



Music from the Peterhouse Partbooks, vol. 3

restored by Nick Sandon

John Mason (c. 1480-1548)

1 Ave fuit prima salus (19:17)

Sarum plainchant

2 Kyrie Cunctipotens genitor (3:07)

Nicholas Ludford (c. 1490-1557)

Missa Inclina cor meum

3 Gloria (8:09) 4 Credo (10:20)

5 Sanctus (11:25) 6 Agnus dei (7:37)

Total time 59:58

Blue Heron

treble

Julia Steinbok, Sonja Tengblad, Shari Wilson

mean

Jennifer Ashe, Pamela Dellal, Martin Near

contratenor

Owen McIntosh, Jason McStoots

tenor

Michael Barrett, Mark Sprinkle (Ludford),
Sumner Thompson (Mason)

bass

Cameron Beauchamp, Paul Guttry,
Dashon Burton (Ludford), David McFerrin (Mason)

Scott Metcalfe, *director*

Missa Inclina cor meum
and *Ave fuit prima salus*
edited and restored by Nick Sandon
(Antico Edition RCM132 & RCM108).
Kyrie Cunctipotens genitor
edited by Nick Sandon
(Antico Edition LCM1).
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Recorded September 21-22
and October 22-23 and 25-26, 2012
at the Church of the Redeemer,
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

Engineering & mastering Joel Gordon
Producer Eric Milnes
Editing Eric Milnes & Joel Gordon

Cover photo
Close-up of white lamb's wool
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THE PETERHOUSE PARTBOOKS

This CD is the third installment in Blue Heron's series of recordings of music from the so-called Henrician set of partbooks now residing at Peterhouse, Cambridge.¹ The partbooks, originally five in number, contain a large collection of Masses, Magnificats, and votive antiphons. They were copied at Magdalen College, Oxford, in the latter years of the reign of Henry VIII, by the professional singer and music scribe Thomas Bull, just before Bull left Oxford in 1540 to take up a new position in the choir of Canterbury Cathedral.

Bull wrote down, within a very short time, a great quantity of music in carefully checked, highly legible but plain copies. Lacking any decoration, the partbooks were clearly aimed at performance in church services, rather than for study or for presentation to a noble as a gift.² Why did Bull copy so much music, so quickly? He appears to have been acting on commission. The monastic foundation at Canterbury was dissolved by Henry VIII in April 1540, one of nearly a dozen great monastic cathedrals dissolved in the years 1539-41. Most were refounded in short order as secular (i.e., non-monastic) institutions, subject not to an abbot—a member of a religious order—but to a bishop and thus to the king as head of the Church of England. The refounded cathedrals aspired to considerably more pomp and circumstance than their monastic predeces-

sors, and so they sought to hire large choirs of professional singers as well as recruit choirboys for training. Canterbury Cathedral's new choir included ten "queresters" (choristers, "quire" being the normal 16th-century spelling of the word), their master, and twelve vicars-choral, among them Thomas Tallis and Thomas Bull. The new choir required an entirely new library of up-to-date polyphonic repertory, for monks typically did not attempt virtuosic polyphonic music: this Bull supplied, bringing about 70 works with him from Oxford.

But the brilliant choral institution at Canterbury would not last long. Henry died in 1547 and the Protestant Reformation that ensued took a dim view of such popish decorations as professional choirs and the highly sophisticated Latin music they sang. All the elaborate polyphonic music of late medieval English Catholicism became, at best, obsolete; at worst it was viewed as gaudy ornament to a despicable ritual. Many musical sources were destroyed, and if a manuscript escaped deliberate destruction by zealots, it might yet be subjected to other indignities:

A greate nombre of them which purchased those superstysyouse mansyons [former monasteries], reserved of those librarrye 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 unversytees of thys realm are not all clere in this detestable fact.... I know a merchaunt man, which 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 laboryouse Journey & serche of Johann Leylande for England's Antiquities* (1549)³

Very few collections of church music survived. The main sources of sacred vocal music remaining from the entire first half of the sixteenth century are a mere three choirbooks and four sets of partbooks. (Compare this paucity to, for example, the *sixteen* choirbooks owned in 1524 by a single establishment, Magdalen College, Oxford.)⁴ We do not know what happened to Bull's five partbooks (one each for the standard five parts of early 16th-century English polyphony: treble, mean, contratenor, tenor, and bass) between 1547 and the early years of the next century, but by the 1630s they had made their way to the library of Peterhouse, where they would survive yet another cataclysm of destruction, that wrought by the Puritans in the 1640s.

Or, at least, some of Bull's five partbooks survived. At some point the tenor book disappeared, along with several pages of the treble. Of the 72 pieces in the partbooks, 39 are transmitted uniquely, while another dozen or so are incomplete in their other sources. The result is that some fifty pieces of music—a significant portion of what survives from pre-Reformation England—now lack their tenor, and some of these are also missing all or part of their treble. In the Peterhouse repertoire, music by the most famous masters of the early sixteenth century, such as John Taverner and Thomas Tallis, sits next to works by less celebrated but nonetheless first-class composers such as Nicholas Ludford and Hugh Aston, and a number of wonderful pieces by musicians who have been virtually forgotten, for so little of their work survives: Richard Pygott, John Mason, Robert Jones, Robert Hunt, and others. The few extant works of these latter four composers are transmitted mostly or solely in the Peterhouse partbooks and are thus now incomplete.

