25TH SEASON / 2023-2024

Scott Metcalfe, Artistic Director

BLUEHERON



Christmas in Medieval England

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2023 | SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2023

Christmas in Medieval England

I. Advent

Veni, veni, Emanuel JM & men
13th-century French

II. Annunciation

Angelus ad virginem SM harp
Arundel MS (late 13th century)
Gabriel fram Heven-King KL MB harp
Cotton fragments (14th century)

Alma redemptoris mater KL CM SM
Antiphon for the Blessed Virgin Mary from Advent to Candlemas
Sarum plainchant

Ave Maria I say CM harp / *instrumental*
Cambridge MS Add. 5943 (c. 1400)

Hayl Mary, ful of grace KL SM MB CDH JM ST harp
Trinity Roll (early 15th century)

Gloria (Old Hall MS, no. 21) JM ST MB CW PG
Leonel Power (d. 1445)

Ther is no rose of swych vertu SM CH MB harp
Trinity Roll

Ibo michi ad montem mirre KL JM ST
Antiphon for the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Leonel Power

III. Christmas Eve

Veni redemptor gencium PG & men
Hymn for first Vespers of the Nativity on Christmas Eve
Sarum plainchant

*** intermission ***

IV. Christmas Day

Dominus dixit ad me ST & men
Introit for the Mass at Cock-Crow on Christmas Day
Sarum plainchant

Nowel! Owt of your slepe aryse KL CM SM
Selden MS (15th century)

Gloria (Old Hall MS, no. 27) SM CM KL JM CDH
Pycard (?fl. 1410-20)

Thys yol the beste red that y kan ST harp
Edmundus, *Cambridge MS Add. 5943*
Thys yol *instrumental*
Contratenor by Scotus Viridis Montis

Sanctus / *Missa Veterem hominem*
anonymous English, c. 1440

Ave rex angelorum MB ST PG
Egerton MS (15th century)

Lolay lolay KL CM SM
Cambridge MS Add. 5943

Agnus dei / *Missa Veterem hominem*

Nowel syng we bothe al and som
Trinity Roll

BLUE HERON
cantus
Kim Leeds, Clare McNamara, Sophie Michaux
tenor & contratenor
Michael Barrett, Corey Dalton Hart, Jason McStoots, Sumner Thompson
bassus
Paul Guttry, Charles Weaver

Laura Jeppesen, *rebec*
Charles Weaver, *lute*
Scott Metcalfe, *harp*

Veni, veni, Emanuel!
Captivum solve Israel,
Qui gemit in exilio,
Privatus Dei filio.
Gaude! gaude! Emanuel
nascetur pro te, Israel.

Veni, O Jesse Virgula!
Ex hostis tuos ungula,
De specu tuos tartari
Educ, et antro barathri.

Veni, veni, O Oriens!
Solare nos adveniens,
Noctis depelle nebulas,
Dirasque noctis tenebras.

Veni, Clavis Davidica!
Regna reclude celica,
Fac iter tutum superum,
Et claude vias inferum.

Veni, veni, Adonaï,
Qui populo in Sinaï
Legem dedisti vertice
In maiestate glorie.

13th century French?

Come, O come, Emmanuel!
Redeem captive Israel,
who laments in exile,
deprived of the son of God.
Rejoice! rejoice! Emanuel
shall be born to you, O Israel.

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

Come, come, O Morning Star!
Console us with your coming,
dispel the gloom of night,
and pierce the nocturnal shadows.

Come, Key of David!
Open wide the heavenly kingdom,
make safe the road above,
and bar the ways to hell.

Come, come, Adonai,
who on the mount of Sinai
gave your people the Law
in glorious majesty.

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

The angel, coming secretly
to the Virgin,
calming the Virgin's
fear, said: —Hail!
hail, Queen of Virgins!
You shall conceive the Lord of Heaven and Earth
and give birth, remaining a virgin,
to the salvation of mankind;
you are made the gateway of heaven,
the cure for sin.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Eya, Mater Domini,
que pacem reddidisti
angelis et homini
cum Christum genuisti,
tuum exora filium
ut se nobis propicium
exhibeat et deleat peccata,
prestans auxilium
vita frui beata
post hoc exilium.

