



Taverner, Mason & Byrd

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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2007, AT 3 P.M.  
First Church in Cambridge, Congregational

## Blue Heron

Noël Bisson  
Lydia Brotherton  
Lydia Heather Knutson

Pamela Dellar  
Martin Near  
  
Michael Barrett  
Allen Combs  
Jason McStoots  
Aaron Sheehan  
Steven Soph  
Mark Sprinkle

Glenn Billingsley  
Sumner Thompson  
Derrick Yee

Scott Metcalfe, *director*

*Today's concert is being recorded for future broadcast on WGBH, 89.7 FM.*

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*This organization is funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.*



# *Program*

**WILLIAM BYRD (1542/3–1623)**

Vigilate (*Cantiones sacrae I*, 1589)

Sarum chant

Kyrie *Rex clemens*

**JOHN TAVERNER (c. 1490–1545)**

Missa *Mater Christi* (Peterhouse partbooks, c. 1540)

Gloria

Credo

**JOHN MASON (d. 1547/8?)**

Quales sumus O miseri (Peterhouse partbooks, c. 1540)

~*intermission*~

**BYRD**

Quomodo cantabimus

**TAVERNER**

Missa *Mater Christi*

Sanctus

Agnus Dei

**BYRD**

Ne irascaris (*Cantiones sacrae I*, 1589)

Haec dicit Dominus (*Cantiones sacrae II*, 1591)

# Taverner, Mason & Byrd

## CATHOLIC MUSIC IN ENGLAND BEFORE AND AFTER THE REFORMATION

The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century took a particular form in England, owing in no small part to the connubial unrest of its monarch, Henry VIII. Desperate to rid himself of his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, with whom he had failed to produce a male heir, and confounded by the unwillingness of the Pope to annul the marriage, Henry finally forced to an extreme conclusion his political resistance to the power of Rome over the English Church. The reform-minded Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, declared the marriage null and void, allowing Henry to wed Anne Boleyn in 1533; this was soon followed by the so-called Reformation Parliament's establishing Henry as Supreme Head of the Church of England, in the Act of Supremacy. The reformed Anglican Church was at first, in the words of Antonia Fraser, "a national church that retained its medieval organisation but lacked a firm confession of faith." Over the next several decades both organization and confession would undergo substantial transformation in a struggle between Protestants and Catholics that cost dearly in human life.

As Head of the Church, Henry claimed jurisdiction over all its assets, and in 1536 he began to liquidate some of these assets in a most ruthless manner, dissolving England's monasteries, dismissing (at the least violent end of the spectrum) their monks and nuns, and confiscating their property. Henry's chief minister, Thomas Cromwell, who supervised the process, first attacked the smaller houses, but by 1539-40 the dissolution of the monasteries progressed to the most eminent, including all the

large monastic cathedrals. Most of these were refounded within a year as secular institutions directly answerable to the king. One side-effect of the dissolution was the sudden creation of new ecclesiastical choirs, each of which needed to acquire a complete repertory of up-to-date polyphonic music. Thus in late 1539 Canterbury Cathedral, one of the grandest of the new secular foundations, seems to have commissioned Thomas Bull, a lay-clerk and scribe at Magdalen College, Oxford, to copy from his college's repertoire a large number of five-part pieces—everything, in fact, that a major cathedral would need for High Mass, Vespers, and other services—and bring it with him as he took up a new position at Canterbury. In a burst of activity, Bull copied over seventy works into five partbooks: Treble, Mean, Contratenor, Tenor, and Bass. (This, at least, is the hypothesis of the leading modern scholar of the partbooks, Nick Sandon.)

Bull's five partbooks would have been put immediately into service at Canterbury, although it is not clear whether they were sung from directly or used as exemplars for the preparation of performance copies. Within less than a decade, however, they were rendered obsolete. Henry died in 1547, leaving his ten-year-old son, Edward, on the throne, whereupon Edward's uncle, the Duke of Somerset, quickly seized power as Protector of the Realm. Under Somerset radical Protestantism became the rule of the land, and the newly promulgated doctrines and practices of the Anglican Church left no place in its services for the florid festal Masses and grandly-scaled Marian antiphons of this col-

lection. The partbooks seem to have gathered dust on the shelf at Canterbury for nearly a century, until being acquired by the master of Peterhouse College, Cambridge, in the 1630s. At Peterhouse they have remained—and are hence known as the Peterhouse partbooks—but long ago, sometime before the middle of nineteenth century, the tenor partbook and part of the treble book went missing. For this reason the thirty-nine pieces that are unique to the Peterhouse partbooks, as well as the further dozen that lack complete concordant sources, cannot be performed without recomposing at least one line. Both Taverner's *Missa Mater Christi* and the votive antiphon *Quales sumus O miseri* by John Mason fall into the former category, and today we are singing the extraordinarily idiomatic reconstructions of Nick Sandon, published by Antico Edition.

