

27TH SEASON / 2025-2026

Scott Metcalfe, Artistic Director

BLUEHERON



Christmas in 16th-Century Spain & New Spain

DECEMBER 19–20, 2025

Christmas in 16th-Century Spain & New Spain

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19, 8PM • SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20, 3PM & 8PM
FIRST CHURCH IN CAMBRIDGE, CONGREGATIONAL

I. Come, Lord, and do not delay

Francisco Guerrero (1528–99)
Canite tuba in Sion
Conditor alme siderum

II. The Angel & the Virgin

Guerrero
Gabriel archangelus locutus est ad virginem
Ave Maria gratia plena

III. Let Heaven & Earth rejoice

Gaspar Fernandes (1566–1629)
¡A de abajo!

IV. Christmas Mass for the shepherds

Cristóbal de Morales (c. 1500–1553)
Missa Queramus cum pastoribus
Gloria
Sanctus & Benedictus

intermission

V. A child is born to us

Morales
Puer natus est nobis
Anonymous (*Villancicos de diversos autores*, 1556)
Verbum caro factum est

VI. On stormy seas

Mateo Flecha (1481–1553)
La Bomba
Flecha & Alonso Mudarra (c. 1510–1580), arr. SM
La Gala y La Romanesca

VII. The Three Kings

Guerrero
A un niño llorando al yelo
Los reyes siguen la estrella
Juan del Encina (1468–1529/30)
O reyes magos benditos
Guerrero
Pues la guía d'una estrella

VIII. ¡Viva el zagal bello!

Fernandes
Tañe Gil tu tamborino

BLUE HERON

Sophie Michaux, Timothy Parsons, Sonja DuToit Tengblad *cantus*

Michael Barrett, Jonas Budris, Corey Dalton Hart, Jason McStoots, Sumner Thompson *tenor*

David McFerrin *bassus*

Grant Herreid *guitar & voice*

Jonathan Hess *percussion*

Ben Matus *dulcian, recorder, bagpipes & voice*

Scott Metcalfe *violin, director*

Pre-concert performance at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday by the Training Choir & Repertory Chorus of the New School of Music, Cambridge, directed by Rachael Chagat.



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SINGER SPONSORS FOR THIS CONCERT

Damon Dimmick *sponsoring Timothy Parsons*

Catharine Melhorn & John Lemly *sponsoring David McFerrin*

Rebecca Nemser *sponsoring Sonja DuToit Tengblad*

Harry Silverman *sponsoring Sumner Thompson*

Lois Wasoff *sponsoring Jason McStoots*

Texts & Translations

Canite tuba in Sion quia prope est dies domini.

Ecce venit ad salvandum nos. Erunt prava in
directa et aspera in vias planas. Veni domine et
noli tardare.

Rorate caeli desuper et nubes pluant iustum.

Aperiat terra et germinet salvatorem. Ostende
nobis domine misericordiam tuam et salutare
tuum da nobis. Veni domine et noli tardare.

Antiphon at Lauds and Vespers, Advent IV

Conditor alme siderum,

eterna lux credentium,

Christe, redemptor omnium,

exaudi preces supplicum.

Qui condolens interitu

mortis perire seculum,

salvast mundum languidum,

donans reis remedium.

Vergente mundi vespere,

uti sponsus de thalamo,

egressus honestissima

virginis matris clausula.

Cuius forti potentie

genu curvantur omnia

celestia, terrestria

nutu fatentur subdita.

Te deprecamur agie,

venture iudex seculi,

conserva nos in tempore

hostis a telo perfidi.

Laus, honor, virtus, gloria

Deo patri et filio,

sancto simul paraclito,

in seculorum secula. Amen.

Advent hymn

Blow the trumpet in Zion, for the day of the Lord is
nigh. Lo, he comes to our salvation. The crooked

shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain.

Come, Lord, and do not delay.

Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the

skies pour down righteousness. Let the earth

open and bring forth a savior. Show us, O Lord,

your mercy, and grant to us your salvation. Come,

Lord, and do not delay.

O bountiful creator of the stars,

everlasting light of believers,

O Christ, redeemer of us all,

hear our humble prayers.

Suffering with us a worldly death,

enduring death and earthly destruction,

you saved the suffering world,

bringing us healing for our sins.

As the world turned to evening,

like a bridegroom from his chamber

you came forth from the most pure

cloister of a virgin mother.

Before your mighty power

all creatures kneel down,

in heaven and on earth,

all accept your command.

So we pray you,

O judge of the world to come,

preserve us when we face

the enemy with treacherous arms.

Praise, honor, might, and glory

to God the Father, the Son,

and the Holy Spirit,

for ever and ever. Amen.

Gabriel archangelus locutus est ad virginem
dicens: Ave Maria gratia plena, dominus tecum,
benedicta tu in mulieribus.

Gabriel archangele, veni in adiutorio populo dei, qui
semper assistis in conspectu domini.

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum;
benedicta tu in mulieribus, et be nedictus fructus
ventris tui, Jesus.

Sancta Maria, regina celi, dulcis et pia, O mater
Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus ut cum electis te
videamus.

A de abajo! A de abajo!
A de arriba! que quereis?
Que todos os alegréis
que ha nacido nuestro Dios.
Para quien? Para ti.
Para mi? Para vos
y para entrambos a dos.

A de abajo! allá va
un preso de innumerable valor.

Venir preso tal señor
no será por poco exceso.

A de abajo! ...

Que pidan glorias tales
todas las horas al sentir iguales.

A de abajo! ...

Gabriel the archangel spoke to the virgin, saying:
Hail Mary, full of grace: the Lord is with thee;
blessed art thou among women.
O archangel Gabriel, come to the aid of the people
of God, thou who attendeth always in the sight of
the Lord.

Hail Mary, full of grace: the Lord is with thee;
blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the
fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Queen of Heaven, sweet and merciful,
O mother of God, pray for us sinners, that with
the elect we may see thee.

Hi, down there!
Hi, up there! What do you wish?
Let all of you rejoice
for our God is born.
For whom? For you.
For me? For all of you
and for all of us.

Hi, down there! there goes
a ransom of incalculable worth.

For such a lord to serve as ransom
shall not be at all too much.

Hi, down there! ...

Let them ask for such glories
to be heard equally at all hours.

Hi, down there! ...

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.

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.

Puer natus est nobis et filius datus est nobis. Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. Alleluia. Verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis. Alleluia.

Verbum caro factum est
porque todos hos salveys.

Y la virgen le dezia,
Vida de la vida mia,
hyo mio, que os haria
que no tengo en que os hecheys?

