and the rigid construction that underlies it is typical of an earlier aesthetic, less sweet than brilliant. 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 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 *Alma redemptoris mater* 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 performed on this program) sets the trope *Deus creator omnium*, which was sung in the Sarum rite on all principal and major double feasts, including Christmas. 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 terrequae 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 greete:  
—Heil be thou, ful of grace aright!  
For Godes Son, this Heven-Light,  
For mannes love will man bicomme and take

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

Fles of thee, Maide bright,  
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 iwrount  
This ilche thing warof tiding ich bringe;  
Al manken wurth ibout  
Thurw thine sweet childinge  
And ut of pine ibrount.

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 propicium  
exhibeat et debeat peccata,  
prestans auxilium  
vita frui beata  
post hoc exilium.

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

human form from thee, fair Maiden,  
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*

**Alma redemptoris mater,**  
que pervia celi porta manens,  
et stella maris, succure cadenti  
surgere qui curat populo,  
tu que genuisti, natura mirante,  
tuum sanctum genitorem.  
Virgo, prius ac posterius,  
Gabrielis ab ore sumens illud ave,  
peccatorum miserere.

*Antiphon for the Blessed Virgin Mary  
from Advent to Candlemas*

**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.

Beneficent mother of the Savior,  
who keeps the door of heaven always open,  
and star of the sea: help those falling  
people who seek to rise up,  
you who, while nature marvelled,  
begot your holy creator.  
Virgin before and afterwards,  
from Gabriel’s mouth hearing that “Hail”:  
have mercy on us sinners.

*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. Alleluya.

*Processional antiphon for the Blessed Virgin Mary*

**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.

**Ther is no rose of swych vertu**  
*as is the rose that bare Jhesu.*  
Alleluya.

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

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

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

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.

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.

*swych such*

a marvellous thing

*be* by means of

of the same form

Glory to God in the Highest!  
Let us rejoice.

**Ibo michi 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. Alleluya.

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

**Veni, redemptor gentium,**  
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.

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



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. Alleluya.

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.



**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.

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.

**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...

**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 lysse:  
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.

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...

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.



***Nova, nova! Ave fit ex Eva.***

Gabriell off hye degre,  
He cam down from Trinite  
To Nazareth in Galile.

He met a maydn in a place,  
He knelyd down afore hir face,  
He seyde, Heile Mary, ful of grace!

When the maiden herd tell off this,  
Sche was full sore abaschyde iwys,  
And wened that sche had don amysse.

Then seide th'angell, Dred not thue,  
Ye shall conceyve in all vertu.  
A Chyld whose name shall be Jhesu.

It is not yit syx moneth agoon  
Sen Elizabeth conceyved John,  
As it was prophysed beforene.

Then seide the mayden verely,  
I am youre servaunt right truely.  
*Ecce ancilla domini.*

News, news! "Ave" is made from "Eva."  
(i.e. *The angelic salutation "Ave" reverses the  
sin committed by Eve.*)

wened thought

Behold the handmaiden of the Lord

**About the Artists**



**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 its "expressive intensity." Committed to vivid live performance informed by the study of original source materials and historical performance practices, Blue Heron ranges over a wide repertoire from plainchant to new music, with particular specialities in 15th-century Franco-Flemish and early 16th-century English polyphony. 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*, including many world premiere recordings of works copied c. 1540 for Canterbury Cathedral; the fifth disc was released in March 2017. Blue Heron's recordings also include a CD of plainchant and polyphony to accompany Thomas Forrest Kelly's book *Capturing Music: The Story of Notation* and the live recording *Christmas in Medieval England*. Jessie Ann Owens (UC Davis) and Blue Heron won the 2015

Noah Greenberg Award from the American Musicological Society to support a world premiere recording of Cipriano de Rore's first book of madrigals (1542), which it will complete over the next two seasons.