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

The angel disappeared,
and at once the girl's
womb swelled up
by the power of the birth of salvation.
He, having been contained in the womb
for nine months,
came out from it and entered the conflict,
taking on his shoulder
the cross, by which he gave a blow
to the mortal enemy.

O Mother of the Lord,
who restored peace
to angels and men
when you gave birth to Christ,
beg of your son
that he may show himself favorable to us
and wipe away our sins,
offering help
to enjoy the blessed life
after this exile.

Translations from The New Oxford Book of Carols

Alma redemptoris mater,
que pervia celi porta manens,
et stella maris, succure cadenti
surgere qui curat populo,
tu que genuisti, natura mirante,
tuum sanctum genitorem.
Virgo, prius ac posterius,
Gabrielis ab ore sumens illud ave,
peccatorum miserere.

Antiphon for the Blessed Virgin Mary
from Advent to Candlemas

Beneficent mother of the Savior,
who keeps the door of heaven always open,
and star of the sea: help those falling
people who seek to rise up,
you who, while nature marvelled,
begot your holy creator.
Virgin before and afterwards,
from Gabriel's mouth hearing that "Hail":
have mercy on us sinners.

Ave Maria I say to that blessyd mayde
That modur ys wytout mannys mone.
The same word sothly the angel Gabriel sayde
To Marye, modur and may alone.

Ave Maria I have in mynde
Wereso y wende in wel or in wo.

Ave Maria, wol me defende,
That y ne scende for no maner fo.

Ave Maria I say …

Ave Maria I say to that blessed maid
who is a mother without man's seed,
the same word, truly, the angel Gabriel said
to Mary, who alone is mother and maid.

Ave Maria I have in mind
where'er I go, well or in woe.

Ave Maria, defend me truly,
that I not fall to any manner of foe.

Ave Maria I say …

Hayl Mary, ful of grace,
moder in virgynyte.

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

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

So seith the Gospel of Syn Johan:
God and man is made but one
in flesch and blode, body and bone,
O God in personys thre.

Moche joye to us was graunt
and in erthe pees yplaunte
whan that born was this faunte
in the londe of Galile.

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

the thee

throw through

Saint John

and peace planted on earth
faunte infant

wonynge dwelling
for what we have done wrong
pur charite "pour charité," out of love

Gloria in excelsis deo, et in terra pax hominibus bone voluntatis. Laudamus te. Benedicimus te. Adoramus te. Glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam. Domine deus, rex celestis, deus pater omnipotens. Domine fili unigenite, Jesu 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.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to all of good will. We praise you. We bless you. We adore you. We glorify you. We give thanks to you for your great glory. Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God the Father, Lord Jesus Christ, only begotten Son, Lord God, lamb of God, Son of the Father. Who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Who takes away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Who sits at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are holy, you alone are the Lord, the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

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

For in this rose conteynyd was
Heven and erthe in lytyl space,
res miranda.

Be that rose we may weel see
that he is God in personys thre,
pari forma.

The aungelys sungyn the shepherdes to:
"Gloria in excelsis Deo!"
Gaudeamus.

swych such

a marvellous thing

be by means of

of the same form

Glory to God in the Highest!
Let us rejoice.

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

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

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

Veni, redemptor gencium,
Ostende partum virginis.
Miretur omne seculum;
Talis decet partus Deum.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

St. Ambrose (c. 340-97)

Dominus dixit ad me filius meus es tu:
ego hodie genui te.

Quare fremuerunt gentes: et populi meditati sunt inania?

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

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

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

Glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and forever shall be, world without end. Amen.

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

Nowel, nowel nowel!

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

For God has now taken on human nature
eny make any spot
bereth the belle is the most excellent

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

thorwe through
pris worth

this tyme i.e. Christmastime

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

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

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

He who was in thrall forever is now free

deme judge
do wel act righteously

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

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

mow may

Gloria (see above)

Thys yol the beste red that y kan
Ys for to be a myry man
And leve kare and putte out stryf:
Thus thynk y to lede my lyf,
And wam y may fynde angri
Y wol leve hys company
Thys yol.