Verbum caro factum est
porque todos hos salveys.

O riquezas temporales,
no dareys unos pañales
a Iesu qu'entre animales
es nascido segun veys?

Verbum caro factum est ...

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.

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.

A child is born to us and a son is given to us.
Glory be to God in the highest and on earth
peace to men of good will. Alleluia.
The word was made flesh and dwelt among us.
Alleluia.

The word was made flesh
so that you might all be saved.

And the virgin said to him,
life of my life,
my son, what can I do for you,
since I have nothing for you to lie in?

The word was made flesh
so that you might all be saved.

O riches of this world,
will you not give some swaddling
to Jesus, who is born
in the midst of animals, as you see?

The word was made flesh ...

La Bomba

Bomba! bomba y agua fuera!
Vayan los cargos al mar
que nos imos a anegar,
do remedio no se espera.
A la escota, socorred!
Vosotros id al timón!
Qué espacio! Corred, corred!
No veis nuestra perdición?
Esas gúmenas cortad
porque se amaine la vela.
Hacia acá contrapesad!
Oh, que la nave se asuela!
Mandad calafatear
que quizá dará remedio!
Ya no hay tiempo ni lugar
que la nao se abre por medio!
Qué haremos? Qué haremos?
Si aprovechará nadar?
Oh, que está tan bravo el mar
que todos pereceremos!
Pipas y tablas tomemos.

Mas triste yo, qué haré?
Que yo que no sé nadar moriré!
Virgen madre, yo prometo
rezar contino tus horas.
Si Juancho escapas, yermo moras.
Montserrat luego meto!
Yo, triste, ofrezco también,
en saliendo deste lago
ir descalzo a Santiago
e uyendo a Jerusalén.
Santa Virgen de Loreto!
San Ginés, socorred nos!
Que me ahogo, santo Diós!
San Telmo, santo bendito!
Oh, Virgen de Guadalupe,
nuestra maldad no te ocupe!
Señora de Montserrat,
oíd, Señora y gran rescate!

The Pump

Pump! pump and bail water!
Heave the cargo into the sea
or we're going to sink
with no hope of salvation.
To the mainsheet, help!
All hands to the helm!
Not so slow, run, run!
Can't you see we're doomed?
Cut the ropes
and lower the sail.
Throw your weight over here!
Oh, the ship is wrecked!
Find some caulk
to see if it might help!
It's already too late,
the ship is breaking in half!
What shall we do, what shall we do?
Try swimming?
Oh, the sea is so rough
that all of us will perish!
Hang onto the barrels and timbers!

But woe is me, what will I do?
I can't swim, I'm going to die!
Virgin Mother, I promise
to recite your hours without fail.
You, Juancho, if you escape, you'll live as a hermit.
I'll get myself to Montserrat!
I too, poor wretch, offer
that when I get out of this sea
I'll walk barefoot to Santiago
and go running to Jerusalem!
Holy Virgin of Loreto!
Saint Genesius, help us!
I'm drowning, holy God!
Saint Elmo, blessed saint!
O Virgin of Guadalupe,
do not think of our sins.
Lady of Montserrat,
hear us, Lady and great helper!

Oh gran socorro y bonanza!
Nave viene en que escapemos!
Allegad, que perecemos!
Socorred, no haya tardanza!
No sea un punto detenido,
señores, ese batel!
Oh, qué ventura he tenido,
pues que pude entrar en él.
Gratias agamus domino deo nostro:
dignum et justum est
de tan grande beneficio
recibido en este día.
Cantemos con alegría
todos hoy por su servicio.
Ea, ea! Sus, empecemos!
Empieza tú, Gil Pizarra,
a tañer con tu guitarra
y nosotros te ayudaremos.
Esperad que esté templada.
Témplala bien, hi de ruin!
Denden, dindirindín.
Oh, cómo está destemplada!
Acaba, maldito, ya!
Denden, dindirindín.
Es por demás!
Sube, sube un poco más.
Denden, dindirindín.
Muy bien está!
Ande, pues, nuestro apellido,
el tañer con el cantar
concordes en alabar
a Jesús recién nacido.

Dindirindín, dondón, dondón.
Bendito el que hoy ha venido
a librarnos de agonía,
y bendito sea este día
que nació el contentamiento:
remedió su advenimiento
mil enojos.
Benditos sean los ojos
que con piedad nos miraron,

Oh, what wondrous rescue and blessing!
A ship is coming in which we can escape!
Hurry, we are dying!
Help, do not delay!
Do not slow that boat
for a moment, good sirs!
Oh, what great fortune is mine
that I can board it.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God:
it is meet and right
to give thanks for the great bounty
we have received this day.
Let us all sing joyfully
in his service today.
Come, come, let's begin!
You start, Gil Pizarra,
play your guitar
and the rest of us will help you.
– Just wait until it's tuned.
Tune it well, you whoreson!
Denden, dindirindín.
– Oh, how out of tune it is!
Get on with it, damn you!
Denden, dindirindín.
– It's no use!
Higher, just a little higher.
Denden, dindirindín.
Now that's good!
Come now, all our crew,
let's play and sing
and raise our voices in praise
of the newborn Jesus.

Dindirindín, dondón, dondón.
Blessed be he who came today
to free us from agony,
and blessed be this day
on which contentment is born:
his coming redeemed us
from a thousand woes.
Blessed be the eyes
that looked on us with pity,

y benditos que así amansaron
tal fortuna.

No quede congoxa alguna,
demos prisa al navegar,
pois o vento nos ha de llevar,
garrido vendaval!

No se vió bonanza igual
sobre tan gran desatiento.

Bien hayas tú, viento,
que así me ayudas
contra fortuna.

Gritad, gritad todos a una,
gritad Bonanza! Bonanza!
Salvamiento! Salvamiento!

Miedo hubisteis al tormento,
no teniendo ya esperanza,

O modicae fidei!

Ello está muy bien así.

Gala es todo,
a nadie hoy duela,

la gala chinela,

de la china gala,

la gala chinela.

Mucho prometemos
en tormenta fiera,
mas luego ofrecemos

infinita cera,

de la china gala,

la gala chinela.

Adiós, señores! La vela!

*Nam si pericula sunt in mari,
pericula sunt in terra
et pericula in falsis fratribus.*

and blessed be those that averted
such misfortune.

Let no sorrow remain,
let us hasten to sail,
for the wind will carry us,
a fair sea wind!

Never has such blessing followed
on such great disaster.

Best wishes to you, wind,
who helps me thus
against Fortune.

Shout, shout all together as one,
shout Blessing! Blessing!
Salvation! Salvation!