John Taverner of Boston (Boston, Lincolnshire, that is) was one of the musical luminaries of early sixteenth-century England, and his name remains well known today. The same cannot be said of his contemporary John Mason, who is nonetheless revealed by *Quales sumus O miseri* as a composer with a strikingly original voice. The work sets a long and unusually complex text abounding in images of suffering, death, conflict, and despair, all preparing a supplication to Mary that she might lead us into heaven where, as one, we shall sing "Alleluia." Mason's music, for five low voices, manages to sustain a high level of intensity for nearly twelve minutes, as trios and duos for various combinations of voices alternate with sections for the full five parts.

The *Missa Mater Christi* is based on Taverner's own antiphon *Mater Christi sanctissima*; that is to say, it is a so-called imitation mass, in which in

each movement the composer takes the musical materials of the model and explores and reworks and recombines them, gradually teasing out every possible contrapuntal permutation, melodic paraphrase, and harmonic variation that his imagination might discover. The result is a marvelous sort of meandering journey or, more precisely, four walks through the same landscape at different seasons, during the course of which we see the same sights (we hear the same music), but each time revealed in a new light, in different weather, at a different time of day, the trees bearing differently colored foliage. We first visit on a brilliant, clear winter's morning in the *Gloria*, return in spring and again in summer for the *Credo* and *Sanctus*, and end up with the *Agnus Dei* on a late September afternoon across the river from Boston (Massachusetts, this time). Like other English polyphonic masses of this period, the *Missa Mater Christi* does not set the first item of the Ordinary, the *Kyrie*, and so today we sing a plainchant *Kyrie* from the English Sarum rite.

The remainder of our program consists of four motets by William Byrd. Born in 1542 or 1543, Byrd was a choirboy during the brief re-establishment of Catholicism under Queen Mary (1553–58). The accession of Elizabeth brought Protestantism back again, and with it occasionally harsh persecution of Catholics like Byrd, especially at times of political and religious crisis such as that surrounding the capture, torture, and execution of the Jesuit missionary Edmund Campion in 1581. Byrd responded publicly to religious oppression in part by composing a series of motets whose texts, largely drawn from unimpeachable biblical sources like the Psalms, complain of captivity, exile, and longing for relief of suffering. Many were published in his two collections of *Cantiones sacrae* (1589 and

1591). We sing three of these this afternoon, as well as a fourth motet that exists only in manuscript, *Quomodo cantabimus*.

*Vigilate* is an urgent call for wakefulness, “for you know not when the Lord of the house shall come: in the evening, at midnight, at cock-crow, or in the morning.” Byrd sets each small section of text in its own distinct mood. “Vigilate” rises insistently, “sero” (in the evening) cascades peacefully downwards, the cock crows out in a snappy dotted rhythm, the sleeping settle into lethargy in a series of suspensions.

In 1583 the Franco-Flemish composer Philippe de Monte sent Byrd an eight-voice motet on a text from the psalm *Super flumina Babylonis*: “By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept... How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?” The next year Byrd replied with his own motet in eight parts, *Quomodo cantabimus*: “How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land? If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand be forgotten; let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you.” Concealed in the polyphonic web of the first part is a three-part canon, in which the first bass is imitated at the octave by the first alto, followed by the second alto *per motu contrario* (in inversion), a perfect symbol of unwavering, if clandestine, faith in the Trinity.

*Ne irascaris* is much beloved, and with good reason, for it is a heart-rendingly lovely evocation of longing for Jerusalem, abandoned, laid waste, and desolate. We conclude the concert with *Haec dicit Dominus*, a tour de force of expressive composition. The first part of the motet and the beginning of the second convey most forcefully the wild grief of Rachel, weeping for her children and refusing to be

consoled, for they are no more. But listen: “Thus saith the Lord: Let thy voice rest from weeping, and thine eyes from tears, for there is a reward for thy work, saith the Lord: and there is hope in thy last days...,” and at these words the tonality turns marvelously from the D and A minor sonorities of the modal final and fifth towards F major and B♭ major, and we realize that this is a motet of comfort, for in the end “thy children shall return to their own borders.” May our children and our children’s children see Jerusalem at peace and a world from which religious hatred has forever disappeared.