Thys yol askyt that eche man
Schal make the myrthe that he kan,
And so wol y with ryt god chere
To bygynning of this newe yere.

Thys yol y yeve my lady bryt
My herte and love and al my myght
And pray yow to be yowre man
And servy yow ryth as y kan.

Thys yol the beste red that y kan …

This Yule the best advice I know
is to be a merry man,
and leave care and put away strife:
thus I think to lead my life.
And him whom I may find angry,
I will leave his company
this Yule.

This Yule asks that each man
make the mirth that he can,
and so will I, with right good cheer
to begin this New Year.

This Yule I give my lady bright
my heart and love and all my might
and pray that I may be your man
and serve you as best as I can.

This Yule the best advice I know …

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.

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.

Ave rex angelorum,
Ave rexque celorum,
Ave princepsque polorum.

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

Ave rex angelorum …

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

Hail, most mighty in thy deeds,
Hail, thou Lord of every thing,
I offer thee gold, as to a king.

Hail, King of Angels …

Lolay lolay

As y lay on Yole is nyght,
Alone in my longing,
My thoght y sawe a well fayr syght,
A may hir child rokkyng.

The maiden wolde withouten song
Hire child o slepe bringge;
The child thoght sche ded hem wrong
And bad his moder sengge.

Sing nou, moder, seide that child,
Wat me sal befalle
Hereafter wan I cum to eld,
So don modres alle.

Suete sone, seyde sche,
Weroffe suld I singge?
Wist I nevere yet more of the
But Gabrieles gretingge.

He grette me godli on is kne
And seide, Heil Marie,
Ful of grace, God is with the:
Beren thou salt Messye.

I wondrede michil in my thouth,
For man wold I rith none.
Marie, he seide, drede the nouth,
Lat God of hevene alone.

Lolay lolay

As I lay down on Yule night,
alone in my longing,
methought I saw a well fair sight,
a maiden rocking her child.

The maiden wished without a song
to bring her child to sleep;
the child thought she did him wrong
and bade his mother sing.

Sing now, mother, said the child,
what shall befall me
hereafter when I am of age:
so do mothers all.

Sweet son, said she,
whereof should I sing?
I never yet knew more of thee
than Gabriel's greeting.

He greeted me courteously on his knee,
and said, Hail Mary,
full of grace, God is with thee:
thou shalt bear Messiah.

I wondered much in my thoughts,
for I would have no man.
Mary, he said, dread thou not,
let God of Heaven work this alone.

The Holi Gost sal don al this,
He seyde, withouten wone,
That I sulde beren mannis blis,
The, my suete Sone.

He seide, Thou salt beren a king
In Kinge Davits see:
In al Jacobs woning
Ther king suld he be.

I ansuerde blethely,
For his word me paiyede,
Lo Godis servant her am I,
Be et as thou me seyde.

The Holy Ghost shall do all this,
said he, without delay,
that I should bear mankind's bliss:
thee, my sweet son.

He said, Thou shalt bear a king
in King David's city:
in all the land of Jacob
shall he be king.

I answered gladly,
for his word pleased me,
Behold, I am God's servant,
be it as thou hast said.

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.

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.

Nowel syng we bothe al and som,
Now Rex Pacificus is ycome.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nova, nova! Ave fit ex Eva

News, news! "Ave" is made from "Eva" *(i.e. The angelic salutation "Ave" reverses the sin committed by Eve.)*

Gabriell off hye degre,
He cam down from Trinite
To Nazareth in Galile.

He met a maydn in a place,
He knelyd down afore hir face,
He seyd, Heile Mary, ful of grace!

When the maiden herd tell off this,
Sche was full sore abaschyd iwys,
And wened that sche had don amysse.

wened thought

Then seid th'angell, Dred not thue,
Ye shall conceyve in all vertu.
A Chyld whose name shall be Jhesu.