You were afraid in your torment,
having lost all hope,

O ye of little faith!

All is well now.

Everything is rejoicing,
let noone grieve today,

la gala chinela,

de la china gala,

la gala chinela.

We promised a lot
during the fierce storm,
and later we'll burn

an infinite number of candles,

de la china gala,

la gala chinela.

God be with you, good sirs! To sail!

*For while there are perils at sea,
there are perils also on land
and perils among false brethren.*

A un niño llorando al yelo

van tres Reyes a adorar,
porque el niño puede dar
reynos, vida, gloria y cielo.

Nace con tanta baxeza
aunque es poderoso Rey,
porque nos da ya por ley
abatimiento y pobreza.

Por esto llorando al yelo
van tres Reyes a adorar,
porque el niño puede dar
reynos, vida, gloria y cielo.

Alma, venid también vos
a adorar tan alto nombre.
Veréis que este niño es hombre
y mayorazgo de Dios.

Y aunque pobre y pequeñuelo
le van Reyes a adorar,
porque el niño puede dar
reynos, vida, gloria y cielo.

Los Reyes siguen la estrella,

la estrella sigue al Señor
y el Señor de ellos y de ella,
sigue y busca al pecador.

Teniendo de Dios noticia,
buscan con divino zelo,
la estrella al sol de justicia,
los Reyes al Rey del cielo.

Guiados son de una estrella,
la estrella de su Señor
y el Señor de ellos y de ella,
sigue y busca al pecador.

Buscan al Rey soberano
los Reyes para 'doralle,
y el Rey traydor y tyrano
le busca para matalle.

To a child crying in the cold
come three Kings, to adore him,
for the child can give
kingdoms, life, glory, and heaven above.

He is born so lowly,
although he is a powerful King,
because for a law he gives us
humbleness and poverty.

For this one crying in the cold
come three Kings, to adore him,
for the child can give
kingdoms, life, glory, and heaven above.

O soul, come, you too,
to adore his most high name.
You will see that this boy is a man
and the firstborn son of God.

And although he is poor and tiny,
three Kings come to adore him,
for the child can give
kingdoms, life, glory, and heaven above.

The Kings follow the star,
the star follows the Lord,
and the Lord of kings and star
follows and seeks out the sinner.

Receiving the news from God,
they seek with holy zeal:
the star seeking the sun of justice,
the Kings, the King of Heaven.

The Kings are guided by a star,
the star by its Lord,
and the Lord of kings and star
follows and seeks out the sinner.

The Kings seek the sovereign King
in order to adore him,
and the traitorous and tyrannical King
seeks him in order to kill him.

Siguen los tres a la estrella,
la estrella sigue al Señor
y el Señor de ellos y de ella,
sigue y busca al pecador.

O reyes magos benditos,
pues de Dios sois tan amados,
sed mi guarda y abogados.

Sed mi guarda en este suelo
porque en sus lazos no caya
y abogados en el cielo
porque a veras allá vaya;
porque por vosotros aya
gran perdón de mis pecados,
sed mi guarda y abogados.

Tanto quiso dios amaros
por vuestro mereçimiento
que le plugo rrevelaros
su sagrado nacimiento:
pues le teneis tan contento
y con el soys tan privados,
sed mi guarda y abogados.

Venistes desde oriente
adorar al rey divino
con aquel alto presente
para quien d'el era digno.
Caminastes de contino
por una estrella guiados:
sed mi guarda y abogados.

Serbieronle los pastores
por pastor de tantas greyes
y vosotros mis señores
por mayor rey de los reyes.
Pues del dador de las leyes
sois tan queridos y amados,
sed mi guarda y abogados.

The three follow the star,
the star follows the Lord,
and the Lord of kings and star
follows and seeks out the sinner.

O blessed Kings and Magi,
since you are so beloved of God,
be my guardians and advocates.

Be my guardians on this earth
so that I do not fall into his [the devil's] snares,
and my advocates in heaven
so that I may truly go there;
so that through you I shall receive
great pardon for my sins,
be my guardians and advocates.

God so loved you
for your merits
that it pleased him to reveal to you
his holy birth:
since you content him so
and are so intimate with him,
be my guardians and advocates.

You came from the east
to adore the divine king
bearing that great gift
for him who was worthy of it.
You travelled without rest,
guided by a star:
be my guardians and advocates.

The shepherds served him
as the shepherd of many flocks,
and you likewise, my lords,
as the greatest king of kings.
Since by the giver of laws
you are so cherished and loved,
be my guardians and advocates.

Pues la guía d'una estrella

a tres Reyes mostró a dios,
Virgen mostrádnosle vos,
que soys guía mejor qu'ella.

Estrella soys que paristes
al claro sol de justicia.
Vos soys la que dió notiçia
de dios, pues a dios nos distes.

Pues si material estrella
oy fue guía para dios,
Virgen mostrádnosle vos,
que soys guía mejor qu'ella.

Fuystes medianera y medio
para con el mediador
y distes al pecador
medio para su remedio.

Pues si fue medio un'estrella
que a tres Reyes mostró a dios,
Virgen mostrádnosle vos,
que soys guía mejor qu'ella.

Tañe Gil tu tamborino

y anden la flauta y sonajas,
hágase la gayta rajas
y el rabel no pierda el tino.

Que el cielo divino
a fiestas convida
por la nueva vida
que a la tierra vino.

Viva el zagal bello
que assi al çielo aplaze
pues todo el celebra
lo que puede y vale.

Since the guidance of a star
led the three kings to God,
O virgin, lead us to him,
for thou art a better guide than a star.

A star art thou, who gave birth
to the bright sun of justice.
Thou art she who heralds
God, for thou gavest God to us.

So if a physical star
was today a guide to God,
O virgin, lead us to him,
for thou art a better guide than a star.

Thou wast mediator and means
towards the mediator
and thou gavest the sinner
the means for his remedy.

So if it was through a star
that the three Kings were led to God,
O virgin, lead us to him,
for thou art a better guide than a star.

Play your drum, Gil,
and let the flute and tamborine sound,
let the bagpipe stutter
and the fiddle not lose its tune.

For heaven above
invites us to a party
for the new life
that has come to earth.

Hurrah for the beautiful boy
who is so pleasing to heaven
that everything celebrates
what he will do and what he will become.

Al sol increado
que en el portal yace,
pues la tierra alumbra
la tierra le ensalse.

Que el cielo divino
a fiestas convida ...

The uncreated sun
lies in the creche:
since he lights up the earth,
the earth extols him.

For the divine heavens
invite us to a feast ...

