

Music from the  
Peterhouse  
partbooks



Tallis, Jones,  
Taverner & Aston

# Music from the Peterhouse partbooks Tallis, Jones, Taverner & Aston

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2008, AT 8 P.M.  
First Church in Cambridge, Congregational

## Program

### I

THOMAS TALLIS (C. 1505–1585)  
Ave rosa sine spinis

### II

ROBERT FAYRFAX (1464–1521)  
That was my woo / PD AS  
EDMUND TURGES (B. C. 1450)  
Alas it is I / MN MS PG

Three rounds

WILLIAM DAGGERE (?)  
Downbery down / JM MS AS  
DOCTOR COOPER (?)  
Alone I leffe alone / AC MS JM  
KEMPE (?)  
Hey now now / AS JM MS

WILLIAM CORNYSH (D. 1523)  
Adew mes amours et mon desyre / LB PD AS AC

### III

ROBERT JONES (FL. C. 1520–35)  
Magnificat

# intermission

## IV

JOHN TAVERNER (c. 1490–1545)  
Mater Christi sanctissima

## V

FAYRFAX

Most clere of colour / MN JM AC

CORNYSH

A the syghes / NB PD MS

ANONYMOUS

I am a joly foster / JM AC CB

ANONYMOUS

Madame d'amours / BW MN AS GB

## VI

HUGH ASTON (c. 1485–1558)  
Ave Maria ancilla trinitatis

# Blue Heron

Noël Bisson

Lydia Brotherton

Brenna Wells

Pamela Dellal

Martin Near

Allen Combs

Jason McStoots

Aaron Sheehan

Mark Sprinkle

Cameron Beauchamp

Glenn Billingsley

Paul Guttry

*Scott Metcalfe, director*

*Pre-concert talk by Christopher Martin, Boston University*

*We dedicate this concert to the memory of Mimi Sprinkle, mother of Mark,  
and a great fan and supporter of Blue Heron.*

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



# Sacred & secular song in England, c. 1500–1540

THE HISTORICAL RECORD permits us to imagine an abundance of musical activity taking place in England during the early Tudor period. Monastic singers devoted most of their time to plainchant, perhaps attempting polyphonic music on special occasions. Secular (i.e., non-monastic) cathedrals might be more ambitious in their musical undertakings, and at the colleges and collegiate churches (those not connected with a bishop) splendid polyphony may have been sung on an almost daily basis. Boy choristers received their musical education in schools attached to the colleges; some went on to earn advanced degrees at the universities in Cambridge and Oxford. We have some evidence of the diversions and amusements that entertained the court of Henry VIII, himself a modestly accomplished composer, and surely dancing and singing went on at all levels of society, although virtually everything of the music of the non-musically literate, those not trained in notation, has vanished without a trace.

Indeed, only a very small part of the written music of pre-Reformation England survives. The main extant sources comprise a mere three choirbooks, four sets of partbooks, and one organ manuscript. (Compare this paucity to, for example, the sixteen choirbooks owned by a single establishment, Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1524.) Much of the rest fell victim to the religious cataclysms that shook England in the sixteenth century and, following close on their heels, new disasters brought on by religious Civil War in the seventeenth. Upon the Protestant Reformation of 1547 all the elaborate polyphonic music of late medieval English Catholicism became at once obsolete. If a manuscript escaped deliberate destruction by zealots, it was subject to other indignities:

A greate nombre of them whych purchased those superstyusyouse mansyons [former monasteries], reserved of those librarye boke, some to serve their jakes [privies], some to scoure their candelstyckes, and some to rubbe their bootes. Some they solde to the grossers and sope-sellers.... Yea the unversyteees of thys realm are not all clere in this detestable fact.... I know a merchaunt man, whych shall at thys tyme be namelesse, that boughte the contentes of two noble lybraryes.... Thys stuffe hath he occupied in the stede of graye paper [wrapping-paper] for the space of more than these x yeares, and yet hath store ynough for as many yeares to come.

(Preface to *The labouryouse Journey & serche of Johann Leylande for England's Antiquities* (1549) quoted in Roger Bray, *The Blackwell history of music in Britain: The sixteenth century*, pp. 7–8.)