—Scott Metcalfe

# Texts & Translations

## VIGILATE

*Mark 13:35-37 (slightly modified)*

Vigilate, nescitis enim quando Dominus domus veniat: sero, an media nocte, an gallicantu, an mane. Vigilate ergo, ne cum venerit repente inveniat vos dormientes. Quod autem dico vobis omnibus dico: Vigilate.

KYRIE eleison. Christe eleison. Kyrie eleison.

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

CREDO in unum deum, patrem omnipotentem, factorem celi et terre, visibilium omnium et invisibilium. Et in unum dominum Jesum Christum, filium dei unigenitum. Et ex patre natum ante omnia secula. Deum de deo, lumen de lumine, deum verum de deo vero. Genitum non factum, consubstantiale patri: per quem omnia facta sunt. Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de celis. Et incarnatus est de spiritu sancto ex Maria virgine: et homo factus est. Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato: passus et sepultus est. Et resurrexit tertia die secundum scripturas. Et ascendit in celum: sedet ad dexteram patris. Et iterum venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos et mortuos: cuius regni non erit finis. Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi seculi. Amen.

*Keep watch, for you know not when the Lord of the house shall come: in the evening, at midnight, at cock-crow, or in the morning. Keep watch therefore, lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep watch.*

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

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

*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 await the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.*

QUALES SUMUS, O MISERI

Quales sumus, O miseri,  
properantes ad portas inferi,  
quatriduani fetentes,  
ut te laudare presumamus,  
O Maria, cum sciamus  
non audiri delinquentes?

Sed in arcto constituti,  
in labore lateris et luti,  
insudantes gemiscimus.  
Consolatricem miserorum  
et refectricem laborum,  
te depositimus

ut oculos misericordes  
ad nos convertas et sordes  
peccatorum amoveas,  
scelerumque soluto vecte,  
Jesum sequentes recte  
vermiculos ne despicias.

Israel celum non respicit,  
nam terrena pulvis perficit;  
hinc desperans confunditur.  
Quare pro nobis deprecare  
ad hunc qui lapides mutare  
in Abraham filios dicitur

ut Israel oculos erigat  
ad celum et deum sitiat  
sicut cervus aquarum fontes,  
ut, de Pharaonis imperio  
erepti tandem durissimo,  
mare transeamus insontes.

Et, licet hostes seviant,  
hos maria non operiant,  
O domina,  
sed sevitiam removeant,  
ut ereptos hos deleant  
claustra tunc infernalia.

Et sic, virtutibus fecundi,  
ad celestia mente mundi  
properemus, O Maria,  
ut post finem vite, jocundi  
Christo juncti, letabundi  
una cantemus alleluia.

*What are we, O wretches,  
hurrying to the gates of hell,  
stinking after four days,  
that we dare to praise you,  
O Mary, although we know  
that sinners are not to be heard?*

*But, narrowly confined,  
toiling with bricks and clay,  
sweating, we groan.  
Comforter of the wretched  
and refresher of labors,  
we beg you*

*to turn merciful eyes  
towards us and remove  
the transgressions of sinners,  
and not to despise, as they deserve,  
the worms seeking to follow Jesus  
after committing their sins.*

*Israel does not look towards heaven,  
and (since dust is the fate of earthly things),  
thus she is thrown into despair.  
Intercede therefore for us  
with him who is said to turn stones  
into sons of Abraham*

*so that Israel may raise her eyes  
to heaven and thirst for God  
as the hart pants after the water-brooks,  
and so that we, snatched at last  
from the most cruel tyranny of Pharaoh,  
may cross the sea without harm.*

*And, although enemies rage,  
let the seas not conceal them,  
O Lady,  
but wash away their fury,  
so that these plunderers may be then destroyed  
by the confines of hell.*

*And thus, rich in merit,  
pure in mind, may we hasten  
to heaven, O Mary,  
so that after life's end,  
happily united with Christ,  
as one we may sing Alleluia.*

## QUOMODO CANTABIMUS

*Psalm 136:4-7*

Quomodo cantabimus canticum Domini in terra aliena? Si oblitus fvero tui, Hierusalem, oblivioni detur dextra mea; adheret lingua mea faucibus meis, si non meminero tui,

Si non proposuero Hierusalem in principio letitiae meae. Memor esto, Domine, filiorum Edom in die Hierusalem.