It is not yit syx moneth agoon
Sen Elizabeth conceyved John,
As it was prophysed beforne.

Then seid the mayden verely,
I am youre servaunt right truely.
Ecce ancilla domini.

Behold the handmaiden of the Lord

Christmas in Medieval England

The medieval commemoration of Christ's nativity was introduced by the preparatory and penitential season of Advent, beginning on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day. After Christmas itself came a series of saints' days, including those of St. Stephen, St. John the Apostle, and St. Thomas of Canterbury. Ritual observances reached another climax on the feast of the Circumcision on January 1, the Octave or eighth day of Christmas, which was the traditional first day of the New Year and, until the thirteenth century, also the feast day of the Virgin Mary. Celebrations continued through Epiphany on January 6, marking the revelation to the Gentiles and the Adoration of the Magi, and extended to Candlemas on February 2, the fortieth day after Christmas, when Christians observed both the feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple and the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin.

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

memorable tunes—and "popular in destination" (in the words of R. L. Greene, the preeminent twentieth-century student of their texts). They might have provided entertainment and edification to educated cleric and uneducated congregant alike, within, around, and outside of the liturgy, for processions and banquets and celebrations of all kinds.

This program offers a small selection of music for the Christmas season—plainchant, carols, and polyphonic antiphons and settings of the Mass—that might have been heard in England in the 1440s, when the most modern of the works on the program were composed. We begin with the familiar Advent hymn *Veni, veni Emanuel.* Probably French in origin, the hymn may have made its way to England as early as the thirteenth century, when Franciscan friars in France and England maintained extensive connections and an evangelizing member of the order might have carried such a song across the Channel. The text is a metrical version of five of the seven so-called O-antiphons which date back to the eighth century or earlier. One of the O-antiphons was sung before and after the Magnificat at Vespers on each of the seven days before Christmas Eve. They address the Messiah to come in his various attributes: O Sapientia (wisdom), O Adonai (Lord), O Radix Jesse (root of Jesse), O Clavis David (key of David), O Oriens (the morning star), O Rex (king), O Emanuel ("God with us"). The initial letters, after the O, spell out the promise of redemption in a reverse acrostic, SARCORE, *ero cras:* "Tomorrow I shall be there." (Medieval English tradition added an eighth antiphon, "O virgo virginum," making the acrostic *vero cras:* "Truly, tomorrow!")

The Annunciation is formally commemorated nine months before Christmas, of course, but the miracle is remembered and celebrated at the Christmas season with retellings of the archangel Gabriel's appearance to Mary, their conversation—brief, yet charged with import—and the divine conception. Our set of Annunciation music opens with one of the most famous songs of the English Middle Ages, *Angelus ad virginem*. The song figures in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, in the Miller's Tale, where it is sung to a psaltery by a poor scholar at Oxford by the name of Nicholas:

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

(In the tale, a notably rude one, Nicholas goes on to cuckold his landlord, an elderly carpenter with an eighteen-year-old wife named Alison. A medieval reader would presumably have relished the ironic reference to a song about a virgin conceiving a son in the absence of her husband, also a carpenter.) Christopher Page has shown that the text of *Angelus ad virginem* is probably by the poet and theologian Philippe (d. 1236),

chancellor of Paris, nearly all of whose Latin lyrics survive with music. Text and tune probably came to England with travelling Franciscans in the thirteenth century, just as we have imagined happened with *Veni, veni Emanuel*. The song quickly became popular in England: all of the extant sources are British and there are two thirteenth-century versions in English verse, *Gabriel fram Heven-King* and *The angel to the Vergyn said*. We sing the former in a two-voice setting from the fourteenth century, inserted between verses of the monophonic Latin song.