Of the very few musical sources that remain to us today, the largest is a set of partbooks from c. 1540–41, the Peterhouse partbooks (so called for their current home at Peterhouse College, Cambridge). The set of five partbooks was copied to meet a need that arose at one particular moment in the tumultuous history of the English church, when Henry VIII and his ministers had dissolved all eleven of the monastic cathedrals, refounding them in short order as secular institutions. Many of the New Foundation cathedrals were established with much larger and more ambitious new choral resources than their monastic predecessors; they thus found themselves wanting to acquire an extensive and up-to-date polyphonic repertory. Music printing had not yet arrived in England, so the only way in which a library might be stocked was to commission a scribe to copy material he had at hand. It seems that the authorities at the refounded Canterbury Cathedral hired a singer

at Magdalen College, Oxford, to copy from exemplars at Magdalen everything the new choir might require—Masses, Magnificats, and votive antiphons, all on the grandest scale—and bring them with him as he took up a new position at Canterbury.

The Peterhouse partbooks contain seventy-two works, including music by such luminaries as John Taverner and Thomas Tallis, lesser-known composers of the first rank such as Hugh Aston, and otherwise completely unknown figures such as Robert Jones and many others. Thirty-nine of the pieces are transmitted uniquely in Peterhouse, while another dozen or so are incomplete in their other sources. Unfortunately, although the partbooks almost beat the odds and escaped destruction intact, at some point the tenor partbook went missing, as well as a few pages of the treble book. The result is that some fifty pieces of music—a very large proportion of what we have from pre-Reformation England—now lack one of their original five parts, and some of these are also missing their treble. We are able to sing this music today thanks to the extraordinarily skilled and idiomatic reconstruction done by the English musicologist Nick Sandon. Professor Sandon completed his dissertation on the Peterhouse partbooks in 1983, including recompositions of most of the missing tenor lines; in the years since he has been refining his work and gradually issuing it in Antico Edition. All four of the sacred works on this program come from Sandon's editions of Peterhouse repertoire; his contribution ranges from transcription and edition (in the case of *Mater Christi sanctissima*, which survives complete in another source), to composition of a few bars of the treble part (*Ave rosa sine spinis*), to supplying the complete treble

part (to Robert Jones's Magnificat), to composing both treble and tenor parts, fully two-fifths of the musical texture (*Ave Maria ancilla trinitatis*).

We open with a work by the youngest composer on the program, Thomas Tallis. The earliest references we have to Tallis find him occupying minor positions in smaller churches in the 1530s, but in the summer of 1540 he was listed first among twelve vicars-choral at the refounded Canterbury Cathedral. Sandon suggests that *Ave rosa sine spinis* may have been brought to Canterbury and given to the copyist of the partbooks by Tallis himself, along with the *Missa Salve intemerata*, likewise unique to Peterhouse. An exuberant, virtuosic, and somewhat craggy work, *Ave rosa sine spinis* perhaps shows the young composer writing for the first time for a truly first-rate choral ensemble, and it displays the hallmarks of late-medieval English polyphony that we shall hear in other Peterhouse repertoire: a constantly shifting texture of duos, trios, and quartets building towards sections for the full five parts; extraordinarily long melismas; imitation used in passing, not as a structural device; and a finely-wrought sense of large-scale development leading to a satisfyingly dramatic conclusion.

About Robert Jones we know virtually nothing but for the fact that he was a Gentleman of the Royal Household Chapel by 1520 and until at least 1533/4. Two works by Jones survive, both only in the Peterhouse partbooks, the *Missa Spes nostra* and the Magnificat we perform today. The Magnificat is built on a tenor cantus firmus: not a plainchant Magnificat tone itself, but a countermelody to it called a faburden, a peculiarly English phenomenon. A conspicuous feature of this particular

faburden is that the first half of the tune starts on C and ends on A, and the second starts on C and ends on G. Jones follows the harmonic implications of his cantus firmus in each verse of his polyphonic setting, with the result that the first half of each verse tends to accumulate tension, while the second tends to dissipate it. In the tenth verse (“Sicut locutus est”) Jones heightens the effect of the medial cadence with a striking and archaic double leading tone.

