Music from the Peterhouse Partbooks, volume 2
Nicholas Ludford Missa Regnum mundi
Richard Pygott Salve regina

Blue Heron
Scott Metcalfe
Music from the Peterhouse Partbooks, vol. 2

A Mass for Saint Margaret

Nicholas Ludford (c1490-1557) • Missa Regnum mundi

Sarum plainchant • Proper for the Feast of St Margaret

Richard Pygott (c1485-1549) • Salve regina

1. Introit: Me expectaverunt peccatores (0:00)
2. Kyrie XII (Conditor) (0:00)
3. Gloria / Missa Regnum mundi (0:00)
   Nicholas Ludford
4. Gradual: Specie tua (0:00)
5. Alleluia: Veni electa mea (0:00)
6. Credo / Missa Regnum mundi (0:00)
   Ludford
7. Offertory: Offerentur regi virgines (0:00)
8. Sanctus / Missa Regnum mundi (0:00)
   Ludford
9. Agnus Dei / Missa Regnum mundi (0:00)
   Ludford
10. Communion: Feci iudicium (0:00)
11. Ite missa est (0:00)
12. Votive antiphon: Salve regina (0:00)
    Richard Pygott

Blue Heron

treble Julia Steinbok, Teresa Wakim, Shari Wilson
mean Jennifer Ashe (Pygott), Pamela Dellal, Martin Near
contratenor Owen McIntosh, Jason McStoots
tenor Michael Barrett, Sumner Thompson
bass Paul Guttry, Ulysses Thomas, Peter Walker
Scott Metcalfe director


Recorded September 18–21, September 26-27 & October 8, 2011 at the Church of the Redeemer, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

Engineering & mastering: Joel Gordon (assistant: Livia Lin)
Producer: Eric Milnes
Editing: Eric Milnes & Joel Gordon

Cover photo: Green Iguana (Iguana iguana), Barro Colorado Island, Panama (Getty Images)

All other photos: Liz Linder (www.lizlinder.com), in the Italian Garden of the Codman Estate in Lincoln, Massachusetts (courtesy Historic New England.)

Graphic design: Pete Goldust & Melanie Germond
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A MASS FOR SAINT MARGARET

Many cyclical settings of the Mass are based upon a pre-existent melody, often a piece of plainchant; the melody may be carried by the tenor of the polyphonic composition as a cantus firmus. But why did composers choose any one cantus firmus in particular? As Andrew Kirkman puts it, “To build a Mass setting around a borrowed melody is to unlock the potential of that melody for symbolic and emblematic significance. With its presence in each section of the Ordinary, it weaves a continuous metaphorical thread through the entire musical setting, and hence through the ritual enactment of which it is part.” A chant proper to the feast of a saint, for instance, would provide a suitable cantus firmus for a Mass to be sung on that feast day. The quotation might also be intended to attract the intercessory power of its divine honoree. But in the case of Nicholas Ludford’s Missa Regnum mundi, the cantus firmus (“Regnum mundi et omnem ornatum seculi contempsi”) is the ninth responsory at Matins from the Common of Virgin Martyrs—that is, the liturgy prescribed for the feasts of all those saints who are virgin martyrs but who do not have their own special set of texts—which seems unpromising. Why compose such a splendid Mass for such an apparently generic purpose?

In fact, the Use of Salisbury, the liturgical calendar that governed medieval English Christianity, includes just two feasts of virgin martyrs celebrated with nine lessons at Matins whose responsories and other texts were drawn from the Common rather than from the saint’s own individual Office and Proper. These are St Margaret of Antioch and the Welsh saint Winifred. Of the two, Margaret was by far the more popular. Venerated as the protector of women in childbirth, she was commonly depicted emerging from or standing astride a dragon, in an allusion to the most colorful incident from her legend. More than 250 churches in England are dedicated to her, the most notable of which is St Margaret’s, Westminster, which lies immediately adjacent to Westminster Abbey and is today the parish church of the Houses of Parliament. St Margaret’s was Nicholas Ludford’s parish church from the early 1520s until his death, and he was buried there on August 9, 1557. Ludford was not employed at St Margaret’s—he spent most of his career at St Stephen’s Chapel, a collegiate church attached to the royal palace of Westminster—but he seems to have been an active parishioner, including serving as warden. In 1533/4 St Margaret’s churchwardens bought a book of polyphonic music from him for 20 shillings. It thus seems most likely that Ludford originally composed the Missa Regnum mundi for a festal mass at St Margaret’s on her feast day, July 20; perhaps it was included in the book of music that Ludford sold to the church.