The carols on the program are drawn from several manuscripts copied between around 1400 and the 1440s whose contents overlap somewhat. With the exception of the rather ambitiously contrapuntal Epiphany carol *Ave rex angelorum*, the carols are written in a robust popular style with graceful melody and simple harmonies and often take the form of a three-voice refrain with a two-voice verse. The rollicking *Nowel! Owt of your slepe aryse* inverts this pattern, with a brilliant three-voice verse and a refrain whose two parts roll from voice to voice. Both *Lolay lolay* and *Nova nova* are transmitted as unaccompanied melody; I have added two parts to the refrain and one to the verse of the latter, but we sing the lullaby *Lolay lolay* plain. Two of the earliest English songs on the program, *Ave Maria I say* and *Thys Yol*, both for two parts, are in a sort of virelai form, AbbA. We also play them as instrumental pieces with an added third part.

The decades between the 1410s and the 1440s saw striking changes in the compositional style of learned polyphony. In some instances we can hear the change in the works of a single composer. Listen to the craggy dissonances and bristly cross-rhythms of Leonel Power's astonishing Gloria from the Old Hall manuscript of c. 1415, for two, four, and finally five voices—Christopher Page likens the effect to sticking your head into a beehive—and compare it to his *Ibo michi ad montem mirre*, transmitted in a continental manuscript from the 1440s. The latter work is fluid, tuneful, and almost entirely consonant—sweeter, a fifteenth-century musician would probably say, just as *Hayl Mary* and *Ther is no rose* are sweet. Power's later music has lost none of its ability to dazzle with complex cross-rhythms, as the dancing Alleluia of *Ibo michi* demonstrates, but the effect is suave and sensuous rather than glittering and prickly.

The Gloria by Pycard (whoever he may have been), like Power's, is a work from the Old Hall manuscript, and the rigid construction that underlies it is typical of the earlier aesthetic, less sweet than brilliant. Here two of the upper three voices sing in canon at the distance of five breves (or measures), as do the two tenors. The canons are complicated and partially obscured by a third upper voice moving at the same speed and in the same range as the other two. Towards the end, when the three upper voices trade hockets (the term, related to the English hiccup, describes a rapidfire back-and-forth exchange of single notes), the entire ensemble locks into a regular pattern of five measures, like waves rising and breaking on the shore.

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

—*Scott Metcalfe*

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. Blue Heron has been in residence at the Center for Early Music Studies at Boston University and at 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 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. Jessie Ann Owens and Blue Heron won the 2015 Noah Greenberg Award from the American Musicological Society to support the world premiere

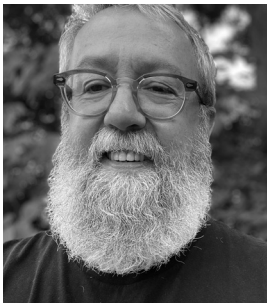


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recording of Cipriano de Rore's *I madrigali a cinque voci*, released in 2019. In 2015 Blue Heron inaugurated *Okeghem@600*, a multi-season project to commemorate the circa-600th birthday of Johannes Okeghem (c. 1420-1497) by performing his complete works, finishing up in 2023. A parallel project to record all of Okeghem's songs bore its first fruits in 2019 with the release of *Johannes Ockeghem: Complete Songs, Volume I*, which was named to the *Bestenliste of the Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik*; Volume 2 will follow this season. 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*, and (in collaboration with Les Délices) a live recording of a concert production of Guillaume de Machaut's *Remede de Fortune*.



Michael Barrett is a Boston-based conductor, singer, multi-instrumentalist, and teacher. He serves as music director of The Boston Cecilia. Michael is also an Assistant Professor at the Berklee College of Music, where he teaches courses in conducting and European music history, and until 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 (AB, Harvard University), voice (First Phase Diploma, Royal Conservatory in The Hague, The Netherlands), and choral conducting (MM, Indiana University; DMA, Boston University).



Bass-baritone **Paul Guttry** has performed throughout the USA and internationally with Sequentia, Chanticleer, the Boston Camerata, and New York's Ensemble for Early Music. A founding member of Blue Heron, he has also appeared in and around Boston as soloist with Emmanuel Music, the Handel & Haydn Society, the Boston Early Music Festival, the Tanglewood Music Center, Cantata Singers, Boston Cecilia, Prism Opera, Boston Revels, Collage, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, and Intermezzo. Paul can be heard on Blue Heron's recordings and on discs of medieval music by Sequentia.