Like Tallis, John Taverner (of Boston, Lincolnshire) is one of the big names of the sixteenth century. Aside from a few years at the glamorous but short-lived Cardinal College, Oxford, however (the college was taken over by Henry when its founder, Cardinal Wolsey, fell into royal disfavor, and eventually became Christ Church College), he worked outside the prestigious centers of music-making and spent the last fifteen years of his life back in Boston. The votive antiphon *Mater Christi sanctissima*, relatively short by Peterhouse standards, packs considerable event into its few measures. Throughout the piece B-natural alternates with B-flat, an ambivalence built into the signatures of the parts (no flats for the top four parts, B-flat in the bass). The compact concluding Amen is signalled by a marvellous turn from dark G minor harmonies to radiant G major. The antiphon later served as the basis for Taverner’s *Missa mater Christi*, also copied in the Peterhouse partbooks.

The last work on the program is by Hugh Aston, a favorite composer of Blue Heron’s since we sang his *Ave Maria dive matris Anne* on our very first concert in October 1999. *Ave Maria ancilla trinitatis* is another splendid Marian antiphon, its repeated “Ave Marias” finally spilling over into one of the

most luxuriantly extended melismatic Amens imaginable, more than one-tenth the length of the entire work.

If we have very few early Tudor sources of sacred polyphony, the situation for secular song is even more dire, for a mere three manuscripts transmit virtually all that we know of the repertory, fewer than 150 songs. The *Fayrfax MS* (so called for the arms of the composer Robert Fayrfax on the title page and the several works ascribed to him therein) contains music mostly by composers at the court of Henry VII and dates from c. 1505. We sample two serious songs by Fayrfax, *That was my woo* and *Most clere of colour*, and one by Edmund Turges (or Fayrfax, for it is also ascribed to him), *Alas, it is I*. The remaining songs on the program come from *Henry VIII’s MS* of c. 1510–20, which, although not actually owned by the king, contains 34 pieces ascribed to him and seems to represent a courtly repertory, lighter in tone than that of the *Fayrfax MS*, from the early years of Henry’s reign. It cannot be said that Henry’s are the best works in the volume, and we have chosen instead two songs by William Cornysh, a handful of elaborate and frankly rather odd rounds by characters named Daggere, Cooper, and Kempe, a rollicking and mildly obscene “foſter” (“foreſter”) song, and the lovely, anonymous *Madame d’amours*.

—Scott Metcalfe

## Texts & Translations

**Ave rosa sine spinis,**  
tu quam pater in divinis  
majestate sublimavit  
et ab omni ve purgavit.

Maria, stella dicta maris,  
tuo nato illustraris  
luce clara deitatis  
qua prefulges cunctis datis.

Gratia plena te perfecit  
spiritus sanctus dum te fecit  
vas divine bonitatis  
et totius pietatis.

Dominus tecum miro pacto  
verbo vite carne facto  
opere trini conditoris:  
O quam dulce vas amoris.

Benedicta tu in mulieribus:  
hoc testatur omnis tribus.  
Celi fantur te beatam  
super omnes exaltatam.

Et benedictus fructus ventris tui  
quo nos dona semper frui  
per pregestum hic internum  
et post mortem in eternum.

Hunc virgo salutis sensum  
tue laudis gratum pensum  
corde tuo sinu pia  
clemens sume, O Maria. Amen.

*Trope of "Ave Maria gratia plena"*

**That was my woo** is nowe my most gladness;  
That was my payne is nowe my joyus chaunce;  
That was my feere is nowe my sykyrness;  
That was my grefe is now my alegeaunce.  
Thus hath now grace enrychyd my plesaunce,  
Wherfor I am and shal be tyll I dye  
Your trewe servant with thought, hart and body.

Hail, rose without thorns,  
whom the father set on high  
in divine majesty  
and made free from all sorrow.

Mary, called star of the sea,  
by your son you are made resplendent  
with the bright light of divinity,  
through which you shine with every virtue.

Full of grace the holy spirit filled you  
while it made you  
the vessel of divine goodness  
and total obedience.

The Lord is with you in a wondrous way,  
the word of life made flesh  
by the deed of the triune creator:  
Oh, how sweet a vessel of love!

Blessed are you among women:  
this is declared to all nations.  
The heavens acknowledge you to be blessed  
and exalted above all.

And blessed is the fruit of your womb,  
a gift for us always to enjoy here  
as an inner foretaste,  
and after death in perpetuity.

Receive this perception of salvation,  
the grateful object of your prayers,  
into the holy refuge of your heart,  
O merciful virgin Mary. Amen.