We are able to sing the Peterhouse music today thanks to the extraordinarily skilled recomposition of the missing parts by the English musicologist Nick Sandon. (Sandon also pieced together the story of the genesis of the partbooks that I have related above.) Sandon completed his dissertation on the Peterhouse partbooks in 1983, including in it recompositions of most of the missing lines; in

the years since he has been refining his restorations and publishing them in Antico Edition. This disc presents world-premiere recordings of Nicholas Ludford's *Missa Inclina cor meum* and John Mason's *Ave fuit prima salus* from Sandon's editions. For the Mass Sandon recomposed the tenor line. In the case of Mason's antiphon, both tenor and treble parts are entirely lost: thus fully two-fifths of the polyphonic texture you will hear in this piece have been restored by Sandon in a brilliant feat of reimagining.

NICHOLAS LUDFORD

Of the composers represented so far in this series of recordings (Aston, Jones, Ludford, Mason, and Pygott), Nicholas Ludford has perhaps achieved the most latterday recognition, although his name is hardly a household word. Ludford was unquestionably a marvelous composer, but that anyone today has any sense of his accomplishment is due largely to the happy accident of his music being preserved in some quantity. His surviving music includes seven festal Masses, seven small-scale Lady Masses, four votive antiphons, and one Magnificat, and it is found in four of the seven principal choral sources mentioned above. Three of these sources were copied sometime between the mid-1510s and the mid-1520s; these three are all connected with Ludford's place of employment for most of his working life, the Royal Free Chapel of St. Stephen in the

Palace of Westminster.⁵ The fourth source is the Peterhouse partbooks, which were copied, as we have seen, at Oxford around 1540.

The Peterhouse partbooks contain three Masses and four antiphons by Ludford. Five of these works are uniquely transmitted there and so may have been composed after the earlier sources were copied.⁶ The *unica* are the Masses *Inclina cor meum* (recorded here) and *Regnum mundi* (recorded on vol. 2 of this series) and the antiphons *Ave cujus conceptio*, *Ave Maria ancilla trinitatis*, and *Domine Jesu Christe*. A fourth antiphon, *Salve regina*, is found only in Peterhouse (missing its treble and tenor) and in a single orphaned Mean partbook, the lone survivor from another set of five which was copied c. 1530.⁷



MISSA INCLINA COR MEUM

The *Missa Inclina cor meum*, like Ludford's other extant festal masses, is based on a plainchant cantus firmus, a piece of pre-existing melody that undergirds the polyphonic structure. The *Inclina cor meum* cantus firmus is a snippet of a fourth-mode melody (E final) with a range extending from B below tenor C to G below middle C. Why Ludford chose this particular piece of plainchant for the foundation of a Mass is a mystery—and, most unusually, the *Missa Inclina cor meum* shares this cantus firmus with two other works by Ludford found uniquely in Peterhouse, *Salve regina* and *Ave Maria ancilla trinitatis*. *Inclina cor meum* is a responsory sung throughout the year and so its use as a cantus firmus does not associate this Mass Ordinary (or the two antiphons) with any particular feast. For this reason we have not added plainchant Propers to this recording, as we did on vol. 2's recording of the *Missa Regnum mundi*: in this case the choice of feast and Propers would be purely arbitrary. We do, however, sing a troped plainchant Kyrie, since the *Missa Inclina cor meum*, like other early 16th-century English polyphonic Masses, does not include one.



What's more, the chant is not obviously suited to serve as a cantus firmus. It is so melodically bland as to be wholly anonymous and unmemorable, and the endings of its phrases do not descend by step to the final, as a polyphonic tenor normally does.

Although the chant melody is quoted more than two dozen times in the Mass and appears in four of the five voices—treble, contratenor, and bass, in addition to its usual home in the tenor—it remains virtually unnoticeable, except, perhaps, when it is sung in the bass in much longer notes than the melodies above it. But its abundant use and the harmonic progressions it permits determine the mood of the Mass, meandering, musing, without obvious harmonic direction. A ramble through a landscape unmarked by grandly arresting features, whose apparent surface homogeneity conceals a wealth of detail, the work invites the listener to relinquish any impatient need for grand gesture or a drive to the climax and pay the closest attention to the play of sonorities and textures. Through such concentration you will perceive many marvelous things. Listen carefully, for example, to the openings of each of the four movements, and you will notice the way they all begin with the same basic material and

then head off on their own paths, melodically and harmonically. The final harmonies of the movements also surprise, for Ludford cannot conclude with a typical cadence on account of the way the plainchant melody ends. There are many moments of distinctive color, like the “Crucifixus” section of the Credo, and truly strange passages such as that at “Pleni sunt celi” in the Sanctus, where the bass intones the chant melody at a glacial pace while the top two voices spin out melodies high above. As Sandon observes, “Ludford’s *Mass Inclina cor meum* stands a little apart from his other works on account of its rather higher level of dissonance and occasionally awkward counterpoint. It would, I think, be mistaken to infer that it is an immature work; on the contrary, its boldness, resourcefulness and strong personality imply that it is a thoroughly mature composition. Its stylistic peculiarities may have more to do with the character and treatment of the cantus firmus: by relying so heavily upon such an unpromising plainchant melody, and by placing it sometimes in voices that do not usually carry cantus firmi, Ludford subjected his musical invention and technique to a searching examination.”⁸

