a Mass in Canterbury c. 1540
a Mass in Canterbury

c. 1540

Blue Heron
Scott Metcalfe, director

Noël Bisson
Carol Schlakjer
Daniela Tošić
Martin Near
Aaron Sheehan
Mark Sprinkle
Allen Combs
Glenn Billingsley
Paul Guttry
Darrick Yee

Sunday, November 13, 2005, at 3 p.m.
First Church in Cambridge, Congregational

program

Loquebantur variis linguis
Thomas Tallis (1505–85)

Introit: Benedicta sit sancta trinitas
Kyrie: Deus creator omnium
Sarum plainchant

Gloria
Robert Jones (first half of 16th century): Missa Spes nostra

Gradual: Benedictus es
Alleluia: Benedictus es
Sarum plainchant

Credo
Jones: Missa Spes nostra

--intermission--

Ave Maria dive matris Anne
Hugh Aston (c. 1487–1558)

Offertory: Benedictus sit deus pater
Sarum plainchant

Sanctus
Agnus dei
Jones: Missa Spes nostra

Communion: Benedictimus deum celi
Sarum plainchant

Libera nos, salva nos
John Sheppard (c. 1515–59)

Ite missa est
Sarum plainchant

ote please hold your applause until the end of each half.
A Mass in Canterbury, c. 1540

This program presents a polyphonic setting of the Ordinary of the Mass—those items which are sung invariably at every Mass: the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus dei—amid the plainchant Propers which vary according to the season or feast being observed. The Ordinary is the Missa Spes nostra by Robert Jones, the Propers those for Trinity Sunday from the English or Sarum rite. (The first item of the Ordinary, the Kyrie, is also sung in plainchant, since Jones's Mass, in keeping with contemporary English practice, does not include a Kyrie; the Kyrie chanted for Trinity is an elaborate troped version of the usual ninefold plea for mercy to God and Christ.) The liturgical occasion was suggested by the cantus firmus that underlies Jones's Mass, the chant Spes nostra, an antiphon for Matins on Trinity Sunday. The chant melody is quoted in its entirety in the tenor in every movement, and its striking opening gesture, rising from the final of the mode (its home base) through the triad above and up to the seventh scale degree, is given to the treble at the beginning of each movement.

The program also includes a respond by Thomas Tallis, a short antiphon by John Sheppard, and an expansive votive antiphon by Hugh Aston. The Sheppard is another antiphon for Matins on Trinity Sunday, while Tallis’s Loquebantur variis linguis is for Pentecost and Aston’s Ave Maria dive matris Anne for an unspecified Marian celebration. The Tallis is linked to the rest of the program by its use of a chant cantus firmus, for the same technique structures both the Jones and the Sheppard; the Aston is transmitted in the same source as the Jones. These “extra” pieces might be felt to replace the parts of the Mass chanted or intoned by the priest, or they might simply remind us that this is a concert, albeit one whose form is adapted from liturgy.

The concert opens with Tallis’s vivid evocation of the events recorded in the Acts of the Apostles: “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1–3). In Tallis’s work, the tenor, the sixth voice to enter, sings a slow-moving plainchant melody (a cantus firmus) whose inexorable progress is barely discernible amidst the clamor of six other voices which clash against each other rhythmically and melodically, creating abundant false relations.

Jones’s Missa Spes nostra and Aston’s Ave Maria dive matris Anne are both found uniquely in the Peterhouse partbooks, a set of manuscripts copied around 1540 that contain an extensive repertoire of sacred polyphony from the years just prior to the Reformation in England. The partbooks may have been prepared by a scribe at Magdalene College, Oxford, for use at Canterbury Cathedral, which was dissolved in 1540 as a monastic institution and refounded the following year as a secular cathedral. The refounded Canterbury Cathedral was staffed with a large and ambitious musical establishment eager to sing the most challenging polyphonic repertoire. This the anonymous scribe supplied in abundance. The partbooks contain 72 works, including large-scale Marian antiphons like Ave Maria dive matris Anne and long festal masses like the Missa Spes nostra, all written in the ornately melismatic style of late medieval English Catholicism. Alas for our hardworking scribe, the elaborate Latin repertoire he copied in such quantity was very shortly to be rendered obsolete by the progress of the Reformation in England, the promulgation of the new Book of Common Prayer, and the promotion of simple homophony in the vernacular over Latin polyphony. The partbooks were shelved, and at some point later the tenor book went missing along with several pages of the treble.