That was *That which was*  
sykyrness *security*

**Alas, it is I** that wote nott what to say,  
For why I stond as he that is abusyd;  
Ther as I trusted I was late cast away,  
And no cause gevyn to be so refusyd;  
But pite it is that trust shulde be mysusyd  
Other by colour or by fals semblaunce;  
Wher that is usyd can be no surance.

wote *know*  
For why *For the reason that*

Other by colour or *Either by fair seeming, or*  
surance: *confidence*

**Downbery down!**

Now am I exild my lady fro  
And no cause gevyn therto:  
Wherfor to her I me complayn, hey now!  
Trustyng that dysdayn  
Sone shal be slayne  
And never more to remayne.

**Alone I leffe, alone,**  
And sore I sigh for one.

leffe *live*

**Hey now now!**

Myrie a tyme I telle in May,  
Wan brichte blosmen brekes on tre,  
Theise foules singes nyt ant day;  
In ilche grene is gamen an gle.

brichte *bright*

ilche *every / gamen an gle amusement and sport*

*Text supplied from Pembroke, Cambridge MS 258  
by the modern editor, John Stevens*

**Adew mes amours et mon desyre,**  
je vous depraunce de part amant;  
et sy je vous a fayt deplesure,  
sy na pas saunce commandamant.

Farewell my love and my desire,  
I pray you to depart a friend;  
and if I have displeased you,  
it was not without being forced to.

Pardon a moy tres humblement,  
je le demand;  
Ja my mon cure a servys loyalmant:  
Elas! je bien perdieu ma payne.

Pardon me, most humbly  
I beseech you;  
I set my heart to faithful service:  
Alas! I have quite wasted the effort.

**Magnificat** anima mea dominum,  
et exultavit spiritus meus in deo salutari meo.

Quia respexit humilitatem ancille sue: ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.

Quia fecit michi magna qui potens est,  
et sanctum nomen ejus.

Et misericordia ejus a progenie in progenies  
timentibus eum.

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo:  
dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.

Deposuit potentes de sede  
et exaltavit humiles.

Esurientes implevit bonis,  
et divites dimisit inanes.

Suscepit Israel puerum suum,  
recordatus misericordie sue.

Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros,  
Abraham et semini ejus in secula.

Gloria patri et filio et spiritui sancto.

Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper:  
et in secula seculorum. Amen.

My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit has rejoiced in God my savior.

For he has regarded the lowliness of his  
handmaiden: behold, henceforth all generations  
shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty has made me great,  
and holy is his name.

And his mercy from generation to generation  
is on them that fear him.

He has shown strength with his arm: he has  
scattered the proud in the imagination of their  
hearts.

He has put down the mighty from their seat  
and exalted the humble.

The hungry he has filled with good things,  
and the rich he has sent empty away.

He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy.

As it was promised to our forefathers,  
to Abraham and his seed forever.

Glory be to the Father, and the Son,  
and the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and forever  
shall be, world without end. Amen.

**Mater Christi sanctissima**, virgo sacrata Maria,  
tuis orationibus benignum redde filium,  
unica spes nostra Maria, nam precibus  
nitentes tuis rogare audemus filium.

Ergo, fili, decus patris, Jesu, fons fecundissime  
a quo vive fluunt aque rigantes fida pectora,  
O Jesu, vitalis cibus te pure manducantibus,  
salutari potu et cibo paviſti nostra corpora.

Tua pasce animam gratia; tibi consecratos  
spiritu tuo fove munere.

Quin et nostras, Jesu bone, mentes illustra  
gratia, et nos pie fac vivere, ut dulci ambrosia  
tuo vescamur in palation. Amen.

O most holy mother of Christ, consecrated virgin  
Mary, make the son merciful through your  
prayers, O Mary, our only hope, for relying  
upon your prayers we dare to solicit the Son.

Therefore, O Son, jewel of the Father, Jesus, most  
abundant spring whence flow living waters  
refreshing faithful hearts, O Jesus, life-giving  
nourishment to those who chaste consume you,  
you have nourished our bodies with the draught  
and food of salvation.

Nourish the soul with your grace; nurture with  
your gift those dedicated to you in spirit.

Furthermore, O good Jesus, illuminate our minds  
with grace and make us live virtuously, so that  
we may feed upon sweet ambrosia in your  
palace. Amen.

**Most clere of colour** and rote of stedfastness,  
With vertu connyng her maner is lede,  
Which that passyth my mynde for to express  
Of her bounte, beaute and womanhode;  
The bryghtest myrrour and flour of goodlyhed,  
Which that all men knowith, both more and less;  
Thes vertues byn pryntyd in her doutless.

colour *outward appearance* / rote *root*  
connyng *learned*

bounte *virtue*

**A the syghes** that cum from my hart,  
They greve me passyng sore;  
Sens ye must nedes from me depart,  
Farewell, my joy, for evermore.

Oft to me her godely swet face  
Was wont to cast an nye;  
And now absence to be in place,  
Alas, for wo I dye, I dye.

nye *eye*  
in place *instead*

I was wont her to behold,  
And take in armys twain;  
And now with syghs manyfold,  
Farewell, my joe, and welcom payne.

joe *joy*

And I thynk I se her yet,  
As wol to God I cowld,  
Ther myght no joys compare with it,  
Unto my hart as now she shuld.

**I am a joly foster**  
And have ben many a day,  
And foster will I be styll  
For shote ryght well I may.

foster *forester*

Wherfore shuld I hang up my bow  
Upon the grenwod bough?  
I cane bend and draw a bow  
And shot well enough:  
I am a joly foster.

Wherfor shuld I hang up myne arrow  
Upon the grenwode lynde?  
I have strength to mak it fle  
And kyll both hart and hynd:  
I am a joly foster.

*lynde tree*

Wherfor shuld I hang up my horne  
Upon the grenwod tre?  
I can blow the deth of a dere  
As well as any that ever I see:  
I am a joly foster.

Wherfor shuld I tye up my hownd  
Upon the grenwod spray?  
I can luge and make a sute  
As well as any in May:  
I am a joly foster.

*luge throw something so that it lodges / sute pursuit*

**Madame d'amours,**

All tymes or ours  
From dole dolours  
Ower Lord yow gy;  
In all socours  
Unto my pours  
To be as yours  
Untyll I dye.

*ours hours*

*gy guide  
socours helps  
unto my pours to my utmost*

And make you sure  
No creatur  
Shall me solur  
Nor yet retayne;  
But to endure  
Ye may be sure,  
Whyls lyf endur,  
Loyall and playne.

*solur solace?*

**Ave Maria, ancilla trinitatis** humillima.  
Ave Maria, preelecta dei patris filia  
sublimissima.  
Ave Maria, sponsa spiritus sancti amabilissima  
Ave Maria, mater domini nostri Jesu Christi  
dignissima.  
Ave Maria, soror angelorum pulcherrima  
Ave Maria, promissa prophetarum  
desideratissima.  
Ave Maria, regina patriarcharum gloriosissima  
Ave Maria, magistra evangelistarum  
veracissima.  
Ave Maria, doctrix apostolorum sapientissima  
Ave Maria, confortatrix martyrum validissima.  
Ave Maria, fons et plenitudo confessorum  
suavissima.  
Ave Maria, honor et festivitas virginum  
jocundissima.  
Ave Maria, consolatrix vivorum et mortuorum  
promptissima.  
Mecum sis in omnibus tribulationibus et  
angustiis meis materna pietate, et in hora  
mortis mee suscipe animam meam et offer  
illam dulcissimo filio tuo Jesu, cum omnibus  
qui se nostris commendaverunt orationibus.  
Amen.

Hail, Mary, most humble handmaid of the Trinity  
Hail, Mary, most exalted chosen daughter of God  
the Father.  
Hail, Mary, most loving bride of the Holy Spirit.  
Hail, Mary, most worthy mother of our Lord Jesus  
Christ.  
Hail, Mary, most comely sister of the angels.  
Hail, Mary, most longed-for promise of the  
prophets.  
Hail, Mary, most glorious queen of the patriarchs.  
Hail, Mary, most truthful instructress of the  
evangelists.  
Hail, Mary, most wise teacher of the apostles.  
Hail, Mary, most potent comforter of martyrs.  
Hail, Mary, sweetest fount and source of plenty  
for confessors.  
Hail, Mary, most joyful reward and object of  
celebration for virgins.  
Hail, Mary, most ready consoler of living and  
dead.  
Be with me as a dutiful mother in all my troubles  
and perils, and in the hour of my death receive  
my soul and offer it to thy most sweet son  
Jesus, together with all who have commended  
themselves to our prayers.  
Amen.

Translations from Latin by Nick Sandon

# 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 1500 and 1600; 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. In July 2008 it made its West Coast debut as a guest of the Festival Mozaic (formerly the Mozart Festival) in San Luis Obispo, California. Blue Heron's first CD, featuring music by Guillaume Du Fay, was released in March of 2007.

**Cameron Beauchamp**, bass, is in demand throughout the country as a soloist and chamber musician. In Boston, Cameron is a member of Blue Heron, Exsultemus, Cut Circle, Schola Cantorum, Boston Secession, and the choir of the Church of the Advent. He also sings with Austin's Conspirare, Miami's Seraphic Fire, Atlanta's New Trinity Baroque, and the Santa Fe Desert Chorale. A native of San Antonio and ten-year resident of the

DFW area, Cameron frequently performed with the Dallas Bach Society, Texas Camerata, Orpheus Chamber Singers, Texas Choral Artists, the Helios Ensemble, and the Orchestra of New Spain, and was a regular soloist for the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. He received his musical training from the University of North Texas, where he doubled in voice and jazz trombone. While at UNT, Cameron sang at two national ACDA conventions with the A Cappella choir, and won a prestigious Downbeat award with one of the university's world famous jazz ensembles. Cameron has participated in recording projects for numerous record labels, including Harmonia Mundi, Edition Lilac, Pro Organo, Klavier, and GIA. He has also performed for BBC Radio, WGBH Boston, and WRR Classical Radio of Dallas. With Conspirare he will perform on a future television project for PBS.

Baritone **Glenn Billingsley** made his debut with the New York City Opera National Company. He has sung with the Santa Fe, Chautauqua, and Lake George Opera companies, appeared in the Spoleto and Madeira Bach Festivals, toured most of the western hemisphere with the Waverly Consort, and done significant solo work in New York with Musica Sacra, the Ensemble for Early Music, the Bach Aria Group, Johannes Somary's Amor Artis Chorale, and others, and with numerous choral organizations in Boston. A longtime member of the Choir of the Church of the Advent, he has been a part of Blue Heron since its inception. 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. Earlier this year Glenn joined the Boston Early Music Festival as its first Director of Development.

**Noël Bisson**, soprano and co-founder of Blue Heron, has sung with many groups across the country and locally, including the Choir of the Church of the Advent, the Boston Camerata, Woodley Consort in Washington, D.C., and Ensemble Mi contra Fa in Los Angeles. She is featured as soloist with the Woodman Consort of Viols in a recording of sacred and secular works of Gombert, directed by Peter Urquhart, recently released by Naxos. In addition to her work in early music, Noël has recorded several works by twentieth-century composers, including the boy soprano part in George Crumb's *Ancient Voices of Children* on a Grammy-nominated recording with the Philadelphia-based Orchestra 2001. She holds 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 the Reformation. She has taught as a lecturer in music at Harvard and at Colgate University. Noël is Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education at Harvard University.

**Lydia Brotherton**, soprano, received her B.A. in music with honors from Brown University, and her honors thesis was published as a winner of the prestigious University Prize. Now residing in the Boston area, Ms. Brotherton is working towards an M.Mus. in Historical Performance from Boston University. She has sung under Martin Pearlman in performances of Bach's *Wedding Cantata* and in the title role of Eccles's rarely heard opera *Semele*, and performed with Blue Heron, the Boston Camerata, Sprezzatura, and Exsultemus. Ms. Brotherton recently toured Australia and New Zealand with the Boston Camerata and the Tero Saarinen Dance Company in *Borrowed Light*, for which her part was praised as being "familiar yet fresh, exquisitely sung" (*Dominion Post, NZ*).

Upcoming engagements include performances at the Connecticut Early Music Festival and roles in the Boston Early Music Festival Chamber Opera productions of Blow's *Venus & Adonis* and Charpentier's *Actéon*.

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 the variety of opera, oratorio, and a specialization in early music. A former member of Chanticleer, Paul has performed throughout the USA and internationally with Sequentia, the Boston Camerata, and New York's Ensemble for Early Music. He has appeared in concert and opera with the Seattle Early Music Guild, St. Paul's Ex Machina, the Plymouth Music Series in Minneapolis, the Austin-based choir Conspirare, and the Santa Fe Pro Musica. In Boston he has appeared as soloist with Emmanuel Music, the Handel & Haydn Society, the Boston Early Music Festival, the Tanglewood Music Center, Cantata Singers, Boston Cecilia, Prism Opera, Intermezzo, Boston Revels, and Collage. In November, with Sequentia, he will be part of the "opening act" for the Boston Symphony's performance of Carl Orff's well-known work for orchestra and chorus, singing excerpts from the medieval *Carmina Burana* manuscript. Paul can be heard on recordings of medieval music by Sequentia, Kurt Weill's *Johnny Johnson* and French *airs de cour* with the Boston Camerata, and on recordings of Bach by Emmanuel Music.