JOHN MASON & AVE PRIMA FUIT SALUS

The Peterhouse partbooks are the only extant source of music by John Mason, a composer with a name so common that his biography

is impossible to sort out definitively. The partbooks transmit four works by Mason, three of which are labelled in the index “for men”: that is, for the broken voices of adults. (One of them, *Quales sumus O miseri*, is recorded on vol. 1 of this series.) *Ave fuit prima salus* lacks two of its five voices, which seem to have comprised the usual five-part texture extending from bass up to treble; at least, this is what Sandon has concluded in preparing his revised restoration.

Mason composed *Ave fuit prima salus* without the scaffolding of a pre-existent cantus firmus. He began with a long poem by the 13th-century Franciscan Jacopone da Todi, a methodical expansion and gloss of a salutation addressed to Mary: “Ave Maria gratia plena, Dominus tecum. Benedicta tu in mulieribus et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.” (The text conflates two speeches, that of the archangel Gabriel and that of Elizabeth, from Luke 1:28 and 1:42, respectively.) Each of these sixteen words plus “Amen” is used as the first word of a four-line stanza; each stanza concludes with “Ave Maria.” “As undistinguished as literature as it is pedestrian as theology” (Sandon’s verdict), the text nevertheless serves well as a device for prayer and contemplation. Its realisation in Mason’s music lasts nearly twenty minutes. From arresting opening to gentle conclusion, the journey is measured out by the series of “Ave Marias,” each one distinctive, which draw the listener’s attention back and refocus it.⁹



PERFORMANCE PITCH

The question of the performing pitch of a cappella music before the early seventeenth century resists easy answers, due on the one hand to the near-complete absence of surviving instruments whose pitch might be measured, and on the other to the fact that sacred polyphony was normally sung by voices alone. It is sometimes asserted rather off-handedly that all-vocal ensembles simply chose any convenient pitch out of the air and that the result was a complete absence of a vocal pitch standard across Europe. Besides the lack of evidence in support of this view, there are serious objections to its plausibility. Not the least of these is the fact that when evidence does begin to emerge, from the later sixteenth century onwards, for pitch standards of specific frequencies, whether in Italy, Germany, France, or England, those pitches fall into a pattern. The most common pitch on the continent in

the seventeenth century is around A466 Hz (a semitone above the modern standard of A440); the next most common, around A415 (a whole tone below A466); a third, less common pitch occurs yet another semitone down at about A392. That is to say, the most common pitches are a higher one (A466) and a lower one (A415) separated by a whole tone, with a third pitch (A392) a minor third lower than the higher and more common of the first two. As Bruce Haynes realised and documented in his landmark study of 2002, these pitches are related to each other on a “grid” of integral intervals (not less than a semitone) which allowed players of instruments tuned in meantone, such as organs and most winds, to transpose between them if necessary. And these pitches are associated with names: the pitch around 466 is often called something like “choir pitch” and the pitches at 415 and 392 “chamber pitch.”¹⁰ England, as ever marching to its own drummer, had its own pitch grid that lay slightly above the continental standard. Its “Quire-pitch” was about A473-8.¹¹

In the absence of definitive evidence, a reasonable argument may be made, by a series of steps, that Quire-pitch at around A473-8 is the most likely historical pitch of unaccompanied vocal music in England in the early sixteenth century, just as it is a century later.

1) The normal *written* range of unaccompanied vocal polyphony is far from arbitrary, but rather is tied to *sounding* pitch and

grew from a profound understanding of the ranges of human voices. This knowledge is embedded in and manifested firstly by the gamut or normative musical space of medieval and Renaissance music and its range of three octaves from bass G (or F) to treble e” (or f”), encompassing the composite range of adult male singers from the low notes of the average bass to the high notes of the average male falsettist; next, by the five-line staff, which allows an individual voice range of an octave and a fourth to be notated without the use of ledger lines; and finally, by the standard clefs of vocal music (bass, tenor, alto, and soprano), which imply an ordinary range of F to b for a bass, c to f’ for a tenor, e to a’ for an alto, and b to e” for a soprano. At a pitch somewhere around A415 to 466, these ranges correspond to the comfortable ordinary ranges of human males, within which they can sing “naturally” and deliver text clearly and persuasively, qualities valued by Renaissance writers.

2) Since written ranges derive from the average ranges of actual human singers, standard written vocal ranges are generally stable across the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. (The phenomenon is remarked on by Roger Bowers and David Fallows, both of whom draw the conclusion that A440 is about the right practical pitch for most music of this period, despite their both arguing that the relationship between written and sounding

pitch was entirely arbitrary at the time.¹²) Unsurprisingly, these basic ranges remain the same in the seventeenth century as well, in music with and without accompanying instruments.