Translations by Scott Metcalfe

Cover Illustration Credits

A Celebration of German Poetry & Song, c. 1150-1450

Codex Manesse: Heidelberg University Library, Codex Palatinus germanicus 848

Christmas in 16th-Century Spain

The Annunciation, Budapest Master (Spanish, Castilian, c. 1500)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City (Public Domain)

In Praise of Laura Peverara

A Concert, anonymous (Italian, Venetian, mid-1520s)

The National Gallery, London (CC4.0)

Okeghem: *Missa Cuiusvis toni*

Okeghem and his singers in an illustrated MS of the 1520s

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS fr. 1537, f. 58v

Le grant rhetorique: The Music & Poetry of Guillaume de Machaut

Love presents his children Sweet Thought, Pleasure, and Hope to Guillaume de Machaut.

Machaut MS A: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS fr. 1584, f. A1

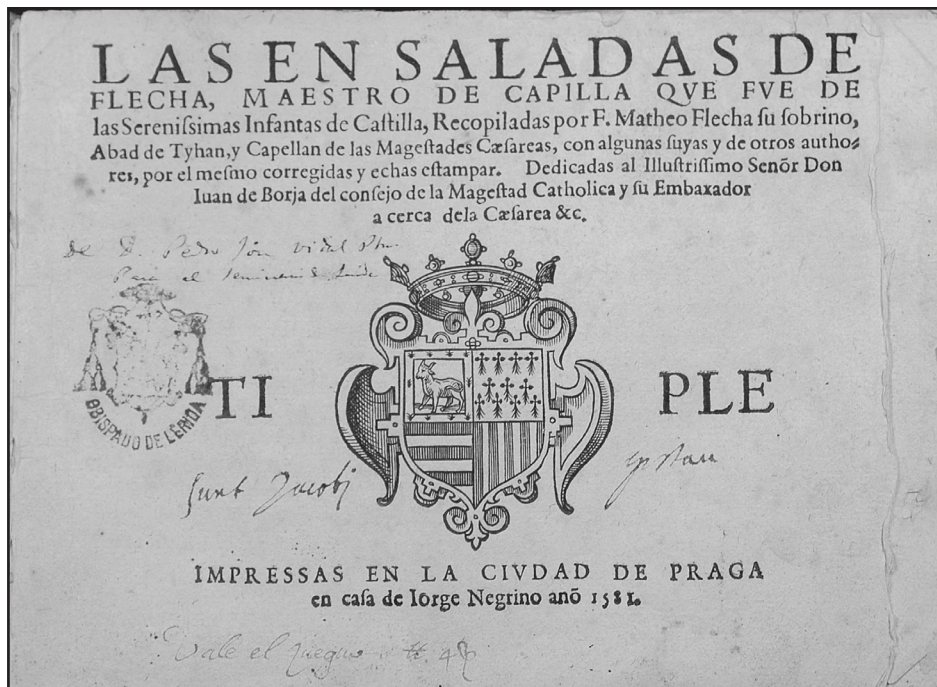
Christmas in Spain & New Spain

Our program opens at the beginning of the church year, in Advent, the penitential and preparatory season during which the birth of the Savior is longed for, anticipated, and prophesied. “Come, Lord, and do not delay,” implores the motet by Francisco Guerrero, “for the day of the Lord is nigh. Lo, he comes to our salvation. The crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain.” Next we hear the familiar Advent hymn *Conditor alme siderum*, celebrating the arrival of Christ and the imminent return of light to a world darkened by evening, while looking ahead to his passion and resurrection. Gabriel appears to the virgin, blessing her and the fruit of her womb: in *Gabriel archangelus* the awesome archangel is evoked by a trio of high voices accompanied by a single tenor, while in *Ave Maria gratia plena* his salutation to Mary is sung in alternation by two four-voice choirs. In both pieces the words “Ave Maria” are set to their plainchant melody in longer note values.

Jesus is born in a manger in Bethlehem, and in Gaspar Fernandes’s villancico *¡A de abajo!* the heavenly host announces the news to those “down there,” referring again to the child’s salvific mission to serve as “a ransom of incalculable worth” for all of humanity. Those on earth observe that the ransom paid by such a Lord is in no way excessive. Angels and people join voices in a rollicking triple meter. We then celebrate Christmas Mass among shepherds, singing two movements from Cristóbal de Morales’s *Missa Queramus cum pastoribus*, a so-called parody mass whose musical materials are derived from the motet of the same name (“Let us seek with the shepherds the Word incarnate”) by Jean Mouton. To the four voices of Mouton’s motet Morales adds a fifth, a second bass; the rich low texture may be meant to emphasize the humble humanity of the Savior’s birth, or that of his pastoral worshippers. The Osannas dance forth in triple time.

Most of the pieces on the second half of the program are villancicos. In every nation in medieval and early modern European Christendom there

evolved—besides a shared repertoire of liturgical chant and non-liturgical Latin *cantiones*—a distinct and distinctive repertoire of vernacular Christmas songs, including (just to mention those nations whose music Blue Heron performs regularly) English and German carols, French *noëls*, and Spanish *villancicos*. The term villancico, derived from *villano* (peasant), was applied to a poetic and musical form in which a refrain or *estribillo* framed stanzas or *coplas*. A villancico might have any number of stanzas and the refrain might be heard between all the *coplas* or just before and after a sequence of them. Originally on generally rustic and amorous themes, villancicos in the mid-sixteenth century took on a devotional character and were sung on the great feasts of the church year, especially at matins or Mass on Christmas Day. Francisco Guerrero, whose music is featured prominently on today’s program, wrote both secular and sacred villancicos. He transformed some of his secular songs into sacred by revising the texts; borrowing the Italian word, he published them alongside secular *canciones* as *villanescas espirituales*.



Title page of Tiple partbook, *Las ensaladas de Flecha* (Prague, 1581).
Centre de Documentació de l'Orfeó Català (CC/PD 1.0)

Although the sixteenth-century villancico often retained a popular flavor, those by Guerrero are extremely sophisticated, their exuberance crafted of complex rhythms and artful counterpoint. The composers of devotional villancicos were all church musicians and there is no mistaking the music for folk music, however lightly the learning of its creators may be worn. A case in point is the sparkling macaronic villancico *Verbum caro factum est*—perhaps by Mateo Flecha—whose refrain quotes both text and music of the short responsory *Verbum caro* sung at Terce on Christmas Day. In drawing on liturgical plainchant it resembles Morales's motet *Puer natus est nobis*, which quotes text and music of the introit to Mass on Christmas Day (“*Puer natus est nobis et filius datus est nobis*”), then the text of the responsory *Verbum caro*, and

then for good measure throws in the *Gloria in excelsis deo* from the Ordinary of the Mass—which itself quotes the angels who appear to the shepherds in the fields by Bethlehem. (We’ll sing a few phrases of the plainchant introit before *Puer natus* and the responsory before *Verbum caro*.)

