



a MEDIEVAL ENGLISH CHRISTMAS  
& a BURGUNDIAN NEW YEAR  
& a FEW DAYS ON THE ISLAND OF CYPRUS

# a MEDIEVAL ENGLISH CHRISTMAS & a BURGUNDIAN NEW YEAR & a FEW DAYS ON THE ISLAND OF CYPRUS

## PROGRAM

### I. ADVENT

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Veni, veni, Emanuel

*Thirteenth century? / AC & men*

Conditor alme siderum

*Verses 1, 3, 5, chant*

*Verses 2, 4, 6, Guillaume Du Fay (c. 1397–1474) / MN JM MS*

O rex virtutum / Quis possit dignexprimere

*Anonymous, Cypriot MS (Turin, Biblioteca nazionale, J.II.9), c. 1413–22*

### II. ANNUNCIATION

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Angelus ad virginem

*Monophonic song, 13th-century French? (Arundel MS) / DT*

*Two-voice setting, 14th-century English (Cotton Fragments, 1349) / LK SS*

Hayl, Mary, ful of grace

*Trinity Roll (early 15th century)*

Nesciens mater

*Bytteryng (Old Hall MS, c. 1415) / PD AC GB*

Ther is no rose of swych vertu

*Trinity Roll / DT MS PG*

### III. CHRISTMAS

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Christe redemptor omnium

*Verses 1, 3, 5, 7, chant*

*Verses 2, 4, 6, Du Fay / MN JM AC*

Nowel syng we now al and sum

*Trinity Roll*

Nova vobis gaudia refero

*Nicolas Grenon (c. 1380–1456)*

## INTERMISSION

#### IV. SONGS FOR THE NEW YEAR

---

Ce jour de l'an qui mant doïst estrenier

*Baude Cordier (d. ?1397/8) / LK JM MS*

La merci, ma dame at Amours!

*Gilles de Bins, called Binchois (c. 1400–1460) / DT SS SM*

Je donne a tous les amoureux

*Du Fay / DT JM MS*

La plus belle et douce figure

*Grenon / LK MS SM*

Je requier a tous amoureux

*Du Fay / PD SS AC*

#### V. CHRISTMAS

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A solis ortus cardine

*Sarum chant*

Letabundus

*Du Fay*

Hodie puer nascitur / Homo mortali

*Anonymous, Cypriot MS, c. 1413–22*

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2007, AT 8 P.M.**

the shortest day of the year — sunrise in Boston: 7:10 a.m.; sunset: 4:15 p.m.

First Church in Cambridge, Congregational

### BLUE HERON

*Pamela Dellal*

*Lydia Heather Knutson*

*Martin Near*

*Daniela Tošić*

*Allen Combs*

*Jason McStoots*

*Steven Soph*

*Mark Sprinkle*

*Glenn Billingsley*

*Paul Guttry*

*Darrick Yee*

*Scott Metcalfe, director, vielle & harp*

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



# NOTES

Today we gather on the shortest day of the year to enjoy music first heard during the season of Advent, Christmas, and New Year's in the early decades of the fifteenth century. The great and wonderful paradox of the December solstice is that it marks at once the beginning of winter and the moment at which the sun begins to climb in the sky again. There may be months of snow and cold ahead, but we have arrived at the darkest day of the year, and from now on the lengthening days assure us that spring will return, and with it warmth and green leaves.

It's a season that inspires feelings of yearning and expectation, and prophetic moods. In Christendom, the weeks leading up to Christmas are given over to remembering the words of the Hebrew prophets and the hope they offered to the people of Israel: "A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots," said Isaiah; "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined"; "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 11:1, 9:2, and 7:14). Isaiah's words, interpreted as heralding the savior Christians recognize in Jesus, underly a series of antiphons sung one each day on the seven days before the eve of Christmas, December 17-23. Written no later than the eighth century, the so-called O antiphons address the Messiah to come in various attributes: O Sapientia (wisdom), O Adonai (Lord), O Radix Jesse (root of Jesse), O Clavis Davidica (key of David), O Oriens (the morning star), O Rex (king), O Emanuel ("God with us"). The initial letters of each text, after the O, spell out the promise in a reverse acrostic, SARCORE: "ero cras," "Tomorrow I shall be there." *Veni, veni, Emanuel* is a metrical version of five of the seven O antiphons, and *O rex virtutum* a highly troped and elaborated meditation on the antiphon for today, December 22, *O Rex gentium et desideratus earum*.

The Annunciation is logically 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. In the second set

on the concert we sample some of the rich repertoire of medieval carols, a uniquely English phenomenon in the fifteenth century. The deceptively simple form and melodies of these graceful strophic songs with a refrain are captivating at first hearing.