3) Organs everywhere played *alternatim* with choirs, and cornetts and sackbuts are documented playing alongside or with English choirs from at least 1514.¹³ At the very least, a 16th-century organist might give the choir its starting pitch.¹⁴ But whether or not instruments played simultaneously or *alternatim* with voices in church or just played starting pitches, or whether singers simply heard and performed with instruments on other occasions outside of the liturgy, thus developing a strong physical sense of where a given note was located in their voices (as all professional singers have nowadays), the pitch of unaccompanied vocal performance must have been related to the pitch of instrumental music. Or rather: the pitch of instruments corresponds to that of voices. In fact, we conceive of the relationship of vocal to instrumental pitch exactly backwards from the way it evolved. We think that vocal pitch derives from instrumental pitch, that instruments give the pitch to singers: historically, it is the ranges of singers that gave instruments their pitch. The pitch and range of the organ, in particular, was originally intended to match that of human voices and vocal music. Thus the lowest note of a 16th-cen-

tury English organ, which was designed for accompanying the choir, sounded “FF fa ut,” the normal bottom note of the vocal bass range.¹⁵ A contract for an organ from Padua in 1507 specifies that its pitch “be choir pitch, at [the level of] a man’s voice or that of a choir”¹⁶ and Arnolt Schlick in his *Spiegel der Orgelmacher und Organisten* (1511) writes that “The instrument has to be pitched for the choir and be tuned suitably for playing with singers.”¹⁷

Now, our own modern pitch grid being centered on A440 and its relatives at integral semitones away, a present-day *a cappella* ensemble finds it quite challenging to shift itself into the cracks and sing at A473 or so, maintaining that foreign pitch for the considerable durations demanded by the Peterhouse repertoire. So on this recording we sing at about A465, a semitone above 440—the most usual choir pitch of the continent, and just slightly lower than English Quire-pitch.

4) In the absence of a reason to alter it, performing pitch is unlikely to change. As Haynes observes, “it is in everyone’s interest that it remain stable.”¹⁸ At most times there will have been many reasons to conserve pitch standards and the pitch grid (while allowing for variations in taste between regions and individual musicians), enabling music to cross distances in space and time and saving a lot of money which would otherwise have to be spent on purchasing or refitting instruments.

5) As one would expect if this line of argument is correct, the pitch grids on the continent and in England are demonstrably stable from the late sixteenth century into the middle of the eighteenth century.¹⁹ In England the orientation to Quire-pitch at circa A473-8 can be documented as far back as the early sixteenth century, as Dominic Gwynn, Andrew Johnstone, and others have shown.²⁰

But all this bother about pitch would count for nothing if one were not at least as concerned with using the right vocal scoring; and that too would be pointless in the cases of Ludford’s *Missa Inclina cor meum* and Mason’s *Ave fuit prima salus* if one did not recognize that both works are notated in a system of low clefs that implies a significant upwards transposition.

VOCAL SCORING & VOICE-TYPES

The five-voice scoring of pre-Reformation English polyphony employs four basic voice types: treble (a boy with a specially trained higher voice), mean (usually a boy with an ordinary voice), tenor, and bass.²¹ Tenor parts are further divided into tenor and contratenor, the latter a part written “against the tenor” and originally in the same range. Beginning around 1515 to 1520 in England the contratenor tended to migrate to a range slightly higher than



the tenor’s. On the continent this bifurcation happened somewhat earlier and the higher part was called a *contratenor altus*, a “high part written against the tenor,” eventually to be known simply as *altus*. A contratenor was not a falsettist but a high tenor. (The high tenor character of the *contratenor altus* survived to the end of the seventeenth century and even beyond. In England it is only in the later works of Purcell that one can see a falsettist counter-tenor emerging,²² while in France the *haute-contre* was the hero of the Baroque operatic stage. The modern notion of a countertenor as a falsettist was essentially invented in the twentieth century by Alfred Deller.)

As for Blue Heron’s forces, we are not bound by the old ecclesiastical prohibition against men and women singing sacred music together,

and our treble parts are sung by women, rather than boys. (Outside of ecclesiastical settings the combination of men’s and women’s voices was perfectly conceivable, as was the substitution of women for boys: in 1586 William Byrd took part in services in a private Catholic chapel in a country home whose musical forces included “choristers, male and female,”²³ and in 1636 Charles Butler described a treble as “the highest part of a boy or woman.”²⁴) 16th-century English choirs usually employed boys on the “mean” line, the second from the top in the standard five-part scoring; an adult male falsettist was the norm for this range on the Continent and may have been an alternative in England. Our mean is sung by one male falsettist and two women. Contratenor, tenor, and bass lines are sung by high, medium, and low mens’ voices, respectively.

In its size and distribution our ensemble very closely resembles the one pre-Reformation choir for which we have detailed evidence of the distribution of voices used in an actual performance, as opposed to a roster of the singers on staff. On one typical occasion in about 1518, this choir—that of the household chapel of the Earl of Northumberland—was divided exactly as ours is, 3/3/2/2/3 from top to bottom.²⁵ Grand collegiate foundations such as Magdalen or cathedrals like Canterbury may have sung polyphonic music with more singers per part—if they ever used all of the choir’s singers at once in a piece of polyphony, which remains



undemonstrated. Magdalen College between 1500 and 1547 generally maintained a complement of 16 boys and 9 or 10 men,²⁶ and a staff list of c. 1540 for the refounded Canterbury Cathedral includes 12 adult male singers or “vyccars” and 10 boy “queresters.”²⁷ I know of no evidence, however, connecting a particular complement or distribution of forces with an actual liturgical performance of a specific piece of English polyphony.