The Peterhouse partbooks contain thirty-nine unica (works surviving in one source only), as well as about a dozen other works whose concordant sources are incomplete. As a consequence of the missing tenor parts, virtually none of this music is known today, including Jones’s Mass and Aston’s Ave Maria dive matris Anne. In recent years, however, the English musicologist Nick Sandon has been preparing brilliant and astonishingly idiomatic reconstructions of the incomplete Peterhouse music and publishing them in Antico Edition. Professor Sandon has devoted more than three decades to the Peterhouse partbooks and his dissertation is the standard work on the topic. Since our first concert in October 1999 Blue Heron has sung works by Aston, Taverner, Ludford, and Jones in Sandon’s reconstructions.

As for Robert Jones himself, virtually nothing is known about his life except that he was a singer in the Royal Household Chapel from at least summer 1520 until about 1534. The Missa Spes nostra and a Magnificat (which Blue Heron performed in January 2005) survive only in the Peterhouse partbooks; these works, plus the bass part of a three-voice song, are all that remain to us of the work of a highly skilled and inspired composer.

Like the Magnificat, the Mass is full of supple melody and lustrous harmony. Drawing on the musical grammar and vocabulary Jones shared with his contemporaries like Tallis and Taverner, it is at the same time the unique creation of a mature composer with an unmistakably distinct individual voice singing out to us from across a divide of more than four and a half centuries. The same is true of Aston’s Ave Maria dive matris Anne, a favorite of ours since our very first concert for its gorgeous melodies and breathtaking sense of harmonic motion.

We conclude with the dashing Libera nos, salva nos by the slightly younger composer John Sheppard, in which six voices (pairs of trebles, means or altos, and tenors) spin out their kaleidoscopically intersecting lines above a slow-moving chant cantus firmus in the bass.

—Scott Metcalfe
The apostles were speaking in many tongues, alleluia, of the great works of God. Alleluia.
All were filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak of the great works of God.
Alleluia.
Blessed be the Holy Trinity and undivided unity: we will give thanks to him, for he has shown us his mercy.
Let us bless the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

O God, creator of all things, thou our merciful God, have mercy.
Singing your praises, O Christ, king of kings, we pray to thee, have mercy.
Praise, power, peace, and dominion to him who is forever without end: have mercy.
O Christ, sole king, born coeternal with the kind father, have mercy.
Thou who saved lost humanity, giving life for death, have mercy.
Lest your pastured sheep should perish, have mercy.
Consoler of suppliants below, we beseech thee, have mercy.
Our strength, O Lord, and our salvation in eternity, have mercy.
Highest and only God, grant us life, the gift of compassion to those whom you favor: have mercy.

Blessed be the Holy Trinity and undivided unity: we will give thanks to him, for he has shown us his mercy.
Let us bless the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

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.

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.

Blessed art thou, Lord God of our fathers, and worthy to be praised forever.
Bless the God of heaven, for he has shown us his mercy.

Benedictus es, domine, qui intueris abyssos et sedes super cherubin. Benedicte deum celci: quia fecit nobiscum misericordiam suam.

Benedictus es, domine, qui intueris abyssos et sedes super cherubin. Benedicte deum celci: quia fecit nobiscum misericordiam suam.

Benedictus es, domine, qui intueris abyssos et sedes super cherubin. Benedicte deum celci: quia fecit nobiscum misericordiam suam.
Agnus de

Communion

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.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine domini.
Osanna in excelsis.
Libera nos, salva nos, justifica nos, O beata trinitas.
Benedicimus deum celi, et coram omnibus viventibus confitebimur ei: quia fecit nobiscum misericordiam suam.

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, grant us peace.
We bless the God of heaven, and before all living things we will give thanks to him, for he has shown us his mercy.
Free us, save us, justify us, O blessed Trinity.
(anthephon for Matins on Trinity Sunday)
Go forth, it is finished. Thanks be to God.
Blue Heron is an ensemble of eight to fifteen singers specializing in Renaissance polyphony. Blue Heron combines a commitment to vivid live performance with knowledge of the latest research into source material and historical performance practice. The ensemble's principal repertoire interests in the last few years have been late fifteenth-century Franco-Flemish polyphony, sacred and secular Spanish music between about 1500 and 1575, and neglected early sixteenth-century English music, especially the rich and unexplored repertory of the Peterhouse partbooks (c. 1540). Founded in 1999, Blue Heron presents its own series of concerts in Boston and appears regularly at Monadnock Music in New Hampshire. This season the group will also sing concerts in New York and Vermont, participate in a conference on the music of Luca Marenzio at Harvard, and appear at Boston University in a lecture-demonstration on Morales’s Lamentation setting Et postquam est.

Baritone Glenn Billingsley has sung leading roles with the Chautauqua, Santa Fe, Lake George and Vermont, participate in a conference on the music of Luca Marenzio at Harvard, and appear at Boston University in a lecture-demonstration on Morales’s Lamentation setting Et postquam est.