Europeans have long celebrated the season around the winter solstice with the ritual exchange of gifts and wishes for good luck and a prosperous new year. The custom in its present form coalesced around the Christian feast of Christmas only in the late nineteenth century, but its roots in western culture can be traced as far back as the ancient Near East. Romans of the imperial era marked the Kalends of January with a festival several days in length, during which the people offered tributary gifts called *strenae* to the emperor in exchange for presents of money. Medieval Europe absorbed the Roman New Year's festivities into its own calendar, modifying them somewhat according to the evolving sensibilities of the Christian church, and the tradition of giving presents at New Year's persisted despite the efforts of the church to suppress what it regarded as pagan beliefs in good luck omens and the efficacy of ceremonial gift exchange. In France, the Latin *strena* passed into the vulgar tongue as *estrange* (*estreine*, *étrenne*, etc.), retaining its meaning of "omen of good fortune" as well as "New Year's gift."

New Year's was celebrated with peculiar intensity at the courts of the nobles of Valois who ruled both France and Burgundy in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century, and members of the courts exchanged precious gifts in enormous quantity. Philip the Bold, duke of Burgundy from 1364 to 1404, disbursed an average of 6.5 percent of his annual budget on *estraines*, while his nephew and political enemy Louis d'Orléans spent no less than 19,000 *livres* at New Year's in 1404. (At the time a good horse or a finely ornamented harp might be had for around 50 *livres*, a house for a hundred or so.) Illuminated books, jewel-encrusted saltcellars, enamelled serving vessels, golden cups, reliquaries, pendants, brooches, rings, horses, dogs, hunting falcons: all changed hands in an ostentatious public ritual which honored the chivalric virtue of *largesse* (liberality, generosity), cemented social ties, established position within the courtly hierarchy, and allowed the rich and powerful to flaunt their wealth.

Just as it does today, all this flamboyant materialism also benefitted those further down the social ladder, the artisans and craftspeople who were employed to fashion the sumptuous *objets d'art* so prized by their noble commissioners. The makers of New Year's gifts included poets and musicians, and it is a small irony that while one single, superb little golden and bejeweled tabernacle is the only known *étrenne* aside from manuscripts to have survived—much of the rest having been melted down and sold off to finance the endless wars pursued by a bellicose and perpetually cash-strapped nobility—27 songs remain to us that commemorate the occasion; 10 of these are by Guillaume Du Fay. While we don't know the exact circumstances in which New Year's songs were written, we can imagine that a courtier would provide a composer with verses to set to music, and the song would then be presented to the courtier's lady love *en bonne estraine*, or perhaps performed at a public celebration. In exchange for his *strena* a courtier might hope to win the lady's amorous favor, while the musicians could expect a gift of money or household necessities.

In keeping with the conventions of chivalric love, these fifteenth-century New Year's songs are not boisterous, champagne-inspired toasts; most are marked with a graceful sort of melancholy, for the point of courtly love is that it can never be consummated, but only yearned and suffered for. Elegantly crafted and finely wrought, the songs' merit as gifts can be measured in part by their ingenuity, their "conceptual dexterity, [their] ability to flatter the recipient's wit" (in the words of Brigitte Buettner), qualities conveyed by the contemporary value of *estrangeté*.

The island of Cyprus may seem worlds away from the halls of England and the courts of northern France, but in the early fifteenth century it was ruled by a noble French family. Richard Coeur de Lion conquered the island in 1191 on his way to the Crusade; he sold it to the Knights Templars, who in turn gave it to Guy de Lusignan, recently deposed as king of Jerusalem. The Lusignan dominion on Cyprus lasted from 1192 until the Venetians took it in 1489; it was subsequently captured by the Ottomans in 1571. One single manuscript bears witness to a thriving musical and literary culture on Cyprus around the turn of the century. It may have been

compiled on Cyprus in the years 1413-22, or perhaps a decade or so later in Savoy, by musicians with a connection to Cyprus. In any case the repertory contained in it is clearly Cypriot in origin, for (among other clues) it opens with a newly-composed plainchant Office and Mass in honor of the island's Saint Hylarion. The entire repertory, including chant, polyphonic settings of the sections of Mass Ordinary, 41 motets, and 167 secular songs, is anonymous, and not one work is known to exist in any other manuscript.

Among the unusual treasures of this unique source is a cycle of nine isorhythmic motets. The first seven set texts inspired by the seven O antiphons, the eighth tropes an additional "O" text addressed to the Virgin and traditionally sung on Christmas Eve ("O virgo virginum"), and the final motet, for Christmas Day (*Hodie puer nascitur*, with which we conclude our concert), celebrates the birth of the Son. In these motets, the upper voices sing two texts simultaneously, making it all but impossible to understand the complicated thread of argument spun out by the philosophical and meditative verse. Significant words do nevertheless emerge from the texture of cross-rhythm, melisma, and hocket (a term, related to the English *hiccup*, describing a rapidfire back-and-forth exchange of single notes), notably the imploring "Veni," "come." Several lines from *Hodie puer nascitur* offer an apt analogy for the mystical mood of these motets, their complicated mathematical structure, and the way they contain a surfeit of meanings, more than one can apprehend just by listening, by reading, by studying, or by singing:

Thus two things created with a double  
nature produce one unique thing,  
with the multiple grace  
of the distinct parts;  
but the third and uncreated thing  
has made a [work]  
such as heaven's grace  
had not yet made.