HIGH CLEFS & TRANSPOSITION

The *Missa Inclina cor meum* and *Ave fuit prima salus*, like some other pieces in the Peterhouse partbooks, are written in a system of low clefs, with a C-clef on the second line of the staff for the treble part (of the Mass only, for *Ave fuit* lacks its treble) and an F-clef on the top line for the bass part, rather than the treble (g-clef on

the second line, or g₂) and bass (F-clef on the fourth, or F₄) clefs normally used for these parts. Writing in low clefs, Ludford notated the Mass’s plainchant cantus firmus in the tenor at its normal written pitch and with its traditional modal final on E, without using ledger lines, while maintaining the tenor’s customary position relative to the other four parts in the polyphonic texture—three above and one below. A low combination of clefs normally signals the singers to transpose up a fourth or fifth, and when transposed up a fourth to a final on A the five parts of the *Missa Inclina cor meum* lie precisely in the customary ranges of music notated in ordinary clefs, with an overall compass of 21 notes from G to f’.

It is not clear why Mason chose to notate *Ave fuit* in low clefs, since there is no pre-existent melody, but the same principle of upwards transposition appears to apply to it; transposed up a fourth, its compass extends from G to g’ (in Sandon’s restoration). With this transposition, at Quire-pitch, the singers are able to sing “naturally” and “sweetly” and pronounce the words of the text with clarity and precision, all qualities valued by 16th-century writers. As Thomas Morley put it in 1597, “[Singers] ought to studie howe to vowel and sing cleane, expressing their wordes with devotion and passion, whereby to draw the hearer as it were in chaines of gold by the eares to the consideration of holie things.”²⁸

—Scott Metcalfe

A thorough account by Nick Sandon of the history of the Peterhouse partbooks and his restoration work may be found in Volume 1 of this series of recordings; the notes are also available on our website, www.blueheronchoir.org. Much of the historical information on the partbooks offered here is drawn from introductions to Sandon’s editions and from his dissertation, “The Henrician partbooks belonging to Peterhouse, Cambridge” (PhD. diss., University of Exeter, 1983; rev. 2009 for DIAMM and available at www.diamm.ac.uk).

- 1 Cambridge, Peterhouse College MSS 31, 32, 40 and 41 (sometimes referred to as University Library MSS 471–4). Digital images of the partbooks are available at www.diamm.ac.uk.
- 2 Whether the partbooks were themselves used or intended for use in services, or whether copies of individual works might have been made to sing from, remains an open question.
- 3 Quoted in Roger Bray, “Music and musicians in Tudor England: sources, composition theory and performance,” in Roger Bray, ed., *The Blackwell history of music in Britain, vol. 2: The sixteenth century* (Oxford, 1995), ch. 1, pp. 7–8.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 7.
- 5 The three are the Lambeth Choirbook, also known as the Arundel Choirbook (London, Lambeth Palace, MS 1), the Caius Choirbook (Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 667), and the Ludford partbooks (London, British Library, MSS Royal Appendix 45–8). See David Skinner, “Nicholas Ludford,” in Grove Music Online.
- 6 Nicholas John Sandon, “The Henrician partbooks belonging to Peterhouse, Cambridge” (PhD. diss., University of Exeter, 1983, rev. 2009), p. 155.
- 7 Harley MS 1709; see Sandon (2009), p. 243.
- 8 *Nicholas Ludford, Missa Inclina cor meum*, ed. Nick Sandon (2002) Antico Edition RCM132, Introduction, p. v.
- 9 *John Mason, Ave fuit prima salus*, ed. Nick Sandon (2012), Antico Edition RCM108, Introduction, p. v.
- 10 Bruce Haynes, *A history of performing pitch* (2002), Introduction, section 0–3; ch. 2; et passim.
- 11 See Dominic Gwynn, “Organ pitch in seventeenth-century England,” *BLOS Journal ix* (1985): 65–78 and “The English organ in Purcell’s lifetime,” in *Performing the music of Henry Purcell* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 20–38; Haynes (2002), ch. 2–5; Andrew Johnstone, “As it was in the beginning’: organ and choir pitch in early Anglican church music,” *Early Music* 31 (2003): 506–525.
- 12 Roger Bowers, “The vocal scoring, choral balance and performing pitch of Latin church polyphony in England, c. 1500–58,” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, vol. 112, no. 1 (1986–7): 38–76, esp. 38–53; David Fallows, “Specific information on the ensembles for composed polyphony, 1400–

1474,” in *Studies in the performance of late medieval music*, ed. S. Boorman (1983): 109–159, esp. 125–6; Fallows, “The performing ensembles in Josquin’s sacred music,” *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 35 (1985): 32–64, esp. 47–53.