Noël Bisson, a co-founder of Blue Heron Renaissance Choir, has sung as soloist and ensemble singer with many ensembles across the country and locally, most regularly with the choir of the Church of the Advent and the Boston Camerata. She earned a doctorate in musicology from Harvard University, and her scholarly focus is English sacred music of the late fifteenth century. Noel and her family reside in Hamilton, New York, where she is Associate Dean of the College at Colgate University.

Tener Allen Combs is a native of Idaho Falls, Idaho and the University of Idaho. He completed a master's in historical performance practice at Harvard. Mr. Combs has given world premieres at the Lowell New Music Festival and with Composers in Red Sneakers. He also performs frequently at Phillips Academy, Andover, where he is a member of the voice faculty. Currently a soloist and cantor at the Church of the Advent, Mr. Combs has served as music director of the Andover Choral Society since 1990. He is also the vocal director for the Composers' Conference and Chamber Music Center at Wellesley College and music director for the New England Dance Ensemble.

Bass-baritone Paul Guttry enjoys a varied career including opera, oratorio, and chamber music. He has sung in over 150 performances of Monteverdi's Six Characters in Search of an Opera for Project ARIA (AIDS Response by Independent Artists), which was given five performances at Roxbury Community College, Arlington Street Church, and the Boston Center for the Arts. Mr. Near is an advocate of the performance of new music and has been a soloist in numerous world premieres, including a microtonal piece in 72-note equal temperament performed in Jordan Hall. He studies voice with Mark St. Laurent.

Carol Schlakier, soprano, received her vocal training at the Music Conservatory in Cologne, Germany, and the Schola Cantorum in Basel, Switzerland. She lived for almost two decades in Germany where she was a frequent soloist for the Lutheran Church radio broadcasts in Frankfurt am Main. She has performed throughout Europe, Australia and the U.S. as a concert and recording artist, both as a soloist and as a member of various early music ensembles, including Sequentia's Vox Feminae and the Huelgas Ensemble. Carol is co-director of the Orpheus Vocal Performance Laboratory, which holds workshops for young singers on the South Shore. She also teaches voice in after-school programs in local high schools and at her private voice studio.

Aaron Sheehan, tenor, is now enjoying his fifth season singing with Blue Heron. He has also performed with Theater of Voices, the Handel & Haydn Society, Fortune's Wheel, and Liber unUsualis. Last fall he sang the title role in the Harvard Early Music Society's production of Monteverdi's Orfeo, and last June he appeared as Ivan in the Boston Early Music Festival production of Mattheson's Orpheus. Aaron Sheehan enjoys an active and varied career as a soloist and ensemble singer in repertoires ranging from the 14th to the 18th centu-
ries. He has appeared as a soloist with Concerto Palatino and with the Handel & Haydn Society under Grant Llewellyn and Christopher Hogwood, and sang in the Boston Early Music Festival productions of Rossini’s Orfeo, Lully’s Thésée and Conradi’s Ariadne. In May 2005 he sang the Evangelist in Bach’s St. John Passion with the Andover Choral Society. He worked for many years with Emmanuel Music and can be heard on their recordings of the motets of Heinrich Schütz and the St. John Passion. He is on the voice faculties of Phillips Exeter Academy, Salem State College and Boston College.

Mezzo-soprano Daniela Tošić, a native of Belgrade, Yugoslavia, toured with the Belgrade-based ensemble Renaissance throughout the former Yugoslavia. In the Boston area she has worked with Ensemble P.A.N., Revels, Balmus, and La Donna Musica! and has premiered several new works. She is a founding member of Tapestry, the acclaimed vocal ensemble that records with Telarc International and MDG and tours widely throughout the US and abroad. She is also a founding member of the medieval-world fusion ensemble HourGlass.

Darrick Yee has performed with a wide variety of vocal ensembles in the Boston area. He received his bachelor’s degree in East Asian Studies and master’s degree in Education from Harvard University, where he sang with the Glee Club, the University Choir, the Krokodiloes, and the Collegium Musicum. He currently works for the Massachusetts Department of Education and sings in the ensembles Cut Circle, the Boston Secession, and the King’s Chapel Choir.

The World of Guillaume Du Fay (c. 1397–1474)
Chansons, motets, and mass movements by one of the greatest composers of the fifteenth century, including chansons for a few voices and motets for the full ensemble. Mack Ramsey joins the vocal ensemble on slide trumpet, Scott Metcalfe on the vielle.