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, the National Gallery of Art, and Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C.; at the Berkeley Early Music Festival; at Yale University; and in San Luis Obispo, Seattle, St. Louis, Kansas City, Chicago, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Providence. This season's highlights include an October tour to England, with performances at Peterhouse and Trinity College in Cambridge and at Lambeth Palace Library, at the London residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Blue Heron has been in residence at the Center for Early Music



Studies at Boston University and at Boston College, and has enjoyed collaborations with A Far Cry, Dark Horse Consort, Les Délices, Parthenia, Piffaro, and Ensemble Plus Ultra. In 2015 the ensemble embarked on a multi-season project to perform the complete works of Johannes Ockeghem (c. 1420-1497). Entitled *Ockeghem@600*, it will wind up around 2021, in time to commemorate the composer's circa-600th birthday.

Mustering up “rock solid technique” and “the kind of vocal velvet you don’t often hear in contemporary music” (*Boston Phoenix*), soprano **Jennifer Ashe** has been praised for performances that are “pure bravura, riveting the audience with a radiant and opulent voice” (*The Boston Globe*).



A strong advocate of new works, she has sung with Boston Musica Viva, Sound Icon, Fromm Festival, Boston Microtonal Society, Harvard Group for New Music, New Music Brandeis, New Gallery Concert Series, Guerilla Opera, Ludovico Ensemble, and the Callithumpian Consort. Recent projects include *Boulez's Le marteau sans maitre* with Boston Musica Viva and Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire* with Ensemble Parallax. Ashe holds a DMA and an MM from the New England Conservatory and a BM from the Hartt School of Music. Formerly on the faculties of the College of the Holy Cross and Eastern Connecticut State University, she currently teaches voice, piano, and ukulele at the Dana Hall School of Music in Wellesley and preschool music at Music Together Arlington.

**Michael Barrett** is a Boston-based conductor, singer, multi-instrumentalist, and teacher.



He has performed with many professional early music ensembles, including Blue Heron, the Boston Camerata, the Huelgas Ensemble, Vox Luminis, the Handel & Haydn Society, Boston Baroque, Nederlandse Bachvereniging (Netherlands Bach Society), L'Académie, Seven Times Salt, Schola Cantorum of Boston, and Exsultemus. He can be heard on the harmonia mundi, Blue Heron, and Coro record labels. Michael has served as music director of Convivium Musicum since 2007. He also directs the Meridian Singers, a vocal ensemble based at MIT. Michael is currently an Assistant Professor at the Berklee College of Music, where he teaches conducting courses for undergraduates, and a Lecturer in Music at Boston University, where he teaches seminars in Renaissance and Baroque choral repertoire for graduate choral conducting students.

**Pamela Dellal**, mezzo-soprano, has enjoyed a distinguished career as an acclaimed soloist and recitalist. She has performed in Symphony Hall, the Kennedy Center, Avery Fisher Hall, and the Royal Albert Hall, and premiered a chamber work by John Harbison in New York, San Francisco, Boston, and London. With Sequentia, 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 has appeared 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 thirty 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. Dellal serves on the faculty at the Boston Conservatory at Berklee 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.

Hailed for his “voice of seductive beauty” (*Miami Herald*), baritone **David McFerrin**



has won critical acclaim in a variety of repertoire. His opera credits include Santa Fe Opera, Seattle Opera, Florida Grand Opera, the Rossini Festival in Germany, and numerous appearances in and around Boston. As concert soloist he has sung with the Cleveland Orchestra, Israel Philharmonic, and Boston Pops, and in recital at the Caramoor, Ravinia, and Marlboro Festivals. Recently Mr. McFerrin was an Adams Fellow at the Carmel Bach Festival in California, debuted with Boston Baroque (as Achilla in Handel's *Giulio Cesare*) and Apollo's Fire in Cleveland, and performed with the Handel & Haydn Society in Boston, New York, and California. He was also runner-up in the Oratorio Society of New York's 2016 Lyndon Woodside Solo Competition. This season's highlights include the world premiere of *The Nefarious, Immoral, yet Highly Profitable Enterprise of Mr. Burke and Mr. Hare* with Boston Lyric Opera, a debut with the Arion Baroque Orchestra in Montreal, solo appearances with the Handel & Haydn Society, and various programs with Blue Heron.