- 13 Andrew Parrott, “Grett and solompe singing: instruments in English church music before the Civil War,” *Early Music* vi (1978): 182–187. The practice is likely older still. A full century earlier, Ulrich von Richental described English musicians at the Council of Constance in 1416 singing Vespers “with organs and prosunen [slide trumpets] above which were tenor, discant and medius”: see Fallows, “Specific information,” p. 127.
- 14 In 1570 the chapter of Lincoln Cathedral, attempting to restrict what they considered the excessive instrumental display of their organist, William Byrd, instructed him to limit his contribution to giving the choir its notes for the plainsong Canticles: see Ian Payne, *The provision and practice of sacred music at Cambridge colleges and selected cathedrals c. 1547–c. 1646* (New York & London, 1993), p. 147.
- 15 See Johnstone (2003).
- 16 “Item sea coristo a voce de homo over da coro”: contract for the organ at S. Maria di Montebellone, Padua (1507), cited in Haynes (2002), p. 65.
- 17 “Ist das das werck dem Chor gemeß vnd gerecht gestimpt sey zu dem gesang”: cited in Haynes (2002), p. 56.
- 18 Haynes (2002), p. 96.
- 19 Haynes (2002), *passim*. This stability of pitch has persisted until now, for the modern standard of A440 is essentially a reduction to an average of the various pitches of the earlier pitch grid.
- 20 See Johnstone (2003) and the earlier studies cited therein.
- 21 Bowers (1986–7); Bowers, “To chorus from quartet: the performing resource for English church polyphony, c. 1390–1559,” in J. Morehen, ed. *English choral practice 1400–1650* (1995): 1–47.
- 22 Andrew Parrott, “Performing Purcell,” in *The Purcell companion*, ed. Michael Burden (London, 1994), pp. 387–444; see pp. 417–22.
- 23 From the diary of the English Jesuit William Weston, quoted in Joseph Kerman, *The masses and motets of William Byrd* (Berkeley, 1981), pp. 49–50.
- 24 Charles Butler, *The principles of music* (London, 1636), p. 42.
- 25 See Bowers (1986–7), esp. pp. 57–9.
- 26 Bowers (1986–7), p. 55 and n. 43.
- 27 The list is reproduced in Sandon (2009), pp. 133–7.
- 28 Thomas Morley, *A plaine and easie introduction to practical musicke* (London, 1597), p. 179.

Blue Heron



The vocal ensemble Blue Heron has been acclaimed by *The Boston Globe* as “one of the Boston music community’s indispensables” and hailed by Alex Ross in *The New Yorker* for the “expressive intensity” of its interpretations; the *Boston Musical Intelligencer* calls Blue Heron “a fantastic model for the fully-realized potential of early music performance in the 21st century.” Combining a commitment to vivid live performance with the study of original source materials and historical performance practices, the ensemble

ranges over a wide repertoire, including 15th-century English and Franco-Flemish polyphony, Spanish music between 1500 and 1600, and neglected early 16th-century English music, especially the rich repertoire of the Peterhouse partbooks. Blue Heron’s first CD, featuring music by Guillaume Du Fay, was released in 2007. In 2010 the ensemble inaugurated a 5-CD series of Music from the Peterhouse Partbooks, featuring music by Hugh Aston, Robert Jones, Nicholas Ludford, John Mason, and Richard Pygott, including many world premiere recordings; volume 4 will be released in 2014. All of Blue Heron’s recordings have received international critical acclaim and the first Peterhouse CD made the Billboard charts.

Founded in 1999, Blue Heron presents a concert series in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and has performed across the US, including concerts at the Boston Early Music Festival; in New York City at The Cloisters (Metropolitan Museum of Art), the 92nd Street Y, and Music Before 1800; at the Library of Congress and Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C., at Festival Mozaic in San Luis Obispo, California; at the Berkeley Early Music Festival; and for the visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Blue Heron is ensemble in residence at the Center for Early Music Studies at Boston University.

www.blueheronchoir.org

Scott Metcalfe



Scott Metcalfe has gained wide recognition as one of North America’s leading specialists in music from the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries and beyond. Musical and artistic director of Blue Heron, he is also music director of New York City’s Green Mountain Project (Jolle Greenleaf, artistic director), whose performances of Monteverdi’s *Vespers* have been hailed by *The New York Times* as “quite simply terrific” and by *The Boston Globe* as “stupendous.” Metcalfe has been invited to be guest director of TENET (New York), the Handel & Haydn Society (Boston), Emmanuel Music (Boston), the Tudor Choir and Seattle Baroque, Pacific Baroque Orchestra (Vancouver, BC), Quire Cleveland, and the Dryden Ensemble (Princeton, NJ), and he conducted Early Music America’s Young Performers Festival Ensemble at the 2011 Boston Early Music Festival. Metcalfe also enjoys a career as a baroque violinist, playing with Les Délices (dir. Debra Nagy), L’Harmonie des Saisons (dir. Eric Milnes), and other ensembles in Boston, Montreal, and elsewhere. When not playing or directing, he is at work on a new edition of the songs of Gilles Binchois and teaches vocal ensemble repertoire and performance prac-

tice at Boston University, where he is co-director of the Center for Early Music Studies. Metcalfe received a bachelor’s degree in 1985 from Brown University, where he majored in biology (perhaps uniquely in the early music world, he has published an article in the *Annals of Botany*), and in 2005 completed a master’s degree in historical performance practice at Harvard.