**Jason McStoots** has performed throughout the US in the genres of opera, oratorio, recital, and musical theater, and has been described by critics as "a natural, a believable actor and a first-rate singer" and as having "a silken tenor voice" and "sweet, appealing tone." He has performed with numerous organizations including Boston Lyric Opera, The Early Music Guild of Seattle, Handel Choir of Baltimore, New Haven Symphony Orchestra, Emmanuel Music, Granite State Opera, OperaProvidence, Tragicomedia, Blue Heron, and the Boston Early Music Festival, and has long standing relationships with Intermezzo: The New England Chamber Opera Series and the Florestan Recital

Project. Particularly noted for his interpretations of new or modern music and music of the baroque era, he is both a champion of living composers' works and frequent interpreter of the works of J.S. Bach, performing regularly as a part of the weekly cantata cycle at Emmanuel Music, where he was honored to be the Lorraine Hunt-Lieberson Fellow for 2007–08. McStoots is a member of the voice faculty at Brandeis University and the Walnut Hill School.

**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. He appears on recordings on harmonia mundi, ATMA, Dorian, Wildboar, and elsewhere. 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 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. This year he is a Lecturer in choral repertoire and performance practice at Boston University.

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. He 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, Exsultemus, 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. He 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. Future projects include a debut as record producer for a recording of sacred music by Josquin des Prez and Marbrianus de Orto with the vocal ensemble Cut Circle, for release in 2009.

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. Among his recent engagements are 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 the Boston Early Music Festival in June 2007; this November he will appear in BEMF's concert productions of Blow's *Venus and Adonis* and Charpentier's *Actéon*. Aaron

teaches voice at Wellesley College and Brown University.

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. Upcoming performances include solo appearances with the Handel & Haydn Society in Bach's cantatas 191 and 151 and Magnificat in Jordan Hall, Boston. An active Bach Passion Evangelist, Mark appeared in 2007 with Chorus Pro Musica as Evangelist in the St. John Passion in Boston, and in 2008 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 on the music faculty of Boston College. In addition to singing and teaching, he is an American Canoeing Association Open Water Sea Kayaking Instructor and a Registered Maine Guide. He lives in Freeport, Maine.

Soprano **Brenna Wells** has been praised by the *New York Times* for her "star turn" as a soloist. She has sung with such acclaimed ensembles as the Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra, Vox Consort, Seraphic Fire, Britten-Pears Baroque Orchestra, Apollo's Fire, Boston Baroque, Opera Boston, and the Handel & Haydn Society. In 2005 she made her Carnegie Weill Hall debut as a winner of the International Chamber Music Ensemble Competition, and recently she returned to Carnegie Hall under the baton of Ton Koopman. Ms. Wells has participated in many festivals and programs, including Songfest, the Vermont Art Song Festival, the London Handel Festival,

the Aldeburgh Festival, the Amherst Early Music Festival, Accademia D'Amore, the Parley of Instruments' Handel in Italy program, and the BBC Proms in London. She was recently selected as one of two singers to perform in the Egida Sartori and Laura Alvini Early Music Seminars in Venice. Recent operatic roles include Galatea in *Acis and Galatea*, La Poesie and La Paix in *Les Arts Florissants*, Venus in *L'Europe Galante*, the Sandman in *Hansel and Gretel*, and the lead role of the Christian Woman in the world premiere of the opera *The Prioress's Tale*, a role she will reprise for a touring production in 2008–09.



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Thanks to the Cambridge Society for Early Music for a grant supporting this season's pre-concert talks. Visit Blue Heron's website for our podcast series featuring pre-concert talks and concert performances.

Evan Ingersoll (empict multimedia) designs our programs and our website, Chris Clark (Cave Dog Studio) designs our publicity materials and program covers, and Philip Davis records our concerts.

Special thanks to our devoted volunteers, for their help this evening and throughout the year.

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



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