The most surprising work on the program may be *La Bomba* by Mateo Flecha the Elder, a specialist in the genre known as the *ensalada*.

*Ensalada es un composición de coplas redondillas, entre los cuales se mezclan todas las diferencias de metros, so sólo españoles, pero de otras lenguas sin orden de unos a otros al albedrío del poeta; y según la variedad de las letras se va mudando la música. Y por eso se llama ensalada, por la mezcla de metros y sonadas que lleva.*¹

An *ensalada* is a composition of *coplas redondillas* (octosyllabic quatrains) into which are mixed all

1 Juan Díaz Rengifo, *Arte poética española* (Salamanca, 1592), cap. LXIII

different sorts of meters, not only in Spanish, but in other languages as well, shifting from one to another without order at the whim of the poet; and the music changes according to the variety of the text. And for this reason it is called a salad, on account of the mixture of meters and tunes which it contains.

♦ ♦ ♦

Y porque en la ensalada echan muchas yervas diferentes, carnes saladas, pescados, azeytunas, conservas, flor de borraja, grageas, y de mucha diversidad de cosas se haze un plato, llamaron ensaladas, un genero de canciones que tienen diversos metros, y son como centones, recogidos de diversos autores. Estas componen los Maestros de Capilla, para celebrar las fiestas de la

*Navidad, y tenemos de los autores antiguos muchas y buenas, como El Molino, La Bomba, El Fuego, La Justa, El Chilindron, &c.*²

And because into a salad one tosses many different leaves, cured meats, fish, olives, pickles, borage flowers, bits of candied fruit, and from a great diversity of things a dish is made, one calls “salads” a genre of songs which contain diverse meters and which are like centos, collections of quotations from various authors. Chapel masters compose them to celebrate Christmas, and we have many good ones from older composers, such as *El Molino, La Bomba, El Fuego, La Justa, El Chilindrón*, and others.

2 Sebastián de Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (Madrid, 1611), p. 354.



Portrait of Francisco Guerrero in Francisco Pacheco, *Libro de descripción de verdaderos retratos, de illustres y memorables varones* (Seville, 1599)

Into this particular salad Flecha tosses, among other ingredients, a bit of plainchant from the Mass (“Gratias agamus domino deo nostro”), two lines from a Portuguese theatre piece, *Triunfo do Inverno* by Gil Vicente (“Poys o vento nos a de llevar, garrido vendoval”), a quote from the Gospels (“Oh ye of little faith!”: Matthew 8:26), and a bit of nonsensical wordplay (“A la chinagala, la gala chinela,” meaning something like “To the Chinese party, wear party slippers”) from a romance about Sevillian courtesans who (like the sailors of *La Bomba*) set out to sea, encounter a terrible storm, and make a lot of promises to the Virgin and various saints, which, once rescued, they forget. A miniature comic masterpiece, *La Bomba* turns out, as Covarrubias remarks, to be a Christmas piece (surprise), and (surprise again!) winds up with a disconcertingly sober mini-motet setting an admonitory text from Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians.

The Christmas season extends for twelve days until Epiphany, January 6th, commemorating the visit of the Magi, who follow a star to Bethlehem and present their gifts to the newborn king. Our program honors the Three Kings with three villancicos by Guerrero and one by Juan del Encina, the latter largely homophonic and sober.

Why so much Guerrero on this one program? For no better reason than that he is one of the most wonderful composers of the age, wrote an enormous amount of music—no less than a page for each day of his life, according to Francisco Pacheco—and excelled in setting both Latin and Spanish texts.

Behold Francisco Guerrero, in whose compositions are found such elegant craftsmanship and such graceful counterpoint; whose pen has given us such works of lasting merit and universal significance; that all future ages may never produce a master who

combines so many gifts. For just as in musical science he exceeds everyone else, so also he is a consummate singer and a great teacher.³

* * *

In his copious and elegant polyphonic compositions he has ornamented our Spain, for so widely has his fame traveled among all discerning musicians that no collector thinks his library complete without works by the celebrated Guerrero. Among his merits that deserve applause is his pioneering success in fitting music to Spanish verse so that the very life and rhythm of the poetry are preserved.⁴

Our program concludes with another villancico by Gaspar Fernandes, *Tañe Gil tu tamborino*. (Everyone who plays an instrument seems to be called Gil: Gil Piçarra in *La Bomba*, plain Gil here.) Born in Portugal, by 1590 Fernandes was employed as a singer and organist in Évora. In July 1599 he was engaged as organist at the cathedral in Guatemala City, three years later becoming *maestro de capilla*. In 1606 he was appointed *maestro de capilla* of the cathedral in the colonial city of Puebla de los Ángeles in Mexico, where he remained until his death in 1629. Between 1609 and 1616 Fernandes composed several cycles of villancicos and *chanzonetas* for Christmas, Corpus Christi, and other feasts—nearly 300 works collected in a large autograph manuscript now in Oaxaca. Though not nearly as accomplished a composer as Guerrero (whose music he had copied into choirbooks in Puebla), Fernandes wrote lively and attractive villancicos, whose texts sometimes allude to the instruments that were used to add celebratory color to their performance, as we do today.

—Scott Metcalfe

³ Vicente Espinel (1550–1624), *La casa de la memoria*, in *Diversas rimas* (Madrid, 1591), f. 46v (trans. Robert Stevenson in *Spanish cathedral music in the golden age*, p. 137)

⁴ Cristóbal Mosquera de Figueroa, preface to Guerrero’s *Canciones y villanescas espirituales* (Venice, 1589) (trans. Stevenson, *Spanish cathedral music*, p. 184)

BLUE HERON



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 its “expressive intensity.” The ensemble ranges over a wide repertoire from plainchant to new music, with particular specialities in 15th-century Franco-Flemish polyphony and early 16th-century English sacred music, and is committed to vivid live performance informed by the study of original source materials and historical performance practices.

Founded in 1999, Blue Heron presents a concert series in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and has appeared at the Boston Early Music Festival; in New York City at Music Before 1800, The Cloisters (Metropolitan Museum of Art), and the 92nd Street Y; at the Library of Congress, the National Gallery of Art, and Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C.; at the Berkeley Early Music Festival; at Yale University, the University of Chicago, and the University of California, Davis; in Cleveland, Kansas City, Milwaukee, Montreal, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Providence, St. Louis, San Luis Obispo, Seattle, and Vancouver; and in England, Germany, and Belgium, including concerts in the chapel at Peterhouse in Cambridge, England, and in Cipriano de Rore’s hometown of Ronse, Belgium. Blue Heron has been in residence at the University of Chicago, the Center for Early Music Studies at Boston University, and Boston College, and has enjoyed collaborations with A Far Cry, Dark Horse Consort, Les Délices, Parthenia, Piffaro, and Ensemble Plus Ultra.

Blue Heron’s first CD, featuring music by Guillaume Du Fay, was released in 2007. Between 2010 and 2017 the ensemble issued a 5-CD series of *Music from the Peterhouse Partbooks* (available as a boxed set entitled *The Lost Music of Canterbury*), including many world premiere recordings of works copied around 1540 for Canterbury Cathedral and restored by Nick Sandon; the fifth CD in the series was awarded the 2018 Gramophone Classical Music Award for Early Music, making Blue Heron the first non-European



PHOTO: LIZ LINDER

ensemble to receive the honor. Jessie Ann Owens and Blue Heron won the 2015 Noah Greenberg Award from the American Musicological Society to support the world premiere recording of Cipriano de Rore's *I madrigali a cinque voci*, released in 2019. Between 2015 and 2023 Blue Heron celebrated the circa-600th birthday of Johannes Okeghem (c. 1420-1497) by performing his complete works in a multi-season project entitled *Okeghem@600* and recorded all of his songs for a two-CD set; Volume I of the set was named to the *Bestenliste* of the *Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik*. Blue Heron's recordings also include a CD accompanying Thomas Forrest Kelly's book *Capturing Music: The Story of Notation*, the live recording *Christmas in Medieval England*, a compilation of medieval songs entitled *A 14th-Century Salmagundi*, a live recording of a concert production of Guillaume de Machaut's *Remede de Fortune, Christmas & New Year's in 15th-Century France & Burgundy*, and a disc of works by Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol, *Lessons from Nightingales*, released in August 2025.



Michael Barrett is a Boston-based conductor, singer, multi-instrumentalist, and teacher. He serves as music director of The Boston Cecilia and is an Associate Professor at the Berklee College of Music, where he teaches courses in conducting and European music history. He also

recently served as Interim Director of the Five College Early Music Program. Michael has performed with many professional early music ensembles, including Blue Heron, the Boston Camerata, the Huelgas Ensemble, Vox Luminis, the Handel & Haydn Society, Nederlandse Bachvereniging (Netherlands Bach Society), Seven Times Salt, Schola Cantorum of Boston, and Nota Bene, and can be heard on the harmonia mundi, Blue Heron, Coro, and Toccata Classics record labels. He holds degrees in music (Harvard University), voice (Royal Conservatory in The Hague), and choral conducting (Indiana University and Boston University).



Tenor **Jonas Budris** is a versatile soloist and ensemble musician, engaging new works and early music with equal passion. He has enjoyed performing, touring, and recording with such groups as Blue Heron, Cut Circle, the Handel & Haydn Society, Boston Baroque, The Thirteen, and the

Skylark Vocal Ensemble. Mr. Budris is a featured soloist in Boston Baroque's Grammy-nominated recording of Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* and sang on Blue Heron's *Music from the Peterhouse Partbooks, Vol. 5*, which received the 2018 Gramophone Award for Early Music. He can also be heard on Cut Circle's recordings *Messes Anonymes* and *Johannes Ockeghem: The Songs*. On the operatic stage, he has performed principal and supporting roles with Opera Boston, OperaHub, Guerilla Opera, and Odyssey Opera, originating such roles as John in *Giver of Light* and the title role of *Chrononhotontologos*.

Mr. Budris made his debut at the Carmel Bach Festival as the 2018 Tenor Vocal Fellow for the Virginia Best Adams Vocal Masterclass. He is a Lorraine Hunt Lieberman Fellow with Emmanuel Music, where he has performed regularly in their Bach Cantata and evening concert series. Originally from Martha's Vineyard, Mr. Budris holds a degree in Environmental Sciences and Engineering from Harvard College.



Corey Dalton Hart is a Boston-based tenor and voice teacher, known for his musical versatility, engaging presence, and expressive textual interpretations. With a passion for American song, he is a regular recitalist along the east coast, having premiered new works in both New York City and

Boston. As a chamber artist, Corey performs regularly with groups in Boston and across the U.S. including Blue Heron, the Boston Camerata, Zenith Ensemble, Boston Baroque, Renaissance Men, and the Ashmont Bach Project. In conjunction with his performance schedule, Corey maintains an active private voice studio and is a member of the voice faculty of the New England Conservatory Preparatory School. Corey holds a DMA in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy from the New England Conservatory of Music, a MM from the Bard Conservatory Graduate Vocal Arts Program, and a BM from Furman University.



Grant Herreid performs frequently on early reeds, brass, strings, percussion and voice with Piffaro, Hesperus, ARTEK, Elm City Consort, and many others. He was the recipient of Early Music America's Laurette Goldberg award for excellence in early music outreach and education. On

the faculty at Yale University, he directs the Yale Collegium Musicum and the Yale Baroque Opera Project (YBOP). Grant devotes much of his time to exploring the unwritten improvisatory traditions of early (and late) Renaissance music.



Praised for his "power and finesse" (*Boston Classical Review*) and "exacting milieus" (*The Boston Globe*), percussionist **Jonathan Hess** is the principal timpanist for the Handel & Haydn Society (Boston), Boston Baroque, Teatro Nuovo (New York City), and Bach Akadamie

Charlotte. He performs and records regularly throughout New England with some of the region's premier organizations including the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, A Far Cry, Celebrity Series, Odyssey Opera, Aston Magna, Blue Heron, and the Connecticut Early Music Festival. In addition to his versatility and command as a performer, he is also a dedicated and passionate educator, currently teaching percussion at the College of the Holy Cross. Jonathan is a graduate of St. Olaf College and the Boston Conservatory.



Ben Matus enjoys a varied career in music, bringing to life music regardless of whether it was written in the Middle Ages or yesterday. Ben performs with early music groups on various bassoons, dulcians, shawms, recorders, bagpipes, and whatever instruments he can get his hands on, all across

the US—including Alkemie Medieval Music Ensemble, Ars Poetica, New York Baroque Incorporated, The Sebastians, Trinity Baroque Orchestra, The Clarion Society, Opera Lafayette, The Washington Bach Consort, The Handel and Haydn Society, the Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado, and more. In addition to his performances in concert halls, Ben plays Celtic traditional music with his band the Chivalrous Crickets. With Alkemie, Ben recently prepared and recorded the music for *Pentiment*, the award-winning video game set in sixteenth-century Bavaria. His latest endeavor is performing on the *musette de cour*, a French Baroque bagpipe favored by French aristocrats, Rameau, and Bonnie Prince Charlie.