Owen McIntosh Sonja Tengblad Dashon Burton Pamela Dellal Michael Barrett Paul Guttry Scott Metcalfe

Mark Sprinkle Julia Steinbok Jennifer Ashe Cameron Beauchamp Jason McStoots

Shari Wilson Martin Near

not pictured: David McFerrin, Sumner Thompson

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

☐ Ave Maria:

AVE fuit prima salus
Qua vincitur hostis malus;
Remordet culpa noxia;
Juva nos. Ave Maria.

MARIA dum salutaris
Ab angelo sic vocaris
Nomen tuum demonia
Repellit. Ave Maria.

GRACIA sancti spiritus
Fecundavit te penitus;
Graciarum nunc premia
Da nobis. Ave Maria.

PLENA tu es virtutibus
Pro cunctis celi civibus;
Virtutes et auxilia
Presta nunc. Ave Maria.

DOMINUS ab inicio
Destinavit te filio;
Tu es mater et filia
Prefelix. Ave Maria.

TECUM letantur angeli
Et exultant archangeli,
Celi celorum curia,
O dulcis. Ave Maria.

BENEDICTA semper iris
In terris et in superis;
Tibi nullus in gloria
Compar est. Ave Maria.

TU cum deo coronaris
Et veniam servis paris;
Fac nobis detur venia
Precibus. Ave Maria.

IN gentes movent prelia,
Mundus, caro et demonia;
Sed defende nos, O pia,
O clemens. Ave Maria.

Hail, Mary:

HAIL was the first greeting
through which the wicked enemy was overcome;
loathsome sin gnaws away [at us];
help us. Hail, Mary.

MARY: such art thou called
while thou art greeted by the angel;
thy name puts demons
to flight. Hail, Mary.

GRACE of the Holy Spirit
made thee fruitful deep within;
give us now the gifts
of graces. Hail, Mary.

FULL art thou with virtues
more than all the citizens of heaven;
now bring virtue and support
[to us]. Hail, Mary.

THE LORD destined thee
for a son from the beginning;
thou art a most fortunate mother
and daughter. Hail, Mary.

WITH THEE angels rejoice
and archangels exult;
the courtiers of the heaven of heavens,
O sweet one. Hail, Mary.

BLESSED wilt thou ever be
on earth and on high;
none is like to thee
in glory. Hail, Mary.

THOU ART crowned together with God
and thou dost acquire pardon for [thy] servants;
obtain by thy prayers that pardon be granted
to us. Hail, Mary.

AMONG mankind prowl conflict,
worldly distraction, fleshly desires and demons;
defend us, however, O dutiful one,
O merciful one. Hail, Mary.

MULIERIBUS omnibus
Repleris summis opibus;
Reple nos tua gracia.
Ave Maria. Ave Maria.

ET post partum velut prius
Virgo manens et filius
Descendit sicut pluvia
In vellus. Ave Maria.

BENEDICTUS sit filius
Adjutor et propicius;
Adjutrix et propicia
Sis nobis. Ave Maria.

FRUCTUS tuus tam amavit
Quod in te nos desponsavit
Ut parentum obprobria
Deleret. Ave Maria.

VENTRIS claustrum bajulavit
Jesum qui nos sorde lavit;
Hunc exores voce pia
Pro nobis. Ave Maria.

TUI viroris speculum
Clarifica hoc seculum;
Viciorum flagicia
Purga nos. Ave Maria.

JESUS salvator filius
Perducat nos superius
Ubi regnas in gloria
Meritis. Ave Maria.

AMEN est finis salutis;
Vocem aperiens mutis
Celi portas et gaudia
Aperi nobis. Ave Maria.

Ascribed to Jacopone da Todi (c. 1230–1306).

WOMEN all thou dost surpass
in being filled with supreme influence;
fill us with thy grace.
Hail, Mary. Hail, Mary.

AND [thou] remaining a virgin
after the birth just as before, and the son
came down like dew
upon a fleece. Hail, Mary.

BLESSED BE [thy] son,
a propitious helper;
be thou a propitious helper
to us. Hail, Mary.

THE FRUIT of thee loved so greatly
that in thee he espoused us
so that he might wipe away the fault
of [our] forefathers. Hail, Mary.

The cloister OF THE WOMB bare
Jesus who cleansed us of uncleanness;
may thou prevail upon him with a devout voice
on our behalf. Hail, Mary.

May the mirror of the fertility OF THEE
reflect light upon the world;
cleanse us of the disgrace
of sins. Hail, Mary.

JESUS the son, the savior:
may he lead us through on high
where thou reignest in glory
through [thy] merits. Hail, Mary.

AMEN is the end of the greeting;
opening [thy] mouth for those who have no voice,
open the gates and joys of heaven
to us. Hail, Mary.

Translation © Nick Sandon 2012. He comments, "The rather convoluted English of the translation attempts to reproduce an essential feature of the Latin by placing the words of the angelic salutation (printed in capitals) at or near the beginning of each stanza" (Antico Edition RCM108, pp. viii–ix).

② (Kyrie VII) *Cunctipotens genitor*

Cunctipotens genitor Deus omni creator eleyson.
Fons et origo boni pie luxque perhennis eleyson.
Salvificet pietas tua nos bone rector eleyson.

Christe Dei splendor virtus patrisque sophia eleyson.
Plasmatis humani factor, lapsi reperator eleyson.
Ne tua damnetur, Jesu, factura benigne eleyson.