And sodeynly appered in hir sight,
Where as she lay bounden in prisoun,
In the lykenesse of a felle dragoun
The olde serpent, whiche called is Sathan,
And hastyly to assayle hir he began.

With open mouthe, the virgyne to devour,
First of alle, he swolwed in hir hede,
And she devoutly, hiself to socoure,
Gan crosse hirself, in hir mortal drede;
And by grace, anoon or she toke hede,
The horrible beste, in relees of hir peyne,
Brast assondre and partyd was on tweyne.

John Lydgate, The Lyfe of Seynt Margarete (c. 1426), ed. Sherry L. Reames, Middle English Legends of Women Saints (Kalamazoo, MI, 2003), lines 283-94.
Felle: fierce, anoon: before, brast: burst, on tweyne: in two.
The Missa Regnum mundi and the Peterhouse partbooks

Once composed, a polyphonic Mass might make its way in the world for uses independent of its original purpose, so a Mass whose cantus firmus referred to St Margaret might be sung on other occasions. If this were not so, Ludford’s Mass would certainly not have survived until today, for the only source we have of the piece is one unrelated to St Margaret’s, Westminster, or indeed to any other church that might have celebrated her feast with such grandeur. How precisely, we do not know, but by 1539 the work had arrived at Magdalen College, Oxford, where it was copied by the professional singer and music scribe Thomas Bull into a large collection of Masses, Magnificats, and votive antiphons that he would bring with him in 1540 when he joined the choir of Canterbury Cathedral. Bull’s work is manifestly that of a professional copyist hired to assemble, in considerable haste, a work is manifestly that of a professional copyist hired to assemble, in considerable haste, a work is manifestly that of a professional copyist hired to assemble, in considerable haste, a work is manifestly that of a professional copyist hired to assemble, in considerable haste, a.

Why did Bull copy so much music so quickly? He appears to have been acting on commission. The monastic foundation at Canterbury was dissolved by Henry VIII in April 1540, just one of nearly a dozen great monastic cathedrals dissolved in 1539-41, mostly to be refounded in short order as secular institutions subject not to an abbot (a member of a religious order), but to a bishop and thus to the king as head of the Church of England. Since many of the refounded cathedrals aspired to considerably more pomp and circumstance than their monastic predecessors, which typically did not attempt ambitious polyphony, they sought to hire a large choir of professional singers as well as recruit choirboys for training. Bull appears among twelve vicars-choral on a list of the staff of the newly-refounded Canterbury Cathedral. The first of the twelve is Thomas Tallis; there are also ten “queresters” (choristers, “quire” being the normal sixteenth-century spelling of the word) and their master. The new choral establishment would also require an entirely new library of up-to-date polyphonic repertory, and this Bull supplied, bringing about 70 works with him from Oxford.

But the brilliant choral institution at Canterbury would not last long. Henry died in 1547 and the Protestant Reformation that ensued took a dim view of such popish decorations as professional choirs and the highly sophisticated Latin music they sang. All the elaborate polyphonic music of late medieval English Catholicism became, at best, obsolete; at worst it was viewed as gaudy ornament to a despicable ritual. Many musical sources were destroyed and if a manuscript escaped deliberate destruction by zealots, it might yet be subjected to other indignities.

A great number of them whych purchased those superstysyouse manysongs [former monasteries], reserved of those libraye bokes, some to serve their jakes [privies], some to scource their candlestycoks, and some to rubbe their bootes. Some they solde to the grossers and soper-sellers….. Yea the universytys of this realm are not all cler in this detestable fact….. I know a merchaut man, whych shall at thys tymbe be namelesse, that boughte the contentes of two nobyle lybraries…. Thys stuffe hath he occupied in the stede of graye paper (wrapping-paper) for the space of more than these x yeres, and yet hath store ynough for as many yeres to come.