Acclaimed as a “lovely, tender high tenor” by *The New York Times*, **Owen McIntosh** enjoys a diverse career of chamber music and solo performance ranging from bluegrass to reggae, heavy metal to art song, and opera to oratorio. A native of remote Northern

California, Mr. McIntosh has shared the stage with the country's finest ensembles, including Apollo's Fire, Blue Heron, Boston Baroque, Carmel Bach Festival, Les Canards Chantants, New Vintage Baroque, Staunton Music Festival, TENET, Trident Ensemble, True Concord, San Diego Bach Collegium, and the Grammy-nominated Choir of Trinity Wall Street. Recent solo engagements include Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* with Boston Baroque, Haydn's *L'isola disabitata* with the American Classical Orchestra, Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610* with Apollo's Fire and with Green Mountain Project, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with Grand Rapids Symphony, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* with Opera Omnia and Boston Baroque, and the Evangelist in Bach's *St. John Passion* with Tucson Chamber Artists.

Described by reviewers as "the consummate artist, wielding not just a sweet tone but also incredible technique and impeccable pronunciation" (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*), with an "alluring tenor voice" (*ArtsFuse*), **Jason McStoots** is a respected interpreter of early



music whose recent solo appearances include *Les plaisirs de Versailles* by Charpentier, *Orfeo*, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, and the *Vespers of 1610* by Monteverdi, *The Abduction from the Seraglio* by Mozart, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and *St. Mark Passion*, Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, and Handel's *Messiah*. He has performed with Boston Lyric Opera, Emmanuel Music, Pacific MusicWorks, TENET, San Juan Symphony, Bach Ensemble, Casals Festival, Seattle Early

Music Guild, Tragicomedia, and Tanglewood Music Center. He was proud to appear on BEMF's Grammy-winning 2015 Charpentier recording; other recording credits include Lully's *Pysché*, Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, Blow's *Venus and Adonis*, and Charpentier's *Acteon* with BEMF (CPO), Fischer's *Vespers* (Toccat Classics), *Awakenings* with Coro Allegro (Navona), and all of Blue Heron's recordings.



**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 was music

director of New York City's Green Mountain Project (Jolle Greenleaf, artistic director) from 2010-2016 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), Montreal Baroque (dir. Eric Milnes), and other ensembles, and directing the baroque orchestra at Oberlin Conservatory. He taught vocal ensemble repertoire and performance practice at Boston University from 2006-2015, taught a class in vocal ensemble performance at Harvard University this fall, and is at work on a new edition of the songs of

Gilles Binchois. He holds degrees from Brown University and Harvard University.

Countertenor **Martin Near** enjoys a varied



career exploring his twin passions for early music and new music. In recent years Mr. Near 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 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 sings regularly with Emmanuel Music, Boston Baroque, and the Handel & Haydn Society. Mr. Near was 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 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

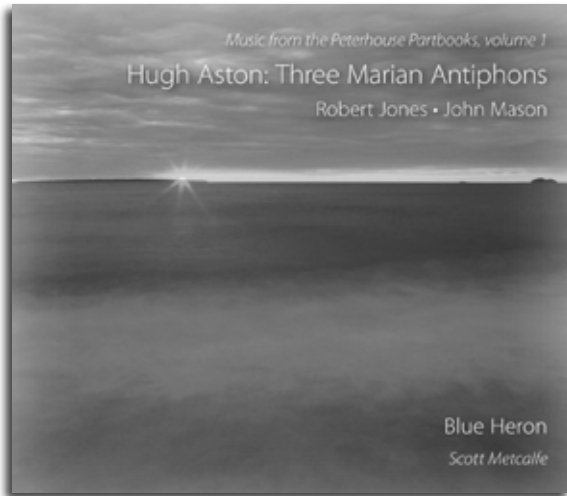


her "burnished and warm sound" (*Boston Musical Intelligencer*), is a soloist and chamber musician who specializes in early, contemporary, and world music repertoires. She has performed in concerts throughout the U.S.,

Europe, and South America. Ms. Tosić 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. Tosić can be heard on Telarc, MDG, and several independent labels.



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