Sunday, March 5, 2006, at 3 p.m.
Pre-concert talk at 2:15 by Sean Gallagher, Harvard University
First Church in Cambridge, Congregational

Listening to the music of Guillaume Du Fay
An introduction to the repertoire of our March 5 concert (history, performance practice, listening guide, and more) with Scott Metcalfe. Participants are invited to attend our dress rehearsal in the afternoon.
Saturday, March 4, 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
EnlightenNext Boston, 38 Cameron Avenue, Cambridge (free parking in lot)

Spring 2006 fundraiser
Madrigals by Luca Marenzio
Food, drinks, conversation, and music by a brilliant sixteenth-century madrigalist—all to benefit Blue Heron.
Saturday, April 29, 5:00 pm – 7:30 pm
The French Library, 53 Marlborough Street, Boston

Visit our website!
buy tickets · sign up for our mailing lists (email & post) · learn more about our concert programs
check our touring schedule of concerts in New York City, Burlington, Vermont, & other major metropolitan centers · learn more about the artists · get directions & figure out where to park
www.blueheronchoir.org

Contact us
Blue Heron Renaissance Choir
PO Box 381595
Cambridge, MA 02238
(617) 924-7501 · info@blueheronchoir.org
acknowledgments

Many thanks to our donors, without whose generous support our concerts could not take place.

Donations from November 1, 2004 through November 6, 2005

Angel
Anonymous
Cynthia Schlaikjer

Benefactor
John & Diane Britton
+Elizabeth Davidson
Eiji Miki & Jane Hever
Theresa Neilsen-Steinhardt
Richard Schmeidler

Patron
Peggy Badenhausen & Tom Kelly
Thomas Bisson
Paul Guttry
David P. Halstead
Lydia H. Knutson & Fred Langenegger
Michael McDonald
William & Elizabeth Metcalfe
Cindy & Peter Nebolsine
Ellen Powers

Sponsor
Anonymous (2)
Elizabeth Davidson
May & Carl Daw
John E. Dooley
Kathleen Fay
David Hawthorne
Deborah Jones & Alfred Mendoza
Robert M. Kovalik
Benjamin Krepp
+Carol Lorber
Anne H. Matthews
Ruthie Miller
Jessie Ann Owens
Sue Poverman
Kathy Rosenfield
Katy Roth
Andrew Sigel
Mimi Sprinkle
Michael & Anninnea Terranova
Michal Truelson & Jody Wormhoudt
Verizon Foundation
John & Jo Ellen Yannis

Supporter
Mira Bartok
Joan Campbell
Lisa Cuklanz
Bruce & Martha Davidson
Catherine & Joe Davin
Elizabeth A. Faley
Mildred & Malcolm Freberg
+Cynthia Gonzales
Dianne Haley
Ivan J. Hansen
Jane W. Hyman
Denise Koniecz
Alan & Judith Kotok
Catherine Liddell
Sudie Marcuse
June Matthews
Julie F. McConchie
Judy Morrison
Om Shanthi
Ken Pierce
Richard & Janet Post
Nancy E. Reid
Julie Rohwein & Jonathan Aibel
Aaron Sheshan
Starbucks Matching Gifts Program
Polly S. Stevens
Marie Stroud
+MaryAnn & Roman Sperluk
Gill & Carl Trieb
Nikolas von Huene
Ruth J. Wales
Emily Walhout
+Barbara & Christoph Wolff
Linda C. Woodford
Alex Yannis

Friend
Roy Bercaw
Nancy A. Ferretti
Cynthia Gilles
Gloria M. Jackson

In memory of Carroll Bisson

Board Of Directors
Cynthia Schlaikjer, president
Cheryl Ryder, treasurer
David Halstead, clerk
Marilyn Boenau
Arthur Hornig
Scott Metcalfe
Richard Schmeidler
John Yannis

program design: Evan Ingersoll, empict multimedia
“These singers are all very good… couldn’t have been more beautiful.”
– Goldberg Magazine

O Rex Orbis  The Rhymed Office of Charlemagne
A recreation of a Vespers service celebrating the elevation of Charlemagne to the sainthood featuring politically-charged chants and polyphony from the Aachen Cathedral

Fri. Feb. 24 at 8pm • First Lutheran Church of Boston
Sun. Feb. 26 at 4pm • Cochran Chapel at Phillips Academy Andover

New World Cathedrals  Music in Mexico & Guatemala
Free community outreach concerts featuring treasures from the archives of Mexico City, Puebla, Oaxaca, and Guatemala by Guerrero, Victoria, López Capillas, Padilla & Franco

Fri. Jun. 2 at 8pm • First Lutheran Church of Boston
Sat. Jun. 3 at 5pm • Spontaneous Celebrations, Jamaica Plain
Sun. Jun. 4 at 4pm • Corpus Christi Parish, Lawrence

857-998-0219 • www.exsultemus.org