Preface to The laboryouse Journey & serche of Johann Leylandle for England’s Antiquities (1549)

Very few books of church music survived. The main extant sources from the first half of the sixteenth century comprise a mere three choirbooks, four sets of partbooks, and one organ manuscript. (Compare this paucity to, for example, the sixteen choirbooks owned in 1524 by a single establishment, Magdalen College, Oxford.) Bull’s manuscripts, a set of five partbooks (one each for the standard five parts of early sixteenth-century English polyphony—treble, mean, contratenor, tenor, and bass), made their way to the library of Peterhouse, Cambridge, by the 1630s, where they survived yet another cataclysm of Protestant destruction, that wrought by the Puritans in the 1640s. Today they may be consulted on the worldwide web in astonishingly high-resolution photographs taken by the Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music (www.diamm.ac.uk).

Or, at least, some of Bull’s set may be viewed there. Somewhere along the way the tenor partbook disappeared, along with several pages of the treble book. Now, of the 72 pieces in the set (known today as the Henrician set of Peterhouse partbooks, for their present location and the monarch during whose reign they were copied), 39 are transmitted uniquely, while another dozen or so are transmitted by their other sources. The result is that some fifty pieces of music—a significant portion of all that survives from pre-Reformation England—now lack their tenor, and some of these are also missing all or part of their treble. We are able to sing this music today only thanks to the extraordinarily skilled reconstruction of the English musicologist Nick Sandon. (Sandon also pieced together the story of the genesis of...
the partbooks and of the Missa Regnum mundi that I have related above.)

Sandon completed his dissertation on the Peterhouse partbooks in 1983, including in it recompositions of most of the missing tenor lines; in the years since he has been refining his work and gradually issuing it in Antico Edition. We perform the Missa Regnum mundi and Richard Pygott's Salve regina from Sandon's editions. For the Mass he recomposed the entire tenor line and, from a point midway through the Credo, the treble as well. In the case of Pygott's Salve regina, both tenor and treble parts are entirely lost. Thus nearly two-fifths of the polyphonic texture you hear on this recording have been restored by Sandon in a brilliant feat of reimagination.

This recording presents the Missa Regnum mundi in a musical context like that of its probable original occasion, a festal mass for St Margaret. Thus we surround Ludford's polyphonic Mass Ordinary (those texts sung invariable at any mass) with plainchant items from the Proper (the texts specific to the occasion in the liturgical calendar, in this case a mass for the feast of a virgin martyr). As usual in early sixteenth-century English Masses, the Missa Regnum mundi does not include a Kyrie, so we sing this in chant as well.

Each of the four movements of the Mass opens with the same extended passage (fifteen breves or measures long), challenging the singers to find appropriate ways to express the very different words it sets (“Et in terra pax hominibus voluntatis,” “Sanctus,” or “Agnus dei”). That early sixteenth-century singers were expected to express the text clearly and to respond to the rhetorical opportunities offered by text and music, rather than simply building a sonic edifice of beautiful but undifferentiated sound, is suggested by statements like the following: "Baroque" understanding of the relationship of text and music was set down not around 1600 but a century earlier. Thomas More's Utopia of 1516 conveys a similar attitude:

"Their musike...doth so resemble and express naturrel affections, the sound and tune is so applied and made agreeable to the thinge, that whether it bee a prayer, or els a dytty of gladnes, of patience, of trouble, of mournyng, or of anger: the fassion of well-coordinated music recited with the same devices, but now slower and now faster….

The experience of the orator can be instructive, if you observe the technique he follows in his oration. For he speaks now loud and now soft, now slow and now fast; thus greatly moving his listeners. This technique of changing the tempo has a powerful effect on the soul…. If the ora tor moves listeners with the devices described above, how much greater and more powerful will be the effect of well-coordinated music recited with the same devices, but now accompanied by harmony.

Nicolai Vicentino, in his L'antica musica ridotta alla moderna prattica of 1555, describes some of the methods that may be used to achieve the desired effect and draws a parallel with the techniques used by an orator:

Sometimes a composition is performed according to a certain method that cannot be written down, such as uttering softly and loudly or fast and slow, or changing the measure [i.e. tempo] in keeping with the words, so as to show the effects of the passions and the harmony…. The measure should change according to the words, now slower and now faster….
Of course, in a Mass there is a basic difference between the movements with regard to text: the Gloria is quite wordy and the Credo more so, while the Sanctus and Agnus dei have very short texts. Nevertheless, Ludford’s Gloria and Credo are about the same length; although the Agnus dei is shorter, it is still plenty expansive, and the Sanctus is positively luxuriant, nearly a third again as long as the Gloria and Credo. Thus the word setting is relatively terse in the Credo, whereas in the Sanctus bars and bars on end are sung on a single syllable. But because the beginning of each phrase is set syllabically, or nearly so, every single word of the text of the Mass can be understood by the listener. In these last moments of English medieval catholicism a polyphonic Mass can both instruct and provide unbounded spiritual delight.

**Salve regina**

The votive antiphon was an extra-liturgical form, not part of the regular Divine Office but appended to it. Addressed most often to Mary, sometimes to Jesus, very occasionally to another saint, in England it was typically sung after Vespers and Compline in a separate evening devotion, perhaps by a group of singers gathered before an altar or image. At its simplest, the votive antiphon might be set syllabically in a quartet of low voices, the contratenor dividing the cries and sighs of the exiled children of Eve but appended to it. Addressed most often to Mary, sometimes to Jesus, very occasionally to another saint, in England it was typically sung after Vespers and Compline in a separate evening devotion, perhaps by a group of singers gathered before an altar or image. At its simplest, the votive antiphon might be set syllabically in a quartet of low voices, the contratenor dividing the cries and sighs of the exiled children of Eve (beginning “Ad te clamamus”) are given to a quartet of low voices, the contratenor dividing into two lines.

Pygott’s **Salve regina** sets the most popular of all votive antiphon texts, including the three stanzas of verse tropes inserted between the acclamations “O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Maria” that are found in virtually every English setting of the Salve. The tropes expand upon the images of the original text, in some ways intensifying its sentiments, and provide an opportunity for further meditation. Pygott’s **Salve regina** proceeds in the same general way: at well over 22 minutes in length it is one of the longest votive antiphon texts. The music is so varied and so beautifully paced, however, that the passage of time goes almost unremarked, despite a deliberate (and unusual) concentration on just two textures of reduced forces, a high trio of treble, mean, and contratenor and a low trio of contratenor, tenor, and bass. On one occasion the lowest voice of the high trio is taken by the tenor rather than the contratenor, giving the contra its only real rest in the piece, and the cries and sighs of the exiled children of Eve (beginning “Ad te clamamus”) are given to a quartet of low voices, the contratenor dividing into two lines.

Pygott’s music succeeds so well over the course of its length due to its “rhetorical efficiency,” a term coined by Fabrice Fitch to describe the way John Browne (a composer from the generation before Pygott’s) uses techniques of texture, form, and counterpoint to heighten the “dramatic or rhetorical dimension” of his music. Like Browne, Pygott uses texture to articulate the structure of his text: thus, in the second half of the work, the full ensemble sings the acclamations (“O clemens,” “O pia,” “O dulcis Maria,” each more captivating than the last) while the verse tropes are given to trios. And like Browne’s, Pygott’s lines are rhythmically complicated and melismatic, if somewhat less gothically intricate than those of the earlier composer.

Pygott was a member in turn of the household of the very best choirs in England, and a highly accomplished composer who must have written numerous works, but his music almost didn’t survive at all. The only pieces by him that one might perform today are the Missa Salve regina, a semitone less fragment of a larger work.

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**PERFORMANCE PITCH**

This is not the place to discuss, in the depth it deserves, the thorny and much-debated topic of the historically appropriate performance pitch of sixteenth-century English music. Nevertheless, as our practice has evolved since our first disc in this series of recordings of Peterhouse repertoire and now differs in a small but significant way from the present-day norm, a few words are in order.

The question of the performing pitch of a *cappella* music before the early seventeenth century resists easy answers, due on the one hand to the near-complete absence of surviv-.png

...
vocal music in
lows: England in the early sixteenth century, as fol
historical pitch of
made that this Quire-pitch is the most likely
I think that a reasonable argument may be
(Endnotes) ????
"Quire-pitch" was about A473-478
slightly above the continental standard. Its
to its own drummer, had its own grid that lay
"chamber pitch.
And these pitches are associated with names:
tuning, a transposition of a semitone is not.
while transpositions of a whole tone and a
transposed between them if necessary, for
while transpositions of a whole tone and a
minor third are usually possible in meantone
when transposed between them if necessary, for
"grid" which allowed players of instruments
tuned in meantone (organs and most winds)
are tuned in meantone (organs and most winds)
"chamber pitch. England, as ever marching
their both arguing that the relationship
conclusion that A440 is about the right
Ranges are generally stable across the fif
octaves from bass F to treble f" which
encompasses the ranges of male singers
from the low notes of the average bass to the
high notes of the average male falsettist:
by the five-line staff, which allows a range of
an octave and a fourth to be notated without
the use of ledger lines; and by the
clef of vocal music (bass, tenor, alto, and
soprano), which imply an ordinary range of
F to b for a bass, c to f' for a tenor, and b to
e" for a (male falsettist) soprano: at a pitch
somewhere around A415 to 466, these
ranges correspond to the comfortable ordi
ranges of human beings, within which
they can sing "naturally" and deliver text
clearly and persuasively, qualities valued by
Renaissance writers.