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.

*How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand be forgotten; let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you,*

*If I do not set Jerusalem at the beginning of my joy. Remember, O lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem.*

*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.*

## NE IRASCARIS

*Isaiah 64:9-10*

Ne irascaris Domine satis, et ne ultra memineris  
iniquitatibus nostrae. Ecce, respice, populus tuus  
omnes nos.

Civitas sancti tui facta est deserta. Sion deserta facta  
est. Jerusalem desolata est.

*Be not angry any more, O Lord, and do not remember  
our iniquity any longer. Behold, see, we are all  
thy people.*

*The city of thy holy place is become a wilderness. Zion is  
become a wilderness. Jerusalem is forsaken.*

## HAEC DICIT DOMINUS

*Jeremiah 31:15-17*

Haec dicit Dominus: Vox in excelsis audita est  
lamentationis, luctus et fletus, Rachaell plorantis  
filios suos, et nolentis consolari super eos, quia non  
sunt.

Haec dicit Dominus: Quiescat vox tua a ploratu, et  
oculi tui a lacrimis, quia est merces opera tuo, ait  
Dominus: et est spes in novissimis tuis, et revertentur  
filii ad terminos suos.

*Thus saith the Lord: A voice of lamentation was heard  
in heaven, mourning and weeping. Rachel crying for her  
children, and refusing to be comforted for them, for they  
are not.*

*Thus saith the Lord: Let thy voice rest from weeping, and  
thine eyes from tears, for there is a reward for thy work,  
saith the Lord: and there is hope in thy last days, and  
thy children shall return to their own borders.*

*translations by Nick Sandon (Quales sumus O miseri) & Scott Metcalfe*

# Biographies

The vocal ensemble **Blue Heron** combines a commitment to vivid live performance with the study of original source materials and historical performance practice. Blue Heron's principal repertoire interests are fifteenth-century English and Franco-Flemish polyphony, ranging from Dunstable and Du Fay through Ockeghem to Josquin; 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). The ensemble has also reached outside these areas to perform very early music (organa by the twelfth-century French composer Perotinus), very recent music (new works by the Australian composer Elliott Gyger), and more, including the complete *Eighth Book of Madrigals* by Luca Marenzio at the international Marenzio conference at Harvard University in April 2006. Founded in 1999, Blue Heron presents its own series of concerts in Cambridge, performs regularly at Monadnock Music in New Hampshire, and has appeared at other venues throughout the Northeast, including the 2005 Boston Early Music Festival and the 92nd Street Y in New York City. Its first CD, featuring music by Guillaume Du Fay, was released in March of 2007.

After completing studies in voice and early music at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague, **Michael Barrett** returned to the US in 2004 to take up conducting positions at Harvard University. While in Europe he was a member of the Huelgas Ensemble (dir. Paul van Nevel) and the Netherlands Bach Society (dir. Jos van Veldhoven). In the US Michael has worked with Blue Heron (dir. Scott Metcalfe), Seven Times Salt, Cut Circle (dir. Jesse Rodin),

Boston Secession (dir. Jane Ring Frank), and Ensemble Trinitas (dir. Tom Zajac), and he appeared in the Boston Early Music Festival's productions of *Boris Goudenow* in 2005 and *Psyché* in 2007. He directs the vocal ensemble Sprezzatura and is the new music director of Convivium Musicum. Michael received an AB in music from Harvard and an MM in choir conducting from Indiana University.

Baritone **Glenn Billingsley** made his debut with the New York City Opera National Company, and has sung with the Santa Fe, Chautauqua, and Lake George Opera companies. He has appeared in the Spoleto and Madeira Bach Festivals, toured the United States, South America, and Europe with the Waverly Consort, and done significant solo work with New York's Ensemble for Early Music, the Bach Aria Group, New York's Musica Sacra, Johannes Somary's Amor Artis Chorale, and numerous other choral organizations in New York and Boston. A longtime member of the Choir of the Church of the Advent, he is a founding member of Blue Heron. Glenn's wife, soprano Monique Phinney, is on the voice faculty of The Boston Conservatory, their son Ken is the drummer for the band Exhale, and their daughter Lisa is majoring in music theater at The Boston Conservatory.

**Noël Bisson**, a soprano and co-founder of Blue Heron, has sung as soloist and ensemble singer with many groups 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 with a dissertation on the Eton Choirbook and a

scholarly focus on English sacred music just prior to and around the time of the Reformation. She has taught as a lecturer in music at Harvard and at Colgate University. Noël recently moved back to the Boston area after several years in upstate New York where she was Associate Dean of the College at Colgate. She is happy to have returned to Harvard where she is now Associate Dean of the Faculty and Secretary of the Faculty.

**Lydia Brotherton**, soprano, received her A.B. in music with honors from Brown University; her honors thesis, entitled “All Nature Joyn to Entertain Our Queen: Revelations and Revels in Henry Purcell’s *The Fairy Queen*,” was published as a winner of the prestigious University Prize. Now residing in the Boston area, Lydia is working towards an M.Mus. in Historical Performance from Boston University. She is founder of The Sun’s Darlings, and performs regularly with Blue Heron, Vox Triniti, and Sprezzatura. Upcoming engagements include performances with the Boston Camerata in December 2007.

Tenor **Allen Combs** is a native of Idaho Falls, Idaho, and received his education at the University of Idaho and the University of Lowell. In addition to his work with Blue Heron, Mr. Combs has performed with Schola Cantorum and Cappella Alamire. His recital repertoire embraces music from the Renaissance to the twentieth century and includes the major song cycles of Schubert and Britten. Mr. Combs has given world premieres at the Lowell New Music Festival and with Composers in Red Sneakers. He 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.

**Pamela Dellar**, mezzo-soprano, is a much sought-after oratorio soloist who has performed with renowned ensembles in Boston and throughout the world. She has been featured in leading roles in operas of Purcell, Mozart, Britten, and others. As a member of Sequentia’s women’s ensemble, Vox Feminae, Ms. Dellar has recorded the music of Hildegard von Bingen and toured the US, Europe, and Australia. She appears frequently with Musicians of the Old Post Road and Ensemble Chaconne and is a regular soloist with Emmanuel Music. Her broad repertoire ranges from early chamber music to contemporary pieces.

Mezzo-soprano **Lydia Heather Knutson** has performed around the world, appearing on radio and at leading international music festivals in the US, Canada, Europe, Latin America, and Australia. She is a founding member of the medieval ensemble Fortune’s Wheel, sang for many years with the women’s ensemble of Sequentia, Cologne, and has sung with Blue Heron since 2003. Locally, she has performed with the Boston Camerata, Boston Cecilia, La Donna Musicale, and Emmanuel Music, among others. She has recorded for Dorian, Erato, and BMG Classics/Deutsche Harmonia Mundi. In addition to singing, Dr. Knutson is a chiropractor and the director of the Lydian Center for Integrative Medicine in Cambridge.

**Jason McStoots**, tenor, has been celebrated as one of the “new generation of New England singers” and described by critics as “particularly outstanding,” with “a perfect light-opera voice,” “sweet, ap-

pealing tone and real acting ability.” He has sung with groups around the US including Boston Lyric Opera, Handel Choir of Baltimore, New Haven Symphony Orchestra, Emmanuel Music, Granite State Opera and Opera Providence; and has performed recitals with Tanglewood Music Center, MIT Recital Series, and Boston French Library. His most recent appearance with the Florestan Recital Project was hailed by the *Boston Globe* as “at least as polished as it is promising.”

**Scott Metcalfe** is a specialist in music between 1400 and 1750 whose career as a violinist and conductor has taken him all over North America and Europe. Besides directing Blue Heron, he serves as concertmaster of the Trinity Consort in Portland, Oregon, under the direction of Eric Milnes, enjoys a varied freelance career as a player, teacher, conductor, and writer, and is presently becoming an active member of Montreal’s burgeoning early music scene, working with Montreal Baroque, Arion, and other groups. Metcalfe directed the Renaissance choir Convivium Musicum from 1996 through 2007 and was a founding member of La Luna and The King’s Noyse. He appears on recordings on harmonia mundi, ATMA, Dorian, Wildboar, and elsewhere. He received a bachelor’s degree in 1985 from Brown University, where he majored in biology, and in 2005 completed a master’s degree in historical performance practice at Harvard.

Countertenor **Martin Near** has been a professional singer since age nine, working his way up to Head Chorister at Saint Thomas Fifth Avenue in New York City, and currently sings with Blue Heron and with the choir of the Church of the Advent. He studied composition at New England Conserva-

tory of Music with Michael Gandolfi. On a grant from the American Composers Forum Boston, Mr. Near served as composer and music director of the one act opera *Six Characters in Search of an Opera* for Project ARIA (AIDS Response by Independent Artists), which was given five performances in Boston. 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.

Tenor **Aaron Sheehan** has appeared as a soloist with Tragicomedia, Concerto Palatino, New York Collegium, American Bach Soloists, Handel & Haydn Society, Aston Magna Festival, Moscow Chamber Orchestra, and many other ensembles; at Tanglewood; and at early music festivals in Boston, Regensburg, and Washington. Aaron performs regularly with Paul Hillier’s Theater of Voices and with Blue Heron, Fortune’s Wheel, and La Donna Musicale. His recent engagements include the *St. John Passion* at the National Cathedral, Bach cantatas with the American Bach Soloists in the San Francisco Bay Area, and the role of Amour in Lully’s opera *Psyché* at BEMF this past June. Aaron teaches voice at Wellesley College and Brown University.

Tenor **Steven Sopf**, a native of Denton, Texas, attended the University of North Texas, where he sang with Lyle Nordstrom’s Collegium Musicum. In 2006 he recorded the roles of Historicus in Carissimi’s *Jonas and Jephtha* with New Trinity Baroque in Atlanta, and in April of 2007 he returned to Atlanta to record a Monteverdi program. In Boston he has performed repertoire ranging from the Renaissance to jazz, singing with Schola Can-

torum of Boston, Cambridge Early Music Project, Philovox, Cut Circle, the Choir of the Church of the Advent, and the Boston Secession.

Tenor **Mark Sprinkle** has appeared as a soloist with Concerto Palatino, the Handel & Haydn Society, the Boston Early Music Festival, Emmanuel Music and Blue Heron, among many others. An active Bach Passion Evangelist, he appeared in 2007 with Chorus Pro Musica as Evangelist in the *St. John Passion* in Boston and in 2008 will perform the same role with the Boulder Bach Festival in Boulder Colorado. He was a founding member of the Cambridge Bach Ensemble. He has performed at music festivals in Bergen Norway, Vancouver, Edinburgh, and Aldeburgh, UK and has recorded with Dorian, Koch, Harmonia Mundi, Decca, Arabesque, and Telarc. He is a member of the voice faculty at Boston College. In addition to singing and teaching, he is an American Canoeing Association Open Water Sea Kayaking Instructor and a Registered Maine Guide.

Hailed as “the real thing” (Cleveland Plain Dealer) and praised for his “elegant style” (Boston Globe), **Sumner Thompson** is one of today’s most sought-after young baritones. His appearances on the operatic stage include roles in productions from Boston to Copenhagen, including the Boston Early Music Festival’s productions of Conradi’s *Ariadne* (2005) and Lully’s *Psyché* (2007) and several European tours with Contemporary Opera Denmark as Orfeo in Monteverdi’s *L’Orfeo*. He has performed across North America as a soloist with Concerto Palatino, Tafelmusik, Apollo’s Fire, Les Boreades de Montréal, and many other ensembles and orchestras of both conventional and early music inclinations. Also a noted recitalist, Mr. Thompson

has sung in Stuttgart, Amsterdam, and Regensburg, and at London’s famed Wigmore Hall.

**Derrick Yee** has performed regularly with a wide array of Boston-area vocal ensembles over the past fifteen years, from the close-harmony groups Downtown Crossing and the Harvard Kroko-dilos to the early music ensembles Exsultemus and Blue Heron. He has performed on local and national stages, including Boston’s Symphony Hall, the Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, and Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall, and in nationally televised performances on ABC, A&E, and PBS. His diverse interests have afforded him the opportunity to perform with such luminaries as Bryn Terfel, Simon Carrington, Barry Manilow, and Sarah Jessica Parker, in programs ranging from vocal jazz and pop to sacred early music. Derrick appears on recent recordings of Philovox Ensemble, Boston Secession, and Blue Heron.

# *Acknowledgments*

Thanks to the Cambridge Society for Early Music for a grant supporting this season's pre-concert talks. We plan to make these talks available as podcasts: check our website for details and to download a podcast of last November's talk by Myke Cuthbert about Dunstable.

Evan Ingersoll (empict multimedia) designs our programs, and has just completed a beautiful overhaul of our website. Chris Clark (Cave Dog Studio) designs our publicity materials and program covers. We are fortunate to work with two so talented, reliable, and patient graphic artists. We are equally blessed to have Doc Davis record so many of our concerts, both efficiently and beautifully.

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