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 Doctorate of Musical Arts degree 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.



Laura Jeppesen, player of historical stringed instruments, earned a master's degree from Yale University. She then studied at the Hamburg Hochschule and the Brussels Conservatory with Wieland Kuijken. She has been a Woodrow Wilson Designate, a Fulbright Scholar, and a fellow of the Bunting Institute at Harvard. A prominent member of Boston's early music community, she has long associations with The Boston Museum Trio, Boston Baroque, The Handel and Haydn Society, the Boston Early Music Festival, and Aston Magna. She has been music director at the American Repertory Theater, creating music for Christopher Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, for which she earned an IRNE nomination for best musical score. In 2015, she was part of the BEMF team that won a Grammy for best opera recording. She has performed as soloist with conductors Christopher Hogwood, Edo de Waart, Seiji Ozawa, Craig Smith, Martin Pearlman, Harry Christophers, Grant Llewellyn, and Bernard Haitink. She has an extensive discography of solo and chamber works, including the gamba sonatas of J. S. Bach and music of Marais, Buxtehude, Rameau, Telemann, and Clerambault. She teaches at Boston University, Wellesley College, and Harvard University, where in 2015 and 2019 she won awards of special distinction in teaching from the Derek Bok Center. She is a 2017 recipient of an Andrew W. Mellon Blended Learning Initiative Grant for innovative teaching at Wellesley College. Her recent essay, "Aesthetics of Performance in the Renaissance: Lessons from Noblewomen," appears in *Uncovering Music of Early European Women 1250-1750*, edited by Claire Fontijn (Routledge Studies in Musical Genres, 2019).



Praised for her "rich, smooth mezzo soprano" (St. Louis Post), **Kim Leeds** has appeared as a soloist with Apollo's Fire, Bach Akademie Charlotte, Back Bay Chorale, Les Délices, Handel Society of Dartmouth, Cantata Collective, Artek, Ad Astra Musical Festival, True Concord, Bach Society of St. Louis, Tafelmusik, and the Oregon Bach Festival. As a choral artist, Ms. Leeds has performed with the Weimar Bach Academy, the Junges Stuttgart Bach Ensemble, the Handel & Haydn Society, the Grammy-nominated ensembles Clarion Society and Seraphic Fire, and Grammy-award winning ensemble The Crossing. Ms. Leeds has garnered multiple accolades, including winning the Tafelmusik Vocal Competition in 2016, being selected as a Virginia Best Adams Fellow at the 2017 Carmel Bach Festival, working with Philippe Herreweghe as a Britten-Pears Young Artist in 2019, and being a semi-finalist in the New York Oratorio Competition in 2022. Last year Ms. Leeds co-founded Filigree, a New England-based early music ensemble. She can be heard on the 2017 Boston Modern Orchestra Project recording of Jeremy Gill's *Before the Wresting Tides* and on Blue Heron's *Johannes Ockeghem: Complete Songs*, vol. 1.



Hailed for his "voice of seductive beauty" *(Miami Herald)*, 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, and the Handel & Haydn Society, and in recital at the Caramoor, Ravinia, and Marlboro festivals. Recent performance highlights have included the role of Thoas in Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride* with Boston Baroque, Monteverdi's dramatic scena *Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* with American Bach Soloists, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with Emmanuel Music, and the role of the Devil in Stravinsky's *A Soldier's Tale* with the Aston Magna Music Festival. 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.



"Otherworldly" mezzo-soprano **Clare McNamara**'s ensemble affiliations have included Skylark, Emmanuel Music, Handel & Haydn, Lorelei Ensemble, The Washington Bach Consort, Tapestry, and The Boston Camerata. Clare's "astonishing" voice is featured in Cut Circle's "pathbreaking" 2020 release of the secular works of Johannes Ockeghem (Gramophone) and she has appeared with the group in concerts at numerous European festivals. MusicWeb International hailed her as "pure-toned" and "as good as they come" for her solo performance of music by Hildegard von Bingen on Skylark's *Seven* (2018), one of the ensemble's three Grammy-nominated albums. Her next album release is Skylark's *Clear Voices in the Dark* (forthcoming in 2024), the first US recording of Francis Poulenc's tour-de-force *Figure humaine*. She will join Emmanuel Music for Bachfest in Leipzig, Germany, in June 2024. Clare holds an A.B. in Music from Princeton University and an M.M. in Early Music Performance from the Longy School of Music of Bard College. She resides in the Greater Boston area with her husband, mother, and infant son.