2) This explains why standard written vocal
ranges are generally stable across the fif
and sixteenth centuries (a phenom
enon remarked on by Roger Bowers and
David Fallows, both of whom drew the
conclusion that A440 is about the right
pitch for most music of this period, despite
their both arguing that the relationship
between written and sounding pitch was
entirely arbitrary at the time9). These basic
ranges remain the same in the seventeenth
century as well, in music with and without
accompanying instruments.

3) The pitch of unaccompanied vocal perfor
ance was surely related to the pitch of
instrumental music, whether or not instru
ments played simultaneously or alternatim
in church or whether singers simply heard
them and performed with them on other
occasions. Professional singers nowadays
develop a strong physical sense of where a
pitch lies in the voice; how much more this
must have been true of singers in the past,
who experienced nothing like the dizzying
variety of styles a 21st-century musician
may participate in. And pitch shifts of less
than a semitone can be especially discon
certing to a musician's sense of pitch.

4) In the absence of a reason to alter it, per
forming pitch is unlikely to change. As
Haynes observes, "it is in everyone's interest
that it remain stable"11. At most times there
will have been many reasons to conserve
pitch standards and the pitch grid (while
allowing for variations in taste between
regions and individual musicians), enabling
music to cross distances in space and time
and saving a lot of money which would
otherwise have to be spent on purchasing
or refitting instruments.

5) As one would expect according to this line
of argument, both the pitch grid on the
continent and its sibling grid in England are
demonstrably stable from the late sixteenth
century into the middle of the eighteenth
century12 and in England its orientation to
Quire-pitch at circa A473-478 can be
extended back to the early sixteenth cen
tury, as Andrew Johnstone has recently
shown12.

Now, our own modern pitch-grid being cen
tered on A440 and its relatives at integral semi
tones away, a present-day a cappella ensemble
finds it quite challenging to shift itself into the
criucs and sing at 473 or so, maintaining that
foreign pitch for the considerable durations
demanded by the Peterhouse repertoire. In
the future Blue Heron may learn to sing at
473, somewhat more than a semitone above
440, and perhaps the results will be revela
tory of something. For the present recording,
however, we sing at about A465, a semitone
above 440—the most usual choir pitch of the
continent, and almost English Quire-pitch.

But all this bother about pitch would go for
nothing if one were not at least as concerned
with using the right vocal scoring; and that too
would be useless in the case of Ludford's Missa Regnum mundi if one did not recognize
the work as being written in system of high clefs,
implying a transposition downwards of (in this
case) a fourth.

---

(Endnotes) ????

1 I think that a reasonable argument may be
made that this Quire-pitch is the most likely
historical pitch of a cappella vocal music in
England in the early sixteenth century, as fol
lows:

1) The normal written range of unaccompa
nied vocal polyphony is far from arbitrary,
but rather is tied to sounding pitch and
grew from a profound understanding of the
ranges of human voices. This knowledge is
embedded in and manifested by the gamut
or standard musical space of medieval and
Renaissance music and its range of three
octaves from bass F to treble f" which
encompasses the ranges of male singers
from the low notes of the average bass to the
high notes of the average male falsettist:
by the five-line staff, which allows a range of
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implying a transposition downwards of (in this
case) a fourth.
As Roger Bowers has shown, the five-voice scoring of pre-Reformation English polyphony employs four basic voice-types: treble (sung by a boy with a specially trained higher voice), mean (sung by a boy with an ordinary voice or by an adult male falsettist), tenor, and bass. Tenor parts are further divided into tenor and contratenor; by the end of the fifteenth century the latter usually (but not invariably) tended to lie higher than the former, as it is in the Ludford Mass. It might then be called a contratenor altus, a “high part written against the tenor,” but it was still sung by a man we might call a high tenor. (The specialty flourished later in French Baroque opera as the haute-contre.)