Hailed for "a voice of seductive beauty" (*Miami Herald*) and as an "unfailing versatile" performer (*Boston Globe*), baritone **David McFerrin** has won critical acclaim in a variety of repertoire. His opera credits include Santa Fe Opera, Seattle Opera, Florida Grand Opera, the

Rossini Festival in Germany, and numerous roles with Boston Lyric Opera and other local companies. As a concert soloist he has sung with the Cleveland Orchestra, the Israel Philharmonic, the Handel & Haydn Society, and the Boston Pops, and in recital at the Caramoor, Ravinia, and Marlboro festivals. Recent highlights have included the title role in Britten's *Noye's Fludde* with Boston Lyric Opera, Jesus in Bach's St. Matthew Passion with Emmanuel Music, and return performances with the

American Bach Soloists in the Bay Area. David has been a member of Blue Heron since 2011. He lives in Natick, Massachusetts, with his wife Erin, an architectural historian and preservation planner; their daughter Fiona; and black lab Holly.



Reviewers have praised **Jason McStoots** as having an “alluring tenor voice” (*ArtsFuse*) and as “the consummate artist, wielding not just a sweet tone but also incredible technique and impeccable pronunciation” (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*). In 2015 he won a Grammy award in

Opera with the Boston Early Music Festival (BEMF) for their recording of works by Charpentier. His recent stage appearances in period-style baroque opera with BEMF include *Le Jeu in Les plaisirs de Versailles* by Charpentier, *Apollo in Monteverdi’s Orfeo*, and *Eumete and Giove in Monteverdi’s Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria*. Other recent solo performances include *Pedrillo in Mozart’s Abduction from the Seraglio*, *Bach’s Christmas Oratorio* and *St. Mark Passion* with Emmanuel Music, and *Monteverdi’s Vespers of 1610* with the Green Mountain Project. He has appeared with Boston Lyric Opera, Pacific MusicWorks, Boston Camerata, TENET, San Juan Symphony, The Bach Ensemble, Pablo Casals Festival, Early Music Guild of Seattle, Tragicomedia, and the Tanglewood Music Center. He is a core member of Blue Heron and can be heard on all their recordings. With BEMF, he appears on recordings of Lully’s *Psyché* (nominated for a Grammy), *Handel’s Acis and Galatea* (as Damon), *John Blow’s Venus and Adonis* (soloist), and *Charpentier’s Actéon* (as Orphée).



Scott Metcalfe is widely recognized 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 since its founding in 1999, he was music director of New York City’s Green Mountain

Project from 2010-19 and has been guest director of TENET (New York), the Handel & Haydn Society (Boston), Emmanuel Music (Boston), the Toronto Consort, The Tudor Choir and Seattle Baroque, Pacific Baroque Orchestra (Vancouver, BC), Quire Cleveland, and the Dryden Ensemble (Princeton, NJ), in music ranging from Machaut to Bach and Handel. He 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. Metcalfe’s scholarly work, centered on the historical performance practice of medieval and Renaissance vocal music, has been published in numerous program and recording notes, and he is the author of two articles in the *Journal of the Alamire Foundation*, two essays in a just-released book on music at Peterhouse, Cambridge (*Music, politics, and religion in early seventeenth-century Cambridge: the Peterhouse partbooks in context*), and editions of music for Antico Edition and the Alamire Foundation. He has just returned from a sabbatical residency at the Alamire Foundation in Leuven, Belgium, working on a new edition of the songs of Binchois (c. 1400-1460). Metcalfe has taught at Boston University, Harvard University, the New England Conservatory, and the Peabody Institute, and has served as director of the baroque orchestra at Oberlin Conservatory. He received a bachelor’s degree from Brown University (1985), where he majored in biology, and a master’s degree in historical performance practice from Harvard (2005).



Praised for her “warm, colorful mezzo” (*Opera News*) and her “astonishing range and flexibility” (*Boston Musical Intelligencer*), **Sophie Michaux** has become one of New England’s most versatile and compelling vocalists. Born in London and raised in the French Alps, Sophie’s

unique background informs her artistic identity, making her feel at home in an eclectic span of repertoire ranging from grand opera to French cabaret songs. Recent solo engagements include the roles of Alcina in Caccini’s *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall’isola d’Alcina* (Haymarket Opera), Olofernes in Scarlatti’s *La Giuditta* (Haymarket Opera), Ceres in Lalande’s *Les Fontaines de Versailles* (Boston Early Music Festival), and Clorinda in Monteverdi’s *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* (A Far Cry), as well as soloist in the world premiere of Kevin Siegfried’s arrangement of *Three Shaker Songs* (Boston Symphony Chamber Players), in Handel’s *Messiah* (Upper Valley Baroque), and in De Falla’s *El Amor Brujo* (Lowell Chamber Orchestra). She is thrilled to collaborate with Blue Heron, Lorelei Ensemble, Roomful of Teeth, A Far Cry, Palaver Strings, Les Délices, Bach Collegium San Diego, Ruckus, Upper Valley Baroque, and other ensembles performing across the US. She is also the Artistic Director of the cross-genre ensemble Tiny Glass Tavern.



Countertenor **Timothy Parsons** is a versatile performer, conductor, and educator, with accolades including Grammy nominations in 2022 and 2024. He is co-director of Ampersand, a chamber ensemble specializing in Renaissance polyphony, and a core member of Ekmeles, a

vocal ensemble devoted to new and rarely heard works as well as gems of the historical avant-garde. Parsons

previously served as a Lay Clerk at Christ Church, Oxford, and is an emeritus member of the Choir of Trinity Church in New York City. He has appeared as guest conductor with the Choir of Trinity Church and the Clarion Choir, served as a clinician for the Artefact Scholars High School Choral Intensive and TENET Vocal Artists, and has created bespoke concert programs for TENET and the Choir of Trinity Wall Street. This season he appears with Res Facta, Ekmeles, Blue Heron, the Arcadia Players, Tiny Glass Tavern, the Thirteen, and the Trinity Church, and tours internationally with the Clarion Choir and the English Concert. Parsons lives in Vermont, where he enjoys yoga, birding, and the ongoing project of becoming less of a novice on the clawhammer banjo.



Recent highlights for soprano **Sonja DuToit Tengblad** include Shostakovich’s Symphony 14 with A Far Cry, Mahler’s 2nd Symphony with the Boston Philharmonic, Barber’s *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* with the Boston Landmarks Orchestra, Monteverdi’s *L’incoronazione*

di Poppea with Boston Baroque, Puccini’s *Suor Angelica* with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Lorelei Ensemble, Bach’s St. John Passion with the Handel & Haydn Society, Knussen’s Symphony No. 2 with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, and Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center debuts with the New York City Chamber Orchestra. A champion of modern music, Sonja curated the award-winning touring program Modern Dickinson (www.moderndickinson.com) and launched the recital project BeatSong for soprano and percussion. She sings with the Grammy-winning ensemble Conspirare on tours of *Considering Matthew Shepard* and is a core member of the Lorelei Ensemble. As the founder of Beyond Artists, Sonja supports Braver Angels, Eden Reforestation Project, and Singers Of This Age with every performance.



Praised for his “elegant style” (*The Boston Globe*), **Sumner Thompson** is highly sought after as both baritone and tenor. His appearances on the operatic stage have included roles in the Boston Early Music Festival’s productions of Conradi’s *Ariadne* (2003) and Lully’s *Psyché* (2007) and several

European tours with Contemporary Opera Denmark as Orfeo in Monteverdi’s *L’Orfeo*. He has performed across North America as a soloist with the Handel & Haydn

Society, Concerto Palatino, Tafelmusik, Apollo’s Fire, Les Boréades (Montreal), Les Voix Baroques, Pacific Baroque Orchestra, the King’s Noyse, TENET, Mercury Baroque, and the symphony orchestras of Charlotte, Memphis, and Phoenix. Highlights of the last several seasons include Monteverdi’s *Vespers of 1610* and other programs with the Green Mountain Project (2010-20), a tour of Japan with Joshua Rifkin and Cambridge Concentus in the St. Matthew Passion, repeat appearances at the Carmel Bach Festival, a performance as a soloist in Britten’s *War Requiem* with the New England Philharmonic, and many programs with L’Harmonie des Saisons (Quebec). He has been a member of Blue Heron since 2002.

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Acknowledgements

BLUE HERON exists thanks to the devotion, hard work, and financial support of a large community of musicians, staff, board members, volunteers, donors, and concertgoers. We are grateful to everyone who joins us in creating, nurturing, and sustaining an organization dedicated to making vocal ensemble music live and thrive in the twenty-first century.

We are extraordinarily fortunate to work with a slate of talented and skilled designers, engineers, videographers, and photographers. Our concerts and CDs are recorded by Joel Gordon. Kathy Wittman (Ball Square Films) is our videographer. Our programs, printed publicity materials, and CDs were designed by Melanie Germond until 2019 and by John Kramer from 2019 to 2023; John continues to design our CDs; the new designer of our programs and all other material is Shawn Keener. FlashPrint in Harvard Square prints our programs, as they have since 1999. Erik Bertrand built our website and keeps it functioning properly. Liz Linder is our photographer, recently joined by Anna Metcalfe and Alexandra Weliever. Our debt to these wonderful people who have shaped our look and sound is impossible to overstate.

Many thanks to our hardworking and devoted board, and to all our dedicated volunteers.

We are very grateful to the hosts who offer their gracious hospitality to our artists who join us from out of town. This week we extend our gratitude to Ruth McKay and Don Campbell and to Laura Zoll.

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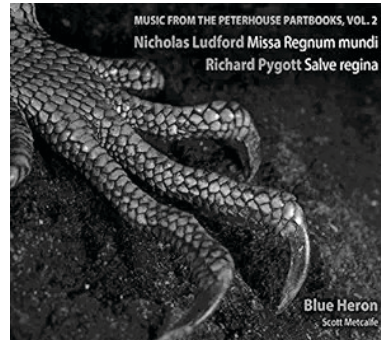
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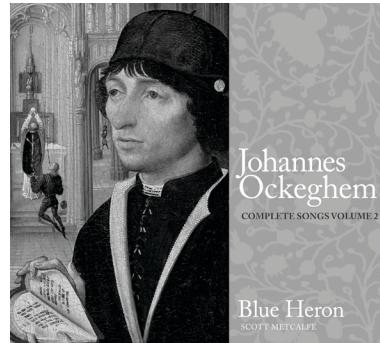
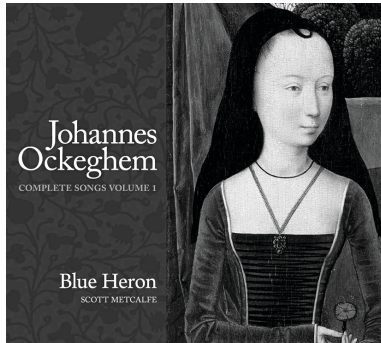
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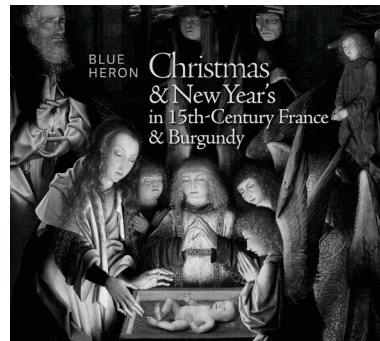
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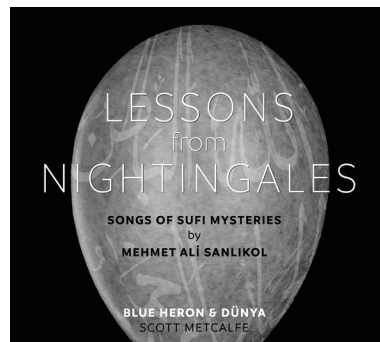
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2025-2026

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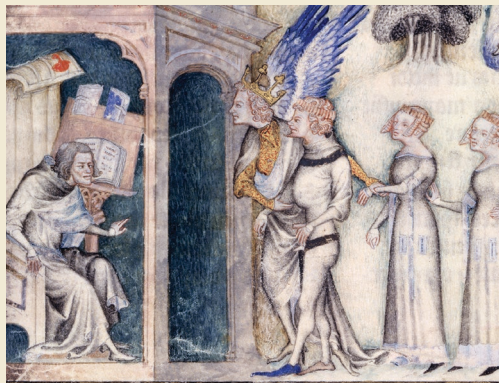
In Praise of Laura Peverara

MARCH 28

Okeghem: *Missa Cuiusvis toni*

MAY 1-3

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