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 essays in a long-forthcoming book on the Peterhouse partbooks and two articles (one published in 2022 and another forthcoming) in the *Journal of the Alamire Foundation*. He has edited music by Francisco de Peñalosa for Antico Edition (UK) and songs from the Leuven chansonnier for the Alamire Foundation (Belgium); other editions are in the works, including a new edition of the songs of Gilles Binchois (c. 1400-1460). He has taught at Boston University and Harvard University, served as director of the baroque orchestra at Oberlin Conservatory, and been a visiting member of the faculty of Music History at the New England 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" by *Opera News*, **Sophie Michaux** has become one of North- America'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 role of Alcina in Caccini's *La Liberation di Ruggiero dall'Isola d'Alcina* (Haymarket Opera), Olofernes in Scarlatti's *La Giuditta* (Haymarket Opera), a tour of Hawai'i with Les Délices, the alto solos in the Handel's *Dixit Domino* (Upper Valley Baroque), and De Falla's *El Amor Brujo* (Lowell Chamber Orchestra). She is thrilled to collaborate with Blue Heron, The Lorelei Ensemble, Les Délices, the Boston Early Music Festival, Roomful of Teeth, Bach Collegium San Diego, Palaver Strings, and others. Last season, she took part in Lorelei Ensemble's US tour, premiering *Her Story* by Julia Wolfe with the Boston, Chicago, Nashville, and San Francisco Symphony Orchestras.



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).



Charles Weaver is on the faculty of the Juilliard School, where he teaches performance practice and historical music theory. He has been assistant conductor for Juilliard Opera and has participated in opera productions at the University of Maryland, the Cleveland Institute of Music, Princeton University, Yale University, and the Boston Early Music Festival. As a collaborative musician, he has performed with the Orchestra of St. Luke's, the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Minnesota Orchestra, and the Virginia Symphony. In addition to being a regular member of the ensemble Quicksilver, his chamber-music projects have included engagements with Blue Heron, Piffaro, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Folger Consort, Apollo's Fire, the Newberry Consort, and Musica Pacifica. He is organist and choirmaster at St. Mary's Church in Norwalk, Connecticut, where he specializes in the liturgical performance of medieval and renaissance music. He holds a PhD in music theory from the City University of New York. His research interests include the rhythm of Gregorian chant and the history of the theory of harmony.



25TH Anniversary Campaign

SEPTEMBER 2021 – SEPTEMBER 2024
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Since its inception in 1999, Blue Heron has earned recognition as North America's leading early music vocal ensemble. Now acclaimed internationally, having won the 2018 Gramophone Classical Music Award for Early Music and the 2020 *Bestenliste* (Quarterly Critics' Choice) of the prestigious *Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik* (German Record Critics' Award), Blue Heron looks to the future with confidence and excitement.

Buoyed by your generous support of our previous campaign, in 2021 we launched our 25th Anniversary Campaign. This campaign has a **goal of $400,000** and reaffirms that Blue Heron's mission and highest priority is live performance. With your support, we will build on our successes with the following goals:

Making our music more accessible to a wider and more diverse audience

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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 in the 21st 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 CDs are produced by Eric Milnes. Our programs, printed publicity materials, and CDs were designed by Melanie Germond until 2019 and by John Kramer from 2019-2023; our new designer is Aaron Haesaert. 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. Our debt to these wonderful people who have shaped our look and sound is impossible to overstate.

Many thanks to our board and to all our dedicated volunteers for their help in person, at this concert, and always.

We are honored and grateful to have so many generous donors. Thank you!

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Carole Rogers, *in honor of Pamela Dellal*
Linda Rubel & