

# CHRISTMAS IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

Saturday, December 19, 2009 at 8 pm  
First Church in Cambridge, Congregational

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## I. ADVENT

Veni, veni, Emanuel | AC & men  
*hymn, 13th-century French?*

## II. ANNUNCIATION

Angelus ad virginem | DT BPE  
*13th-century monophonic song, Arundel MS / text by Philippe the Chancellor? (d. 1236)*

Gabriel fram Heven-King | PD SS BPE  
*Cotton fragments (14th century)*

Gaude virgo salutata / Gaude virgo singularis  
*isorhythmic motet for Annunciation*  
*John Dunstaple (d. 1453)*

Hayl, Mary, ful of grace  
*Trinity roll (early 15th century)*

Gloria (Old Hall MS, no. 21) | JM MS SS GB PG  
*Leonel Power (d. 1445)*

Ther is no rose of swych vertu | DT MB PG BPE  
*Trinity roll*

Ibo michi ad montem mirre | GP JM MS  
*Power*

## III. CHRISTMAS EVE

Veni redemptor gencium  
*hymn for first Vespers of the Nativity on Christmas Eve, Sarum plainchant*  
*text by St Ambrose (c. 340-97)*

## INTERMISSION

#### IV. CHRISTMAS

Dominus dixit ad me

*Introit for the Mass at Cock-Crow on Christmas Day, Sarum plainchant*

Nowel: Owt of your slepe aryse | DT PD GP

*Selden MS (15th century)*

Gloria (Old Hall MS, no. 27) | MN GP PD / JM SS / MB MS

*Pycard (?fl. 1410-20)*

Ecce, quod natura | PD SS MB BPE

*Selden MS*

Missa Veterem hominem: Sanctus

*anonymous English, c. 1440*

Ave rex angelorum | MN MB AC

*Egerton MS (15th century)*

Missa Veterem hominem: Agnus dei

Nowel syng we bothe al and som

*Trinity roll*

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Barbara Poeschl-Edrich, *Gothic harp*

Scott Metcalfe, *director*

Pre-concert talk by Daniel Donoghue,  
Professor of English, Harvard University  
*sponsored by the Cambridge Society for Early Music*



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# CHRISTMAS IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

The medieval commemoration of Christ's nativity began with the preparatory and penitential season of Advent, which consists of the four Sundays preceding Christmas Day. After Christmas itself came a series of saints' days, including those of St Stephen, St John the Apostle, and St Thomas of Canterbury, and ritual observances reached another climax on the feast of the Circumcision on January 1, the Octave or eighth day of Christmas, the traditional first day of the New Year and, until the thirteenth century, also the feast day of the Virgin Mary. Celebrations continued through Epiphany on January 6, marking the revelation to the Gentiles and the Adoration of the Magi, and its Octave, and extended to Candlemas (February 2, forty days from Christmas), the feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple. The latter was also celebrated with special devotion in the Middle Ages as the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin.

Throughout the Christmas season the official liturgy of the Church was embellished and expanded with tropes both textual and musical, adding color and ceremony to the festivities while establishing a closer connection between the universality of fixed ritual and the particularity of a specific sanctuary or congregation. Textual tropes include substitutes for items such as antiphons and versicles, or for parts of the Ordinary of the Mass; in England a troped Kyrie was the rule for all major feasts. A polyphonic setting of an item from the Ordinary such as the Gloria or Sanctus might be considered a purely musical trope, replacing a plainchant. Fifteenth-century England evolved its own unique repertoire of texts and music outside or alongside the liturgy: the carols, of which some 130 survive, many for Christmas. Carols are found mostly in manuscripts of church music and were clearly the province of professional musicians and learned clerics, as witness their sophisticated musical notation and frequent use of Latin alongside the vernacular, but if not exactly popular music in our sense, they were at least popular in character—cast in strophic form and set to simple and highly memorable tunes—and

“popular in destination” (in the words of the preeminent twentieth-century student of their texts, R. L. Greene); that is, they provided for the entertainment and edification of educated cleric and uneducated congregant alike, within, around, and outside of the liturgy, for processions and banquets and celebrations of all kind.

This evening's concert offers a small selection of music for the Christmas season that might have been heard in England in the 1440s, when the most modern of the works on the program was composed. We begin with the familiar Advent hymn *Veni, veni, Emanuel*. Probably French in origin, the hymn could have made its way to England as early as the thirteenth century, a period when Franciscan friars in France and England maintained extensive connections and an evangelizing member of the order might have carried such a song across the Channel. The text is a metrical version of five of the seven so-called O-antiphons, which date back to the eighth century or earlier. One of the O-antiphons was sung at vespers on each of the seven days before the eve of Christmas, December 17–23. They address the Messiah to come in various attributes: O Sapientia (wisdom), O Adonai (Lord), O Radix Jesse (root of Jesse), O Clavis David (key of David), O Oriens (the morning star), O Rex (king), O Emanuel (“God with us”). The initial letters, after the O, spell out the promise of redemption in a reverse acrostic, SARCORE, *ero cras*: “Tomorrow I shall be there.”

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. Our set of Annunciation music opens with one of the most famous songs of the English Middle Ages, *Angelus ad virginem*. The song figures in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, in the Miller's Tale, where it is sung to a psalter by a poor scholar at Oxford by the name of Nicholas:

And al above ther lay a gay sautrie,  
On which he made a-nyghtes melodie  
So swetely that al the chambre rong,  
And *Angelus ad virginem* he song,  
And after that he song the Kynges Noote.

(In the tale, a notably rude one, Nicholas goes on to cuckold his landlord, an elderly carpenter with an eighteen-year-old wife named Alison. A medieval reader would presumably have relished the ironic reference to a song about a virgin conceiving a son in the absence of her husband, also a carpenter.) Christopher Page has shown that the text of *Angelus ad virginem* is probably by the poet, theologian, and eventual chancellor of Paris, Philippe (d. 1236), nearly all of whose Latin lyrics survive with music. Text and tune probably came to England with travelling Franciscans in the thirteenth century. The song quickly became popular there: all of the several extant sources are British and there are two thirteenth-century vernacular versions in verse, *Gabriel fram Heven-King* and *The angel to the Vergyn said*. This evening we sing the former, in a two-voice setting from the next century.

The six carols on our program are drawn from three manuscripts whose contents overlap somewhat, despite the two decades between their likely dates of copying, from after 1415 to the 1440s. With the exception of the more ambitiously contrapuntal Epiphany carol *Ave rex angelorum*, the carols are written in a robust popular style with graceful melody and simple harmonies and generally take the form of a three-voice refrain with a two-voice verse. The rollicking *Nowel: Owt of your slepe aryse* inverts the normal pattern, with a brilliant three-voice verse and a refrain whose two parts roll from voice to voice.

The decades between the 1410s and the 1440s saw striking changes in the compositional style of more learned polyphony. In some instances we can hear the change in the works of a single composer. Listen to the craggy dis-

sonances and bristly cross-rhythms of Leonel Power's *Gloria*, from the Old Hall manuscript of c. 1415, for two, four, and finally five voices—Page likens the effect to sticking your head into a beehive—and compare it to his *Ibo michi ad montem mirre*, transmitted in a continental manuscript from the 1440s. The latter work is fluid, tuneful, and almost entirely consonant—sweeter, a fifteenth-century musician would probably say, just as *Ecce quod natura, Hayl Mary, ful of grace* or *Ther is no rose of swych vertu* are sweet.

The most modern of the works on our program are the *Sanctus* and *Agnus dei* from the *Missa Veterem hominem*. Composed in the 1440s by an anonymous English composer, this Mass was part of the great wave of English works that crashed onto the European continent in the mid-fifteenth century, inspiring a host of imitations by continental composers. It, like Power's *Ibo michi* and Dunstaple's *Gaude virgo salutata* and, indeed, most mid-century English music, survives only in continental copies, for the English originals have disappeared almost without exception. The *Missa Veterem hominem* takes as its cantus firmus an antiphon for Lauds at the Octave of the Epiphany ("The Savior comes to baptism, bringing renewal to old man"), and its Kyrie (not sung this evening) sets the trope *Deus creator omnium*, which was sung on all principal and major double feasts, like Christmas, in the Sarum rite. These features make it a perfect choice for a festive Mass during the Christmas season, while its vigorous rhythms, dashing melodies, and clangorous harmonies offer an apt musical counterpart to the blazing candles, the bright colors of festal vestments, the flashing gold, silver, and jewels of the ceremonial vessels, the swirling smoke and intoxicating odor of frankincense, and all the rest of the liturgical drama of High Mass on one of the most glorious feast days of the Christian year.

—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 unguia,  
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.

*13th century French?*

### **Angelus ad virginem**

subintrans in conclave,  
virginis formidinem  
demulcens, inquit: —Ave!  
Ave Regina Virginum!  
Celi terrequae Dominum  
concupies, et paries intacta  
salutem hominum;  
tu porta celi facta,  
medela criminum.

### **Gabriel, fram Heven-King**

Sent to the maide sweete,  
Broute his blisful tiding  
And fair he gan hir greet:  
—Heil be thou, ful of grace aright!  
For Godes Son, this Heven-Light,  
For mannes love will man bicom and take  
Fles of thee, Maide bright,  
Manken free for to make  
Of sen and devles might.

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

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

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

Gabriel, sent from the King of Heaven  
to the sweet maiden,  
brought her happy news  
and greeted her courteously:  
—Hail be thou, full of grace indeed!  
For God's Son, this Light of Heaven,  
for love of man will become man and take  
human form from thee, fair Maiden,  
to free mankind  
of sin and the devil's might.

Mildelich him gan andswere  
The milde maide thanne:  
—Wichewise sold ich bere  
A child withute manne?  
Th'angel hir seid: —Ne dred tee nout:  
Thurw th'Oligast sal ben iwroun  
This ilche thing warof tiding ich bringe;  
Al manken wurth ibout  
Thurw thine sweet childinge  
And ut of pine ibroun.

Wan the maiden understood  
And th'angels wordes herde,  
Mildelich, with milde mood,  
To th'angel hie andswerde:  
—Ure Lords thewe maid iwis  
Ich am, that heer aboven is;  
Anentis me fulfurthed be thi sawe,  
That ich, sith his wil is,  
A maid, withute lawe,  
Of moder have the blis.

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 propiciam  
exhibeat et deleat peccata,  
prestans auxilium  
vita frui beata  
post hoc exilium.

*Latin by Philip the Chancellor? (d. 1236),  
English version anonymous 13th century*

The gentle maiden then  
gently answered him:  
—In what manner should I bear  
a child without a husband?  
The angel said to her: —Fear nothing:  
through the Holy Ghost shall be done  
this very thing of which I bring news;  
all mankind shall be redeemed  
through thy sweet child-bearing  
and brought out of torment.

When the maiden understood  
and heard the angel's words,  
gently, with gentle spirit  
she answered the angel:  
—I am indeed the bond-maid  
of our Lord, who is above:  
concerning me may thy words be fulfilled,  
that I, since it is His will,  
may, as a maiden, outside natural law,  
have the joy of motherhood.

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.

*Translations from The New Oxford Book of Carols*

## TRIPLEX I

**Gaude virgo salutata** angelicore latu,  
mox es gravida libera omni reatu;  
in te deitas humanata celesti flatu,  
virgo manens illibata re et cogitatu.

Quod mirum si paveas, dum conceptus pandit,  
quanto magis caveas, cum ad partum scandit.  
Dum virgo permanes, mens hec verba pandit;  
dicens “Ne timeas,” te mulcendo blandit.

Nondum contentaris, cum dicit parituram:  
quomodo miraris fietque curam,  
nescisse virum flaris, sed semper esse puram,  
credo, quod miraris, mutasse naturam.

Angelus: “Concipies de superis celestem  
Deum et tu paries filium terrestrem.  
In te non est caries, natum habes testem.  
Leviatan insanies, hic fert tibi pestem.”

## TRIPLEX II

Gaude virgo singularis, mater nostri salvatoris,  
radix vite popularis, germen novi floris.  
Ex te sumpsit hinc tu paris ampullam liquoris  
que virtute aquas maris tenes stilla roris.

Dic, quo verbo concepisti, angeli vultui  
“Dominus tecum” audisti dicens, “fui tui.”  
Presentem conclusisti, tunc naturam sui,  
Messiam invenisti de natura tui.

O celestis armonia, in hac junctioe,  
caro nostre cum sophia in unum persone;  
qualiter ex qua via studeas colone,  
hec sola mater novit pia et tu Jesu bone.

Mater heres Dei mundi redemptoris,  
pia tu memento mei in extremis horis;  
ne coarctent mei rei, secum suis horis  
et presentes faciei mei plasmatoris.

## CONTRATENOR

Virgo mater comprobaris matrem partus indicat,  
claustrum ventris virginalis intactam te judicat.  
Virginem cum divinalis natus ille benedicat,  
celum, tellus, unda maris laudes tuas predicat.  
Non est partus hic penalis qui matrem letificat.  
Christus factus fraternalis sic ut exemplificat.

## TENOR

Ave gemma celi luminarium.  
Ave Sancti Spiritus sacrarium.

## TRIPLEX I

Hail virgin, greeted by the angel’s report,  
pregnant yet free of all sin:  
in you deity is made human by heavenly inspiration,  
virgin undiminished by act or thought.

And if you tremble at the miracle while the child develops,  
how much warier are you when it comes to be born.  
While you remain a virgin, the mind offers these words,  
and saying “Be not afraid,” charms and eases you.

You do not contest it when he says you will bear a child,  
however much you wonder and are troubled.  
You are proclaimed not to have known a man, but to be ever pure,  
and—a thing to wonder at, surely—to have changed nature.

The angel: “You shall conceive the heavenly god  
from the realms on high, and bear a child of earth.  
There is no fault in you, as your son is witness.  
You shall torment Leviathan, and he will plague you.”

## TRIPLEX II

Rejoice, unique maiden, mother of our savior,  
Root of the people’s life, seed of the new flower.  
He drew from you, you then bear, the flask of nectar,  
by your virtue you hold the sea’s waters in a drop of dew.

Say by what word you conceived! You heard,  
“The Lord is with you,” and answered the angelic  
countenance, “I am yours.” You contained his presence,  
then his nature; you found the Messiah in your own nature.

O heavenly harmony in this joining,  
flesh of our person united with Wisdom:  
how and by what path you are so zealous,  
these things only the pious mother knew, and you, good Jesus.

Mother and heir of God, world’s redeemer,  
recall me faithfully in my last hours,  
let my acts not constrain me with them in their hours,  
as you show me to the face of my maker.

## CONTRATENOR

You are proved the virgin mother: the birth shows the mother,  
the seal of your virginal womb judges you untouched.  
When your divine child blesses you as virgin,  
then heaven, earth, and ocean waves preach your praises.  
This birthing is no penance, it gladdens the mother.  
Christ is made our brother as his examples teaches.

## TENOR

Hail, jewel of the lights of heaven!  
Hail, sacred place of the Holy

*Translation by Larry Rosenwald*



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

The Holi Goſte is to the sent  
from the Fader omnipotent;  
now is God withyn the went  
Whan the angel seide “Ave.”

*the* i.e. thee

Whan the angel “Ave” byganne,  
flesh and blode togedre ranne;  
Mary bare bothe God and manne  
throw vertu and throw dyngnyte.

*throw* through

So seith the Goſpel 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.

and peace planted on earth  
*faunte* infant

Mary, graunte us the blys  
ther thy Sonys wonynge ys;  
of that we han ydone amys  
pray for us, pur charite.

*wonynge* dwelling  
for what we have done wrong  
*pur charite* i.e. “pour charité,” out of love

**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 Christi. 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 Christi,  
cum sancto spiritu in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

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.

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

*Alleluya.*

For in this rose conteynyd was  
Heven and erthe in lytyl space,  
*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  
*be* by means of

of the same form

Glory to God in the Highest!  
Let us rejoice.

**Ibo michi ad montem mirre** et ad colles libani, et loquar sponse mee: Tota speciosa es et macula non est in te. Veni de Libano; venies et transibimus ad montem Seir et Hermon, a cubilibus leonum et a montibus leopardorum. Alleluia.

*Antiphon for the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary; Song of Songs 4:6-8*

**Veni, redemptor gentium,**

Ostende partum virginis.  
Miretur omne seculum;  
Talis decet partus Deum.

Non ex virili semine  
Sed mistico spiramine  
Verbum Dei factum caro,  
Fructusque ventris floruit.

Alvus tumescit virginis,  
Claustra pudoris permanent;  
Vexilla virtutum micant;  
Versatur in templo Deus.

Procedens de thalamo suo,  
Pudoris aula regia,  
Gemine gigas substancie  
Alacris ut currat viam.

Deo Patri sit gloria,  
Eiusque soli Filio,  
Cum Spiritu Paraclito,  
Et nunc et in perpetuum. Amen.

*St Ambrose (c. 340-97)*

**Dominus dixit ad me** filius meus es tu:

ego hodie genui te.

Quare fremuerunt gentes:  
et populi meditati sunt inania?

Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto:  
sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper,  
et in secula seculorum. Amen.

*Introit, First Mass at Christmas (Sarum rite);  
Hebrews 1:5, Psalm 2:1*

**Nowel, nowel nowel!**

Owt of your slepe aryse and wake,  
For God mankynd nowe hath ytake,  
Al of a maide without eny make;  
Of al women she bereth the belle.

I will go into the mountain of myrrh and to the hills of Lebanon, and say to my bride: You are all beautiful, and there is no flaw in you. Come from Lebanon; you will come and we will cross to Mount Senir and Mount Hermon, from the dens of lions and the mountains of leopards. Alleluia.

Come, savior of the gentiles,  
And manifest your birth to a virgin.  
All the world shall marvel:  
God decreed such a birth.

Not of man's seed  
But of the Holy Spirit  
Is the word of God made flesh,  
And the fruit of the womb flowers.

The womb of the virgin did swell,  
Yet remained a cloister of chastity;  
The banners of virtue shine forth:  
God dwells in his temple.

He goes forth from his chamber,  
A royal hall of purity,  
A giant of twofold substance,  
Eager to run his course.

Glory be to God the Father  
And to his only Son,  
With the Holy Spirit,  
Now and forevermore. Amen.

The Lord said to me, Thou art my Son:  
this day have I begotten thee.

Why do the nations rage,  
and the people imagine a vain thing?

Glory 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.

For God has now taken on manhood  
*eny make* any mate  
*bereth the belle* is the most excellent

And thorwe a maide fair and wys  
Now man is made of ful grete pris;  
Now angelys knelen to mannys servys,  
And at this tyme al this byfel.

Now man is bryghter than the sonne,  
Now man in heven an hye shal wone;  
Blessyd be God this game is begonne,  
And his moder emperesse of helle.

That ever was thralle, now ys he fre;  
That ever was smalle, now grete is she;  
Now shal God deme bothe the and me  
Unto hys blysse, yf we do wel.

Now, blessyd brother, graunte us grace  
A domesday to se thy face  
And in thy courte to have a place,  
That we mow there synge Nowel!

**Gloria** (see above)

**Ecce, quod natura**

Mutat sua jura:  
Virgo parit pura  
Dei filium.

Ecce novum gaudium,  
Ecce novum mirum:  
Virgo parit filium  
Que non novit virum.  
Que non novit virum,  
Sed ut pirus pirus,  
Gleba fert saphirum,  
Rosa lilium.

Mundum Deus flebilem  
Videns in ruina,  
Florem delectabilem  
Produxit de spina;  
Produxit de spina  
Virgoque regina,  
Mundi medecina,  
Salus gencium.

Nequivit divinitas  
Plus humiliari,  
Nec nostra fragilitas  
Magis exaltari,  
Magis exaltari  
Quam celo collocari  
Deoque equari  
Per conjugium.

*thorwe* through  
*pris* worth

*this tyme* i.e. Christmastime

Now man in heaven on high shall dwell  
*game* action, sequence of events

He who was in thrall forever is now free

*deme* judge  
*do wel* act righteously

*blessyd brother* i.e. Christ  
*A domesday* At Judgement Day

*mow* may

Behold, Nature  
changes her laws:  
a pure virgin gives birth  
to the son of God.

Behold, a new joy,  
behold, a new wonder:  
a virgin gives birth to a son,  
she who knew not man.  
She knew not man,  
but bore as the pear tree bears a pear,  
a clod of earth a sapphire,  
the rose a lily.

God, seeing the wretched world  
in ruin,  
brought forth a delightful flower  
from a thorn;  
from a thorn she brought forth,  
virgin and queen,  
healing to the world  
and salvation of the peoples.

Divinity could not have been  
more humbled,  
nor our fragility  
more exalted,  
more exalted  
than to be raised to Heaven  
and made equal to God  
through this union.

**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.

**Ave rex angelorum,**

Ave rexque celorum,  
Ave princepsque polorum.

Hayl, most myghty in thi werkyng,  
Hayl, thou Lord of all thing,  
Y offer the gold as to a kyng.

**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.

**Nowel syng we bothe al and som,**

Now Rex Pacificus is ycome.

Exortum est in love and lysse:  
Now Cryst hys grace he gan us gysse,  
And with hys body us bought to blysse,  
Bothe al and sum.

De fructu ventris of Mary bright,  
Bothe God and man in here alyght:  
Owte of dysese he dyde us dyght,  
Bothe al and sum.

Puer natus to us was sent,  
To blysse us bought, fro bale us blent,  
And ellys to wo we hadde ywent,  
Bothe al and sum.

Lux fulgebit with love and lyght,  
In Mary mylde hys pynon pyght,  
In here toke kynde with manly myght,  
Bothe al and sum.

Gloria tibi ay and blysse:  
God unto his grace he us wysse,  
The rent of heven that we not mysse,  
Bothe al and sum.

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.

Hail, King of Angels,  
Hail, King of Heaven,  
Hail, Prince of the poles of the earth.

*the* i.e. *thee*

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.

Let us sing Noel, each and every one,  
Now the King of Peace is come.

He is arisen in love and joy:  
now Christ has prepared his grace for us  
and with his body redeemed us unto bliss,  
each and every one.

From the fruit of the womb of radiant Mary  
both God and man alight in her:  
from disease he rescued us,  
each and every one.

A boy-child was sent to us,  
redeemed us unto bliss, turned us aside from evil,  
and else to woe we would have gone,  
each and every one.

The light will shine with love and light;  
in gentle Mary he raised his banner,  
in her assumed humanity with manly boldness,  
each and every one.

Glory to Thee always, and bliss:  
may God guide us to his grace,  
that we shall not lose the reward of heaven,  
each and every one.

## 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 Perotin), 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 and has appeared at other venues throughout the Northeast, including Monadnock Music in New Hampshire, 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 in San Luis Obispo, California and in October 2009 celebrated its tenth birthday by opening the twentieth-anniversary season of the Boston Early Music Festival concert series. Blue Heron's first CD, featuring music by Guillaume Du Fay, was released in March of 2007 to wide critical acclaim; a second recording, of music by Hugh Aston, Robert Jones, and John Mason, is due for release in March 2010.

**Michael Barrett** is active in the Boston area as a singer and conductor. While studying and working in the Netherlands he was a member of the Huelgas Ensemble, the Netherlands Bach Society and the Hemony Ensemble. In Boston Mr. Barrett directs

Sprezzatura, a professional vocal ensemble, and Convivium Musicum, a Renaissance chamber choir; he co-directs l'Académie, a professional chamber choir and orchestra for Baroque music. At Harvard he directs the Holden Chamber Ensembles. As a singer Mr. Barrett has collaborated with Blue Heron, Seven Times Salt, and Boston Secession, and has appeared in the two most recent opera productions of the Boston Early Music Festival. He also maintains a studio for private instruction in voice and music theory. Mr. Barrett earned an AB in music from Harvard University, an MM in choir conducting from Indiana University in Bloomington, and a first phase diploma in Baroque and Classical singing from the Royal Conservatory in The Hague.

**Glenn Billingsley** is the Director of Foundation and Planned Giving for the Boston Early Music Festival. Before entering the world of fund raising, Glenn sang with the New York City Opera National Company and the Santa Fe, Chautauqua, and Lake George Opera companies, appeared in the Spoleto and Madeira Bach Festivals, toured Europe and the Western Hemisphere with the Waverly Consort and the SEM Ensemble, and did 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, and their two children – guitarist, drummer and songwriter Ken, and dancer and singer Lisa – are both undergraduate business majors.

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 an acclaimed soloist and recitalist whose singing has been praised for her "exquisite vocal color," "musical sensitivity," and "eloquent phrasing." She has been featured in leading roles in operas of Purcell, Mozart, Britten, and others. With *Sequentia*, Ms. Dellal has recorded the music of Hildegard von Bingen and toured the US, Europe, and Australia. Passionate about chamber music, early music, and contemporary music, she performs frequently with Dinosaur Annex, Boston Musica Viva, Ensemble Chaconne, Blue Heron, and the Musicians of the Old Post Road. She has been a regular soloist in the Emmanuel Music Bach Cantata series for twenty-five years and has performed almost all 200 of Bach's extant sacred cantatas. Recent appearances include the premiere of a new John Harbison work, *The Seven Ages*, at Merkin Concert Hall this past April. This season she will perform the work in San Francisco, Boston and London.

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 addition to Blue Heron's Du Fay disc, 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. He directs the vocal ensemble Blue Heron and has been invited to serve as guest director by Emmanuel Music, Monadnock Music, the Tudor Choir and Seattle Baroque, Pacific Baroque Orchestra (Vancouver, BC), and the Dryden Ensemble (Princeton, NJ), in works by Monteverdi, Buxtehude, Handel, Bach, and others. In January 2010 he will lead the Green Mountain Project in an all-star 400th anniversary performance of Monteverdi's 1610 *Vespers* in New York City ([www.greenmountainvespers.com](http://www.greenmountainvespers.com)). Metcalfe is concertmaster of Trinity Consort in Portland, Oregon (dir. Eric Milnes), a member of Cleveland-based Les Délices (dir. Debra Nagy), and an active participant in Montreal's early music scene, working with Arion, Montreal Baroque, Les Voix baroques, and other groups. He was a founding member of the 17th-century ensemble La Luna and of the Renaissance violin band The King's Noyse, and from 1996 through 2007 he conducted the Renaissance choir Convivium Musicum. Besides playing and directing, Metcalfe keeps busy writing, teaching, translating, and editing. He is preparing a new complete edition of the songs of Gilles Binchois in collaboration with Sean Gallagher of Harvard University, and is a lecturer in choral repertoire and performance practice at Boston University. Metcalfe 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 in the choir of men and boys at Saint Thomas Fifth Avenue in New York City, advancing to Head Chorister. He recently appeared as alto soloist with Boston Cecilia in Bach's *Mass in B Minor* and was praised as "winsome and lyrical" in the role of David in Handel's *Saul* with the Harvard University Choir and Baroque Orchestra. A founding member of the professional early music ensemble Exultemus, Mr. Near takes up the role of Music Director this season. He recently made his debut as record producer for a recording of sacred music by Josquin des Prez and Marbrianus de Orto with the vocal ensemble Cut Circle, to be released this year. In 2002 Mr. Near served as composer and music director of the one act opera *Six Character in Search of an Opera* for Project ARIA (AIDS Response by Independent Artists). An advocate of the performance of new music, Mr. Near has been a soloist in numerous world premieres, including *Temptation in the Desert* by Elliott Gyger for Mr. Near and Seraphim Singers, and *Some Reflections* by John Eaton, a microtonal piece in 72-note equal temperament composed for the 20th anniversary of the Boston Microtonal Society.

Countertenor **Gerrod Pagenkopf** has been praised by the *Houston Chronicle* as having "an elegant bearing and a sweet, even sound." Pagenkopf made his professional debut in October 2008 with Amarillo Opera as Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*. Other opera credits include Rinaldo (*Rinaldo*), Oberon (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Tolomeo (*Giulio Cesare*), Satirino (*La Calisto*), Arsamenes (*Serse*), the Sorceress, Second Witch, and Messenger (*Dido and Aeneas*), and Ottone (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*). As a concert soloist, Pagenkopf is a core artist with Ars Lyrica Houston, one of Houston's premier early music ensembles, and has performed with Mercury

Baroque, the Bach Society of Houston, the Houston Chamber Choir, the Green Bay Symphony, and the Bel Canto Chorus of Milwaukee. Mr. Pagenkopf has performed as soloist in such masterworks as Handel's *Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt*, Bach's passions, *Magnificat*, and *Mass in B Minor*, as well as numerous cantatas, oratorios, and other liturgical works of Alessandro Scarlatti, Vivaldi, and Telemann.

**Barbara Poeschl-Edrich** grew up in Germany, between Munich and Salzburg. She has performed in recitals in Germany, Austria, Italy, England, Japan, and the United States. Since moving to Boston in 2001 Mrs. Poeschl-Edrich has played with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Boston Classical Orchestra, Boston Baroque, Handel & Haydn Society, Providence Singers, Collage New Music, the Tanglewood Music Center, Boston Cecilia, and Boston Musica Viva, as well as many other orchestras throughout New England. As a soloist she has appeared with Newport Baroque, the Symphony Pro Musica, the Lexington Symphony Chamber Players, the New England String Ensemble, Music at Eden's Edge, and, in 2004, with the Boston Classical Orchestra, performing harp concertos by Handel and Debussy on five days' notice, filling in for Ann Hobson Pilot. Mrs. Poeschl-Edrich earned degrees in Salzburg and London. In 2005 she graduated with a Doctor of Musical Arts from Boston University. She is on the faculty of the Brookline Music School and Boston University, and has recorded with La Donna Musicale and Aston Magna.

With a voice hailed as "sweetly soaring" by the *Dallas Morning News*, tenor **Steven Soph** is an active performer in chamber music and oratorio. He sings with Blue Heron, Boston Secession, Schola Cantorum, Cut Circle, Philovox, Exsultemus, and the Choir of Church of the Advent. Recent solo

engagements include Bach's *St. John Passion* with New Trinity Baroque of Atlanta and Musikanten Montana, Schütz's *Musicalische Exequien* with the Providence Singers, and Bach's cantatas BWV 148 and 76 with Musica Maris. While studying at the University of North Texas with Julie McCoy and David Sundquist, he performed with the Orpheus Chamber Singers, Texas Choral Artists, Dallas Bach Society, Helios Ensemble, Orchestra of New Spain, Paradigm Singers, and the Chancel Choir of the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation. Mr. Soph appears on recordings for Arsis, Edition Lilac and Pro Organo labels. When not singing, he restores electro-pneumatic organs for Spencer Organ Co. in Waltham, Massachusetts.

Tenor **Mark Sprinkle** has appeared as a soloist in Carissimi's *Abraham and Isaac* at the 92nd Street Y in New York City, with the Handel & Haydn Society in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* and Vivaldi's *Gloria* in Symphony Hall, Boston, in Monteverdi's *1610 Vespers* at the Emerson Majestic Theatre under Grant Llewellyn, in concerts of Handel's Chandos Anthems with Christopher Hogwood in Jordan Hall, and with Concerto Palatino, the Boston Camerata, the Boston Early Music Festival, Emmanuel Music, and Blue Heron. Recent solo turns include performances of Bach cantatas and Magnificat in Jordan Hall with H&H. In February 2010 he will be featured in a concert of newly-composed songs by the winners of the Longfellow Chorus's annual international composer's competition in Portland, Maine. An active Bach Passion Evangelist, he has sung the role in the St. John Passion with Chorus Pro Musica (Boston) and with the Boulder Bach Festival in Boulder, Colorado, among others; his performance has been described as "supremely stylish." He was a founding member of the Cambridge Bach Ensemble, 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 was a Fellow of the Britten-Pears School. 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. Ms. Tošić 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. Tapestry is a recipient of the Chamber Music America Outstanding Recording of the Year Award in 2000 and the European Echo Klassik Prize for Outstanding Recording of the Year in 2005. Ms. Tošić is also a founding member of the medieval-world fusion ensemble HourGlass.

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We are grateful 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 (angstrom images) designs our programs and our website, Chris Clark (Cave Dog Studio) designs our publicity materials and program covers, and Philip Davis records our concerts. All three further support this organization in ways that extend beyond their expert services.

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.

*Donations from December 10, 2008 through December 15, 2009*

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# THE BLUE BOX

Dear friends and supporters:

Welcome to the opening concert of Blue Heron's Eleventh season!

There have been many exciting developments in the past year for Blue Heron. (I must encourage you to sign up for our email newsletter, to keep up with *all* of the goings-on.) But, in this space tonight, I want to focus on just one hot topic.

Blue Heron is now poised at the brink of releasing a full-length CD of works of three neglected masters of the English Renaissance: Hugh Aston, John Mason and Robert Jones. None of this music has been much performed in modern times; four out of five of the works on this CD have never before been recorded for commercial release. The release of this CD – slated for our next concert, on March 13, 2010 – will represent a planting of a flag by Blue Heron in the terrain of the Peterhouse partbooks of c. 1540; terrain across which the ensemble has traveled during the entire ten years of our journey. Many of us in the audience have immensely enjoyed tagging along on the trip.

Blue Heron has been engaged with the Peterhouse partbooks for all of its ten years of existence. Its very first concert revolved around works from these books. No one else knows the terrain like Blue Heron. Blue Heron should be the group to release the first recordings of this music. There is no other way to put it.