Amborum sacrum spiramen, nexus amorque eleyson.
Procedens fomes vite fons purificans vis eleyson.
Purgator culpe, venie largitor optime, offensas dele,
sacro nos munere reple, spiritus alme eleyson.

God, almighty father, creator of all, have mercy.
Fount and kindly source of good, eternal light, have mercy.
Benevolent ruler, may thy goodness save us, have mercy.

O Christ, splendor of God, strength and wisdom of the Father,
have mercy. O thou that takest human form, restorer of the
fallen, have mercy. Lest thy works perish, O Jesus, generously
have mercy.

O spirit, sacred vessel of both [father and son] and bond of
love, have mercy. O kindling fire, fount of life and purifying
force, have mercy. O cleanser of guilt, best bestower of
pardon, wipe out our offenses, fill us with thy sacred gift, O
nourishing spirit, have mercy.

Translation © Nick Sandon 2012

Glorify 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.

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



④ Credo in unum deum, patrem omnipotentem, fac-
torem celi et terre, visibilium omnium et invisibilium.
Et in unum dominum Jesum Christum, filium dei
unigenitum: et ex patre natum ante omnia secula.
Deum de deo, lumen de lumine, deum verum de deo
vero. Genitum non factum, consubstantialem patri:
per quem omnia facta sunt. Qui propter nos homines
et propter nostram salutem descendit de celis. Et
incarnatus est de spiritu sancto ex Maria virgine: et
homo factus est. Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio
Pilato: passus et sepultus est. Et resurrexit tertia die
secundum scripturas. Et ascendit in celum: sedet ad
dexteram patris. Et iterum venturus est cum gloria
judicare vivos et mortuos: cujus regni non erit finis.
Et in spiritum sanctum dominum et vivificantem qui
ex patre filioque procedit. Qui cum patre et filio simul
adoratur et conglorificatur: qui locutus est per prophe-
tas. Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam
ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem
peccatorum. Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum,
et vitam venturi seculi. Amen.

⑤ 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.

⑥ 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.



I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven
and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in one
Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten
of the Father. God from God, Light from Light, true God
from true God. Begotten, not made; of one being with the
Father, through whom all things are made. For us and for
our salvation he came down from Heaven. He was born of
the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and was made man. He
was crucified for our sake under Pontius Pilate, died, and was
buried. On the third day he rose again, in accordance with
the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the
right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge both
the living and the dead, and his kingdom shall have no end.
And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who
proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father
and Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through
the prophets. And I believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic
church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. And
I await the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world
to come. Amen.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are
full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have
mercy on us. Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the
world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, who takes away the
sins of the world, grant us peace.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As always, we are immensely grateful to Nick Sandon for his matchless skill in restoring this music and allowing it to sound anew, and we thank him for making his restored version of *Ave fuit prima salus* available to us in advance of its publication.

Leading support for this recording project is provided by The Cricket Foundation and by Blue Heron's Peterhouse Partners. The project is also funded in part by an Alfred Nash Patterson Grant from Choral Arts New England.

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Blue Heron's Peterhouse Partners are a leadership group of donors who have pledged their support for the entire 5-disc series, enabling Blue Heron to bring this extraordinary and neglected repertoire to a wide modern audience. We are deeply grateful for their vision, commitment, and generosity.

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The recording of Volume 3 was made possible by additional significant donations from: Anonymous (2), Kenneth Berk, Thomas N. Bisson, Dr. Russell Blacker, Scott Clugstone, Dan D. Crawford, Mark Davis, John H. Doherty, Alan Durfee, Carole Friedman & Gail Koplów, Hope Hare, Paul Antony Hayward, Richard & Janet Post, Richard Rastall, Cheryl K. Ryder, Ann Besser Scott, Jennifer Farley Smith & Sam Rubin.

Thanks to Suzy Westcott, Elton Matos, and the Church of the Redeemer for hosting the recording sessions.

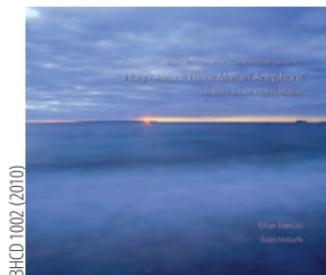
ABOUT THE COVER ART

Each of Blue Heron's CD covers alludes to the music recorded within. The dahlia on the Du Fay disc refers to *Flos florum*, flower of flowers. Vol. 1 of the Peterhouse series features a seascape: the works on the disc honor the Virgin Mary, *Stella maris*, star of the sea. The claw on the cover of Vol. 2 suggests the monstrous talons of the dragon that swallowed St Margaret, for whose feast Ludford may have composed the *Missa Regnum mundi*. The fleece on the cover of the present CD recalls the eleventh stanza of *Ave fuit prima salus*, citing Psalm 71 (in the Vulgate), which itself borrows the image from the story of Gideon's fleece in Judges 6.

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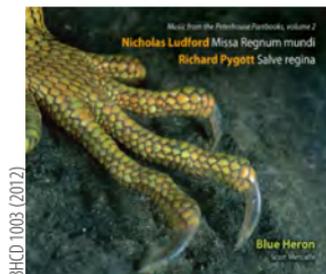
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