The double natures of an isorhythmic motet include its bitextuality, its marriage of pitch and rhythm, its combination of several melodic lines into polyphony, or its subtle union of words and music. (For more on the technique of isorhythm, go to our website and read

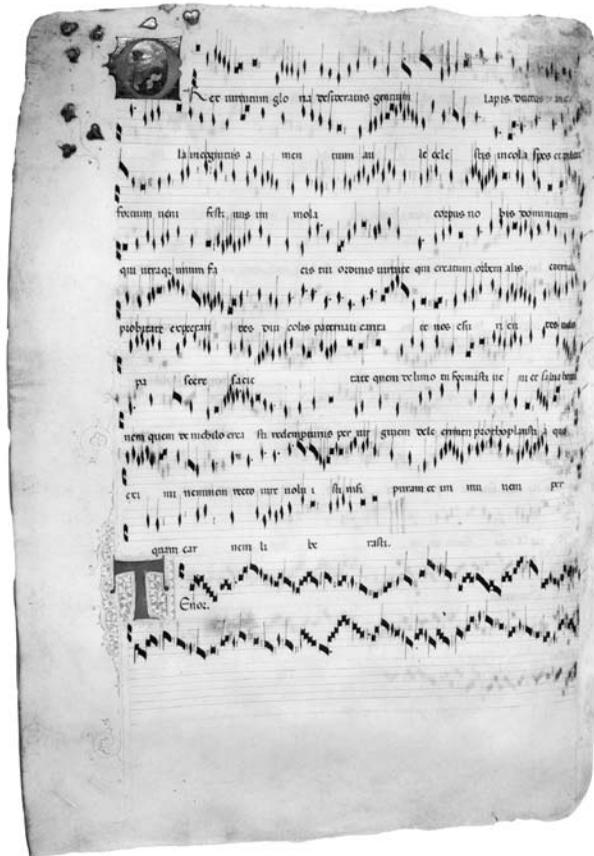
the notes for concerts in March and November 2006, or consult the notes accompanying our CD.)

Finally, a word on words. Our human nature, too, is double, containing both good and evil, and it is a bitter truth that some of the most joyous Christmas texts are marred by venomous barbs aimed at Jews and others regarded by Christianity as unbelievers; some of these were set to beautiful music. There is no single solution to this problem. Our choice is to emend the texts so that we can sing them wholeheartedly, and Richard Tarrant and Larry Rosenwald devised good solutions for *Nova*

*vobis gaudia* and *Letabundus*. As for the Middle English of the carols, we sing it as if it were modern English, our own mother tongue. We lose thereby the savor of the original pronunciation (insofar as we can know what that was), but gain immediacy in understanding and in communication between singer and listener. Again, no solution is perfect; for those who wish to enjoy the original texts, we have included them among the printed texts.

The happiest of holidays to one and all!

—Scott Metcalfe



# 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.

*Thirteenth century?*

## **Conditor alme siderum,**

eterna lux credentium,  
Christe, redemptor omnium,  
exaudi preces supplicum.

Qui condolens interitu  
mortis perire seculum,  
salvastu mundum languidum,  
donans reis remedium.

Vergente mundi vespere,  
uti sponsus de thalamo,  
egressus honestissima  
virginis matris clausula.

Cujus forti potentie  
genu curvantur omnia  
caelestia, terrestria  
nutu fatentur subdita.

Te deprecamur agie,  
venture iudex seculi,  
conserva nos in tempore  
hostis a telo perfidi.

Laus, honor, virtus, gloria  
Deo patri et filio,  
sancto simul paraclito,  
in seculorum secula. Amen.

*Advent hymn, seventh century*

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!  
Lead your people from the enemy's claws,  
from the pit of hell,  
and from the maw of the abyss.

Come, come, O Morning Star!  
Console us with your advent,  
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.

O bountiful creator of the stars,  
everlasting light of believers,  
O Christ, redeemer of us all,  
hear our humble prayers.

Suffering with us a worldly death,  
enduring death and earthly destruction,  
you saved the suffering world,  
bringing us healing for our sins.

As the world turned to evening,  
like a bridegroom from his chamber  
you came forth from the most pure  
cloister of a virgin mother.  
Before your mighty power  
all creatures kneel down,  
in heaven and on earth,  
all accept your command.

So we pray you,  
O judge of the world to come,  
preserve us when we face  
the enemy with treacherous arms.

Praise, honor, might, and glory  
to God the Father, the Son,  
and the Holy Spirit,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

TRIPLUM

**O Rex virtutum, gloria,**  
 desideratus gentium,  
 lapis ductus in angula,  
 incognitus amentium,  
 aule celestis incola,  
 spes et dilectus fortium,  
 veni, foctinus, immola  
 corpus nobis dominicum.

Qui utraque unum facis  
 tui ordinis virtute,  
 qui creatum orbem alis,  
 eternali probitate,  
 expectantes diu colis  
 paternali caritate,  
 nos esurientes velis  
 pascere sacietate.

Quem de limo tu formaſti,  
 veni et salva hominem  
 quem de nichilo creaſti,  
 redempturus per virginem;  
 dele crimen prothoplausti  
 a quo eximi neminem,  
 recto iure, voluiſti,  
 nisi puram et immunem  
 per quam carnem liberaſti.

DUPLUM

Quis possit dignexprimere  
 sacre rei misterium?  
 Qua via comprehendere  
 quis possit puerperium?  
 Ut se possit inserere  
 in almam matris alveum,  
 sine reatus scelere,  
 quo nobis datur vinculum?

Sine peccato originis,  
 nasciturus ex virgine,  
 veni, benignus premiis,  
 libera nos voragine,  
 tui terrore fulminis  
 infice, quos in flumine  
 Flegetontis inveneris,  
 desistat diro turbine.

Quos tu creaſti, redime,  
 qui sedemus in tenebris,  
 et nos sperantes suscipe,  
 purgemur a miseriis.

*Trope of O Rex gentium  
 (O antiphon for December 22)*

TRIPLUM

O king of all excellences, O glory,  
 desired of nations,  
 cornerstone,  
 unknown to the unknowing,  
 dweller in the heavenly court,  
 hope and delight of the bold:  
 come quickly, offer  
 your lordly body for us.

Of the two excellences of your ordering  
 you make one,  
 you nurture the created world  
 with your eternal righteousness,  
 with your fatherly love  
 you cherish those who have long awaited you,  
 you are willing to feed to satiety  
 all of us who hunger.

Come, save the human beings  
 you formed from dust,  
 created from nothing,  
 come to redeem them through the virgin;  
 do away with the crime of the first-made,  
 from which you in strict justice  
 ordained that none be exempt,  
 except that pure and perfect woman  
 through whom you freed all flesh.

DUPLUM

Who could fittingly express  
 the mystery of this sacred matter?  
 By what means could anyone  
 comprehend this childbearing,  
 how the one without stain of sin  
 could place himself  
 in the mother's kindly womb,  
 that womb by which the chain of sin is placed upon us?

Come then, to be born without original sin  
 from the virgin,  
 come, O kind bestower of gifts,  
 free us from the abyss,  
 from the terror of your thunderbolt;  
 let those you find  
 in the river Phlegethon  
 be spared its dreadful turbulence.

Redeem us, whom you have created,  
 who sit in darkness;  
 lift us up in our hope,  
 let us be freed of our misery.

*Translated by Larry Rosenwald.*

**Angelus ad Virginem** sub intrans in conclave,  
Virginis formidinem demulcens, inquit: —Ave!  
Ave Regina Virginum!  
Celi terreque Dominum  
concipies, et paries intacta  
salutem hominum;  
tu porta celi facta,  
medela criminum.

—Quomodo conciperem que virum non cognovi?  
Qualiter infringerem quod firma mente vovi?  
—Spiritus sancti gracia  
perficiet hec omnia.  
Ne timeas, sed gaudeas secura,  
quod castimonia  
manebit in te pura  
Dei potencia!

Ad hec Virgo nobilis respondens inquit ei:  
—Ancilla sum humilis omnipotentis Dei.  
Tibi, celesti nuncio  
tanti secreti conscio,  
consensiens et cupiens videre  
factum quod audio,  
parata sum parere  
Dei consilio.

Angelus disparuit et statim puellaris  
uterus intumuit vi partis salutaris.  
Qui, circumdatus utero  
novem mensium numero,  
hinc exiit et iniit conflictum  
affigens humero  
crucem, 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.

*Philip the Chancellor? (d. 1236)*

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, made the gateway of heaven,  
the cure for sin.

—How shall I conceive, since I know not a man?  
How shall I break what I have resolutely vowed?  
—The grace of the Holy Spirit  
shall perform all this.  
Fear not, but rejoice, confident  
that chastity  
will remain pure in you  
by the power of God.

At this, the noble Virgin, replying, said to him:  
—I am the humble servant of almighty God.  
To you, heavenly messenger,  
who know so great a secret,  
I give my assent and desire to see done  
what I hear  
and am ready to obey  
God's will.

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.

Translation from *The New Oxford Book of Carols*.

**Hayl, Mary, ful of grace,**  
*moder in virgynyte.*

The Holi Gosſte 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 Gosſpel 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.

**Nesciens mater** virgo virum, peperit sine dolore  
salvatore[m] seculorum.  
Ipsum regem angelorum sola virgo lactabat,  
ubera de celo plena.

The virgin mother, not knowing a man, gave birth  
without pain to the savior of the world.  
To that very king of the angels the virgin alone gave  
suck, her breasts filled by heaven.

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

For in this rose conteynynd was  
Heven and erthe in lytyl sſpace,  
*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.*

a wonderful thing

of the same form

Glory to God in the Highest!  
Let us rejoice.

**Christe redemptor omnium,**  
ex patre, patris unice,  
solus ante principium  
natus ineffabiliter.

Tu lumen, tu splendor patris,  
tu spes perennis omnium,

Christ, redeemer of all,  
only begotten son of the Father,  
before all things, from the Father  
you were ineffably born.

O you light and splendor of the Father,  
you endless hope of all,

intende quas fundunt preces  
tui per orbem famuli.  
Memento, salutis auctor,  
quod nostri quondam corporis,  
ex illibata virgine  
nascendo formam sumpseris.

Hic presens testatur dies,  
currens per anni circulum,  
quod solus a sede Patris  
mundi salus adveneris;

Hunc celum, terra, hunc mare,  
hunc omne quod in eis est,  
auctorem adventus tui,  
laudat exultans cantico.

Nos quoque, qui sancto tuo  
redempti sanguine sumus,  
ob diem natalis tui  
hymnum novum concinimus.

Gloria tibi Domine,  
qui natus es de Virgine,  
cum patre et sancto spiritu,  
in sempiterna secula. Amen.

*Christmas hymn*

***Nowel syng we now al and sum,***  
*for Rex Pacificus is cum.*

In Bedleem, in that fayr cete,  
a child was born of a maydn fre  
that xal a lord and prynce be,  
*a solis ortus cardine.*

Childryn were slayn ful greth plente,  
Jhesu, for the love of the;  
qwerfore here sowlys savyd be,  
*hostis Herodes impie.*

As sunne schynth thorw the glas,  
So Jhesu in his modyr was:  
the to serve now graunth us gras,  
*O lux beata Trinitas.*

Now God is comyn to wurchepyn us;  
now of Marye is born Jhesus;  
make we mery amongys us,  
*exultet celum laudibus.*

accept the prayers poured out  
to you by your worldly servants.

Remember, O author of salvation,  
how you once assumed our human form  
being born  
of an undefiled virgin.

Thus testifies the present day,  
cycling through the years:  
that you, sole salvation of the world,  
proceed from the Father's throne.

Whence heaven, earth, sea,  
and all that are in them  
laud the Author of your Advent  
with exultant song.

And we, who by your holy  
blood are redeemed,  
on this day of your birth  
sing a new hymn.

Glory be to you, Lord,  
who is born of a virgin,  
with the Father and the Holy Spirit,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

the King of Peace

from lands that see the sun arise

Herod, ungodly enemy

O light, blessed Trinity

let the heavens exult with praises

**Nova vobis gaudia refero:**

natus est rex virginis utero;  
dum prospero cursum considero,  
omnes de cetero talia dicite:

Noel, Noel!

Natus est rex, salvator seculi,  
reparator labentis populi  
quem tres reges laudant et parvuli  
necnon et emuli; O omnes, credite:

Noel, Noel!

Arthe Satham Eva seducitur,  
deducendo virum inducitur,  
ars fallitur, illabens labitur,  
dum partus sequitur                      Virginis inclite:

Noel, Noel!

Lux oritur, moritur vicium,  
pax oritur, tollitur odium;  
rex omnium per carnis pellium,  
confer remedium salutis perditte:

Noel, Noel! Amen.

*Strophe 2 emended by Larry Rosenwald.*

**Ce jour de l'an qui mant doit estre nier**

joieusement sa belle et douce amie,  
quant est de moy, je veul de ma partie  
mon cuer, mon corps entierement donner.

A ma dame, qui tant fait a loer,  
tout quant que j'ay plainnement li ottrie  
ce jour de l'an qui mant doit estre nier  
joieusement sa belle et douce amie.

Mon cuer me fait loialament amer  
a ce jour cy, et pour toute ma vye;  
soulas et ris, joie, chiere lye  
je puis trop bien si faire et donner.

Ce jour de l'an...

**La merci, ma dame et Amours!**

Mon coeur est ung peu de dolour  
Ostez, et de triste pensée.  
A ce premier jour de l'année  
Viengies suis davains de leurs tours.

Riviere de plaintes et plours  
J'estoient, mes si tous les jours  
Ilz font maintenant grand risée.  
La merci, ma dame et Amours!  
Mon coeur est ung peu de dolour  
Ostez, et de triste pensée.

Se ces deus eussent esté sours,  
En verité jeusse tous jours  
Mené vie desespérée,  
Mais Belacueil la grand meslée

I bring you news of great joy:  
a king is born of a virgin's womb;  
while I reflect upon this fortunate course,  
let all in conclusion sing thus:

Noel, Noel!

A king is born, the savior of the world,  
restorer of the fallen people,  
whom three kings praise, a child  
and yet a rival; Let everyone believe!

Noel, Noel!

Through Satan's wiles is Eve seduced;  
by leading, she pulls her husband down;  
her arts deceive; falling, she causes him to fall,  
yet birth to a glorious virgin follows:

Noel, Noel!

A light rises in the east, putting sin to death,  
peace arises, destroying hatred;  
O king of all, clothed in flesh,  
grant the remedy of salvation to the lost:

Noel, Noel! Amen.

This New Year's day, when each must give a gift  
joyfully to his fair and sweet love,  
as for me, I wish for my part  
to give my heart and body entirely.

To my lady, who is so worthy of praise,  
all that I have I bestow upon her  
this New Year's day, when each must give a gift  
joyfully to his fair and sweet love.

My heart compels me to love faithfully  
on this day, and for all of my life;  
mirth and laughter, joy and cheerfulness,  
are the gifts I may fittingly give to her.

This New Year's day...

Mercy, my lady and Love!  
My heart is somewhat relieved  
from grief and sad thoughts.  
On this first day of the year  
I am defended against their stratagems.

A river of laments and tears  
was I, but nowadays  
they always offer me a big smile.  
Mercy, my lady and Love!  
My heart is somewhat relieved  
from grief and sad thoughts.

If those two had remained unassailable,  
in truth, I would forever  
have led a desperate life,  
but Fair Welcome entered the great fray

Desfiſt et y vient au secours.  
La merchi, ma dame et Amours...

**Je donne a tous les amoureux**  
pour eſtrines une souſſye  
qui c'eſt an aiment ſans partie  
a garir leurs cuers dolereux.

Pis ont qu'a plure laboureux  
ne charatier qui ſe deſvye:  
Je donne a tous les amoureux  
pour eſtrines une souſſye.

Des liens de Dangier plantereux,  
de triſteſſe et de jalouſy  
ſeront gari, je ne doubt mye:  
c'eſt bien rayſon, ainſy m'aiſt Dieux.

Je donne a tous les amoureux...

**La plus belle et douce figure,**  
la plus noble, gente faiture,  
c'eſt ma chiere dame et meſtreſſe:  
bon an, bon jour, joye et liesſe  
li doinſt dieux, et bone aventure.

C'eſt tout mon bien, c'eſt ma d'eſſe,  
celle par qui ma douleur ceſſe,  
en qui je preing ma noreture,  
qui ſervir vueil ſans nul deſtreſſe  
de cuer tant que voglie me leſſe,  
n'en ce monde d'autre en ay cure.

Former la ſut dieux de nature,  
blans, blond, belle, tout par meſure,  
playsamment y jouta joſneſſe,  
largeſſe, honour, toute nobleſſe  
en fais, en diſ et en parleure.

La plus belle...

**Je requier a tous amoureux**  
qui jugent par leur courtoisie:  
ceux qui noſent pas dire "amye"  
ſont en amours ſi bien heureux.

A ce jour de l'an gracieux  
me treuve de celle partye.  
Je requier a tous amoureux  
qui jugent par leur courtoisie.

Mais vray Eſpoir, qui eſt ſongneux  
de moy garir ma maladie,  
me diſt que je ne me souſſye,  
que l'an a venir avray mieux.

Je requier a tous amoureux...

and comes to my rescue.  
Mercy, my lady and Love...

I give to all those in love,  
for their New Year's gift, a marigold,  
for it is by loving forever  
that their suffering hearts can be healed.

They have it worse than laborers when it rains,  
or a driver who goes off the road:  
I give to all those in love,  
for their New Year's gift, a marigold.

From the abundant snares of Danger,  
from grief and jealousy  
they will be saved, I do not doubt:  
it's only right, so help me God.

I give to all those in love...

The most beautiful and sweet figure,  
the nobleſt, moſt gracious form,  
is that of my dear lady and miſtreſſe:  
a good year, a good day, joy and happiness  
may God grant her, and good ſucceſſe.

She is all my good, ſhe is my goddeſſe,  
ſhe through whom my grief ceſſeſ,  
from whom I take ſuſtenance,  
whom I wiſh to ſerve without the leaſt diſtreſſe  
of heart, as much as ſhe will permit me,  
nor in this world do I have any other deſire.

God formed her naturally  
pale, blond, lovely, all in juſt meſure  
and pleaſingly, and he added youth,  
generoſity, honor, and every nobility  
of deed, word, and ſpeech.

The most beautiful...

I call upon all lovers  
to judge by their courtesie:  
those who dare not ſay "My love"  
are moſt fortunate in love.

On this gracious New Year's day  
I find myſelf one of that partye.  
I call upon all lovers  
to judge by their courtesie.

But True Hope, who is anxious  
to cure me of my malady,  
bids me not to worry,  
for in the year to come I will fare better.

I call upon all lovers...

*Translated by Christopher Page.*

**A solis ortus cardine**

et usque terrae limitem  
Christum canamus Principem,  
natum Maria virgine.

Beatus auctor seculi  
servile corpus induit  
ut, carne carnem liberans,  
ne perderet quos condidit.

Caeste parentis viscera  
celestis intrat gratia:  
venter puellae baiulat  
secreta, que non noverat.

Domus pudici pectoris  
templum repente fit Dei  
intacta nesciens virum,  
verbo concepit filium.

Enixa est puerpera  
quem Gabriel predixerat,  
quem matris alvo gestiens  
clausus Johannes senserat.

Gloria tibi, Domine,  
qui natus es de virgine,  
cum Patre et Sancto Spiritu,  
in sempiterna secula. Amen.

*Christmas hymn,  
Sarum rite / Coelius Sedelius (fl. c. 450)*

**Letabundus**

exsultet fidelis chorus:  
Alleluia.  
Regem regum  
intacte profudit thorus:  
res miranda.

Angelus consilii  
natus est de virgine,  
sol de stella,  
Sol occasum nesciens,  
stella semper rutilans,  
semper clara.

Sicut sidus radium,  
profert Virgo Filium,  
pari forma.  
Neque sidus radio,  
neque mater filio,  
fit corrupta.

Cedrus alta Libani  
conformatur hyssopo  
valle nostra;

From lands where the sun arises  
unto the ends of the earth,  
let us sing of Christ the Prince,  
born of the Virgin Mary.

The blessed creator of the world  
put on a servant's body,  
so that, liberating the flesh through becoming flesh,  
he would not lose what he had made.

The chaste mother's belly  
is filled with heavenly grace:  
the girl's womb bears  
secrets which she has not known.

The modest dwelling of her body  
becomes God's new temple;  
untouched, not knowing a man,  
through a word she conceived the Son.

By her birth pangs she bore  
the one whom Gabriel announced,  
whom John, hidden within his mother's womb,  
acknowledged by leaping joyfully.

Glory be to you, Lord,  
who is born of a virgin,  
with the Father and the Holy Spirit,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

Full of joy,  
let the chorus of the faithful exult:  
Alleluia.  
The King of Kings  
is brought forth from an intact womb,  
a thing of wonder.

The Angel of Counsel  
is born of a virgin,  
the sun from a star:  
A sun that knows no setting,  
a star ever shining,  
always bright.

As a star its ray,  
the Virgin produces her Son,  
alike in form.  
Neither the star by its ray,  
nor the mother by her son,  
is corrupted.

The tall cedar of Lebanon  
is formed by the low hyssop  
in our valley:

Verbum, mens altissimi,  
corporari passum est,  
carne sumpta.

Isaias cecinit,  
Synagoga meminit;  
Hec Scriptura definit  
Esse facta.  
Sic et nostris vatibus  
Nec non et gentilibus  
Sibyllinis versibus  
Hec predicta.

Nunc age propera  
Et Christum venera,  
Crede et nova et vetera.  
Quem docet litera  
Natum considera,  
Ipsam genuit puerpera.

*Christmas sequence (Strophes 5-6  
revised & translated by Richard Tarrant)*

#### TRIPLUM

**Hodie puer nascitur,**  
ante secula genitus,  
agnus tener depromitur,  
carne mortali conditus,  
matre intacta ducitur,  
luce quam fecit candidus,  
qui previdetur, colitur,  
quo non videtur splendens.

Splendor in nubem funditur,  
nec a sole divellitur,  
splendor in nube conditur,  
nec a nube minuitur,  
nubes eodem alitur,  
nec alimentum sumitur,  
nubes interdum palitur,  
nec ille splendor pungitur.

In carne verbum seritur  
unione fortissima,  
qua caro verbum creditur  
ratione firmissima,  
et verbum non deseritur  
a carne solidissima,  
nec unquam caro linquitur  
a luce potentissima,  
inesit qui splendor textitur  
alma cum semper anima.

the Word, the mind of the Highest,  
descended into a human body,  
having assumed flesh.

Isaiah sang of it,  
The Synagogue recalls it;  
Scripture reveals that it  
Has been fulfilled.  
Thus has this been foretold  
By our own prophets  
And those of the gentiles,  
In the Sibylline oracles.

Come now, make haste  
And worship the Christ,  
Believe both the new and the old [revelations];  
Whom the scripture proclaimed,  
Look upon at his birth:  
His mother has brought him forth.

A boy is born today,  
a boy begotten before all time;  
a tender lamb is brought forth,  
concealed in mortal flesh.  
He is drawn from a virgin mother,  
from the light which his brightness made,  
he who is foreseen and worshipped,  
he who is more radiant than any thing.

His light is diffused into a cloud  
and yet is not severed from the sun,  
the radiance is established within the cloud,  
and the cloud does not diminish it.  
By him the clouds are given food,  
yet no food is taken from them.  
For the moment he endures the cloud,  
nor is his radiance troubled.

The Word is woven in the flesh  
by the strongest of all unions;  
flesh is believed to be Word  
by the strongest of all reasons.  
And the Word is not abandoned  
by the solid flesh,  
nor is the flesh ever abandoned  
by the light of power;  
the indwelling radiance is woven  
within the ever-kindly soul.

DUPLUM

Homo mortalis, firmiter  
carni cum heret anima,  
humana passibiliter  
coniuncta sunt hec infima,  
duo creata duplici  
natura reddunt unicum,  
cum gratia multiplici  
seperandarum partium,  
sed increata tertia  
talem confecit hominem,  
qualem superna gratia  
ubi vis fecit neminem.

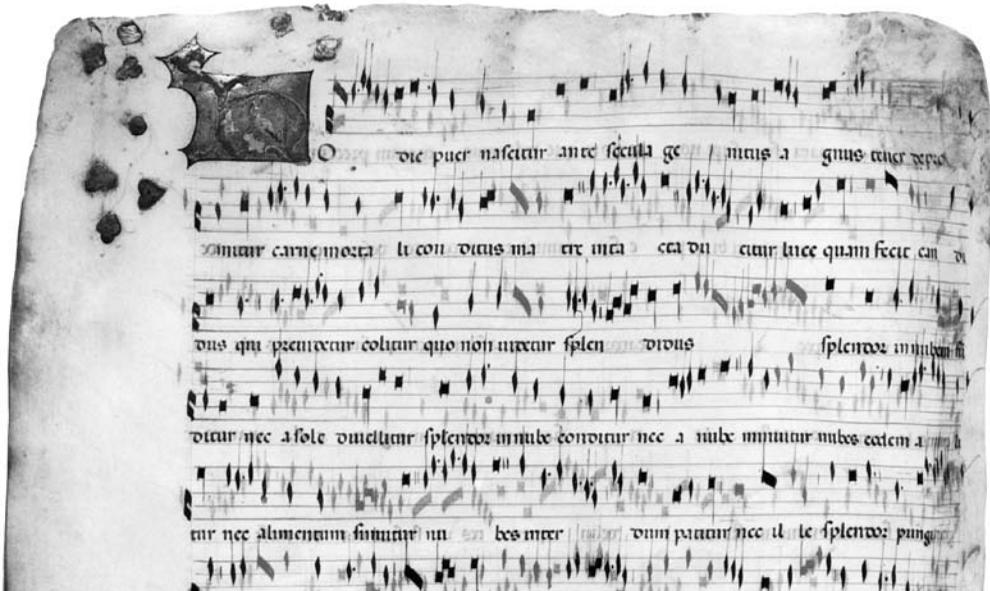
Nam splendor carni additus  
et anime, mirabilem,  
perpetuum divinitus,  
sibi assumpsit hominem.  
Ergo, si caro linquitur  
ab anima passibili,  
mortuus homo creditur  
tantum natura duplici.

Man is mortal because the soul  
is firmly linked to the flesh,  
and human traits undergo  
union with lower nature.  
Thus two things created with a double  
nature produce one unique thing,  
with the multiple grace  
of the distinct parts;  
but the third and uncreated thing  
has made a man  
such as heaven's grace  
had not yet made.

For splendor added to the flesh  
and to the soul has raised up  
a miraculous man,  
everlastingly divine.  
So then: if the flesh is abandoned  
by the passionate soul,  
then man is thought dead  
only by his double nature.

*Translated by Larry Rosenwald.*

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specified otherwise.



# 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.

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.

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 Dellal**, 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. Dellal 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.

Bass-baritone **Paul Guttry** enjoys a varied career including opera, oratorio, and chamber music. He recently played the Mother in Weill's *7 Deadly Sins* with Intermezzo and Balthasar in Schumann's *Genoveva* with Emmanuel Music. Paul has sung with the medieval music ensemble Sequentia and is a former member of Chanticleer. In Boston he has performed with Emmanuel Music, Handel & Haydn, the Boston Cecilia, Boston Revels, Prism Opera, and Collage New Music. Paul can be heard on BMG recordings of medieval music with Sequentia, Erato recordings of the Boston Camerata, and Koch International recordings of Bach with Emmanuel Music.

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, appealing 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 OperaProvidence; 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, Les Boréades, 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** began his professional singing career at age ten, advancing to Head Chorister at Saint Thomas’s Fifth Avenue in New York City. Mr. Near currently sings with Blue Heron, Vox Trinitati, Boston Secession, Amiable Consort, and with the choir of the Church of the Advent. He has appeared as guest soloist

with the Fromm Players at Harvard, Seraphim Singers, Boston Choral Ensemble, Exultemus, the Harvard-Radcliffe Chorus, Andover Choral Society, and NotaRiotous. Trained in composition at the New England Conservatory, Mr. Near was 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 received five performances in Boston, supported by a grant from the American Composers Forum Boston. An advocate of new music, Mr. Near has been a soloist in numerous world premieres, including *Temptation in the Desert* by Elliott Gyger, written for Mr. Near and Seraphim Singers, *On Prayer and Praying* by Rodney Lister, written for Mr. Near and organist Ross Wood, and *You Are There* by Johanna Malone, a microtonal piece in 72-note equal temperament.

Tenor **Steven Soph**, 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 Jephthe* with New Trinity Baroque in Atlanta, and in April of 2007 returned to Atlanta to record a Monteverdi program. In Boston he has performed repertoire ranging from the Renaissance to jazz, singing with Schola Cantorum 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.

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, Foundling, and La Donna Musicale, 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 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 Krokodiloes 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. Darrick appears on recent recordings of Philovox Ensemble, Boston Secession, and Blue Heron.

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Evan Ingersoll (empicT multimedia) designs our programs and 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.

We are honored and grateful to have so many generous donors. Blue Heron could not exist without you. Many, many thanks.

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