This is awfully exciting. But, not too long ago, the subject was a vexed one at Board meetings. "We need to get this CD recorded, but how?" Finally we decided to take the bull by the horns and simply state we intended to do it and were fully prepared to do it, and hope that our donors would follow.

Follow they have. Several large donors enthusiastically and immediately responded, and this money carried us through the recording sessions. The sessions went beautifully, and now the music is "in the can." What remains is the editing, mastering, graphic design, and production of the CDs themselves.

Large donors have done their part and carried us a long distance. Now comes your opportunity to step up and be a part of this important project – to carry it across the finish line. Will you?

Now, I am writing this immediately after receiving some very helpful news, just as this program book is about to go to the printer.

A large donor has returned to us and offered the following, in order that we may bridge this final gap in funding: for every ONE dollar you donate before January 15, it will be matched by TWO dollars. Since there is \$7,500 total left to raise, this means that only \$2,500 in donations are required to finish our fundraising for the CD. The math, as it happens, works very neatly: if 500 people give an average of \$5 each, we are done. You may look around you and see a full house; if so, you are looking at a church with just about 500 people in it.

In fact, on your way out tonight, you will see a small wooden box painted light blue. Drop a \$5, \$10, \$20 or \$50 donation into the box on your way out, and it will be put toward the CD. How thrilling if we were to reach our goal this very night! If this would be your first donation, do it. If it would be your twentieth, do it. Every little bit really will help. Your \$5 will turn to \$15. Your \$20 to \$60. Your \$50 to \$150.

Look for the blue box on your way out.

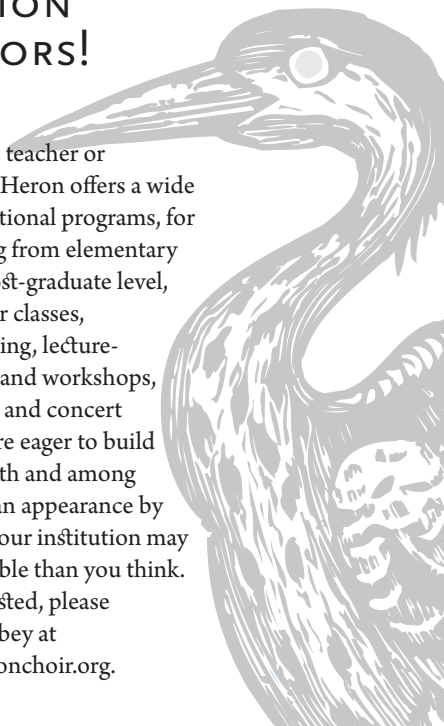
Donations may also be made by simply mailing a check to Blue Heron at 45 Ash Street, Auburndale, MA 02466. Or, donate by simply visiting our website and clicking on the "Get Involved" link.

Thank you in advance for helping to make this CD a reality!

—John Yannis

## ATTENTION EDUCATORS!

Are you a music teacher or professor? Blue Heron offers a wide variety of educational programs, for students ranging from elementary school to the post-graduate level, including master classes, ensemble coaching, lecture-demonstrations, and workshops, as well as recital and concert programs. We are eager to build relationships with and among educators, and an appearance by Blue Heron at your institution may be more affordable than you think. If you are interested, please contact Gail Abbey at [office@blueheronchoir.org](mailto:office@blueheronchoir.org).



## JOIN

Join Blue Heron's mailing list to receive all the news about our concerts in the Boston area, in New York, and on the road. If you sign up for the e-mail list, you will also receive our quarterly newsletter, only available through e-mail, and bulletins about special events, such as the release of our next CD in March 2010. All this can be done through our website, [blueheronchoir.org](http://blueheronchoir.org), where you will also find a detailed concert history, past programs and notes, essays on performance practice, pictures of the musicians, podcasts, and more.

### COLOPHON

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motets • hymns • chansons • sanctus papale

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Blue Heron's first CD, featuring music of Guillaume Du Fay, including three iso-rhythmic motets, two hymns, the Sanctus "Papale," and a selection of chansons. Also available through our website, and through CD Baby: [www.cdbaby.com](http://www.cdbaby.com).

*... glorious performances with incandescent singing ... a triumph for an American ensemble in a field long dominated by Europeans.*

*Craig Zeichner, Early Music America | Fall 2007*

*This debut marks Blue Heron as a leading new actor in the field of early Renaissance music, both for studying the sources and bringing them to life.... Altogether, this is one of the finest Dufay collections to come out in recent years...*

*J. F. Weber, Fanfare | September/October 2007*

*The most attractive aspect of this recital is its feeling of immediacy and freshness.... For me, the high points are the Sanctus Papale, for which it is very welcome to have such a confident and poised rendition; and some of the later songs, for example Malheureux cuer, que veux tu faire, and the cheeky Puisque vous estez campieur... More, please.*

*Fabrice Fitch, Goldberg | August/September 2007*