As for our forces, we sing two or three to a part. Since we are not bound by the old ecclesiastical prohibition against men and women singing sacred music together, our treble parts are usually sung by women, rather than boys. Sixteenth-century English choirs used either boy altos (“mean” sung by a boy with an ordinary voice or by an adult male falsettist), tenor, and bass.

For the plainchant we follow the instructions of the Use of Salisbury for a simple feast of nine lessions like Margaret’s, which specify the role and number of rulers (in the Introit, Kyrie, Offertory, and Communion) and soloists (in the Gradual and Alleluia). The intonations of the Gloria and Credo are assigned to the celebrant, the first phrase of the Ite to the deacon. We employ the full choir to chant, including means and trebles. Boys must have participated regularly in plainchant, which was the basic training ground of sixteenth-century choristers; the Use furthermore directs that the soloists in the Gradual be two boys.

High clefs and transposition

The Missa Regnum mundi, like a number of other pieces in the Peterhouse partbooks, is written in a system of high clefs with a g-clef on the bottom line of the staff for the treble part and a c-clef on the top line for the bass part. This allows Ludford to notate its plainchant music together, our treble parts are usually sung by women, rather than boys. Sixteenth-century English choirs used either boy altos (“mean” sung by a boy with an ordinary voice or by an adult male falsettist), tenor, and bass.

Since we are not bound by the old ecclesiastical prohibition against men and women singing sacred music together, our treble parts are usually sung by women, rather than boys. Sixteenth-century English choirs used either boy altos (“mean” sung by a boy with an ordinary voice or by an adult male falsettist), tenor, and bass.

Vocal scoring and voice-types

lie right in the normal ranges of music notated in ordinary clefs, with an overall compass of 22 notes from F to f". Although disagreement persists nowadays about the practice of transposing high clef music, it is amply documented from the later sixteenth century onwards and an unambiguous prescription to the effect is found as early as Silvestro Ganassi’s Lettione seconda of 1543. Ganassi writes as if he is describing a completely standard practice, not inventing a new one, but I do not know of an earlier description of it. Nevertheless, numerous instances of high clef notation exist dating back as far as the mid-fifteenth century and it may be that both the practice and the reason for it (to preserve the written appearance of a high fifth- or seventh-mode cantus firmus) are of English origin and were conveyed to the continent by that celebrated transmitter of English music, John Dunstable, who may have visited England earlier in the sixteenth century.

For the plainchant we follow the instructions of the Use of Salisbury for a simple feast of nine lessions like Margaret’s, which specify the role and number of rulers (in the Introit, Kyrie, Offertory, and Communion) and soloists (in the Gradual and Alleluia). The intonations of the Gloria and Credo are assigned to the celebrant, the first phrase of the Ite to the deacon. We employ the full choir to chant, including means and trebles. Boys must have participated regularly in plainchant, which was the basic training ground of sixteenth-century choristers; the Use furthermore directs that the soloists in the Gradual be two boys.

As Roger Bowers has shown, the five-voice scoring of pre-Reformation English polyphony employs four basic voice-types: treble (sung by a boy with a specially trained higher voice), mean (sung by a boy with an ordinary voice or by an adult male falsettist), tenor, and bass. Tenor parts are further divided into tenor and contratenor; by the end of the fifteenth century the latter usually (but not invariably) tended to lie higher than the former, as it is in the Ludford Mass. It might then be called a contratenor altus, a “high part written against the tenor,” but it was still sung by a man we might call a high tenor. (The specialty flourished later in French Baroque opera as the haute-contre.)

As for our forces, we sing two or three to a part. Since we are not bound by the old ecclesiastical prohibition against men and women singing sacred music together, our treble parts are usually sung by women, rather than boys. Sixteenth-century English choirs used either boy altos (“mean” sung by a boy with an ordinary voice or by an adult male falsettist), tenor, and bass.

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The vocal ensemble Blue Heron has been acclaimed by The Boston Globe as “one of the Boston music community’s indispensables” and hailed by Alexander Fletcher in The New Yorker for the “expressive intensity” of its interpretations; the Boston Musical Intelligencer calls Blue Heron “a fantastic model for the fully-realized potential of early music performance in the 21st century.” 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 fifteenth-century English and Franco-Flemish polyphony, from Dunstable and Du Fay through Ockeghem to the generation of Josquin; Spanish music between 1500 and 1600; and neglected early sixteenth-century English music, especially the rich repertory of the Peterhouse partbooks, copied c. 1540 for Canterbury Cathedral. The ensemble has also reached outside these areas to perform very early music (organum by the twelfth-century French composer Perotin) and very recent music (new works by the Australian composer Elliott Gyger).

Founded in 1999, Blue Heron presents subscription series in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and New York City and has performed across the country, including concerts for the Boston Early Music Festival; the Berkeley Early Music Festival; The Cloisters (Metropolitan Museum of Art), the 92nd Street Y, and Music Before 1800 in New York; Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C.; Festival Mozaic in San Luis Obispo, California; the Renaissance and Baroque Society in Pittsburgh; and Monadnock Music in New Hampshire. Blue Heron’s first CD, featuring music by Guillaume Du Fay, was released in 2007; its second, Music from the Peterhouse Partbooks (vol. 1) by Hugh Aston, Robert Jones, and John Mason, followed in 2010. Both discs have received international critical acclaim and the Peterhouse CD made the Billboard charts.

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), whose performances of Monteverdi’s Vespers 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 Cleveland’s Les Délices (dir. Debra Nagy), Montreal’s Arion, and other ensembles in Boston, Montreal, and elsewhere. When not playing or directing, he is at work on a new edition of the songs of Gilles Binchois and teaches choral repertoire and performance practice at Boston University. Metcalfe received a bachelor’s degree in 1985 from Brown University, where he majored in biology (perhaps uniquely in the early music world, he has published an article in the Annals of Botany), and in 2005 completed a master’s degree in historical performance practice at Harvard.
Sanctae Margaretae virginis et martyris

Introitus


Graduale
In your comeliness and beauty, hearken, prosper and reign.
Gloria in excelsis deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonis.
Introit
The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: I will consider your testimonies, O Lord. I have seen an end of all perfection, but your commandment is exceeding broad.
Ps. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.
Glorify be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

For Saint Margaret, virgin and martyr

Introit
For Saint Margaret, virgin and martyr

Gradual
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Offertorium
Offerentur regi virgines: proxime eius offerentur tibi in leictu et exultatione, adducentur in templum regi dominus.

Alleluia. Veni electa mea et ponam te in thronum meum: qua concupivit rex speciem tuam.


Alleluia. Come, my chosen one, and I will place you on my throne: for the king has desired your beauty.

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.
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. 

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. 

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. 

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. 

Communion 
I have wrought judgement and justice, O Lord: let me not be oppressed by the haughty. I have been guided by all your commandments: and I have hated every false way. 
Go, it is finished. Thanks be to God. 

Salve regina, mater misericordie, vita dulcedo et spes nostra, salve. Ad te clamamus exules filii Eve. Ad te suspiramus, etes tuus misericordes oculos ad nos converte, et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui, nobis post hoc exilium ostende. 

Virgo mater ecclesie, 
Eterna porta glorie, 
Esto nobis refugium 
Apud patrem et filium. 

O clemens. 

O dulcis Maria, salve. 

Hayle, quene, mother of mercy, our lyfe, our sweetenes, our hope, all hayle. Unto thee do we crye, whyche are the banyshed chyldren of Eva. Unto thee do we syghe, wepyng & waylyng in this vale of lamentacyon. Come of therefore, our patronesse. Caste upon us those pytelful yges of thynye. And after this our banyshement, shewe unto us the blessed fruite of thy wombe Jesu. 

Virgin mother of the congregacion 
Gate of glory that never is donn 
Be for us a reconciliacion 
Unto the father and the sonne. 

O mercyfull. 

Virgin mercifull, virgin holy 
O swete virgin, o blessed Mary 
Heare theyr prayers graciously 
Whiche crye and call unto thee. 

O holy. 

Praye for us unto thy sonne, 
Wounded and crucified for us all 
And sore turmented with flagellation 
Crowned with thorne, & fedde with gall. 

O swete Mary, [hayle]. 

This Prymer in Englyshe and in Laten 
(Robert Redman: London, 1537)
Our greatest thanks to Nick Sandon for making it possible for the incomplete Peterhouse music to sound again in our time. His work is an unfailing inspiration for ours.

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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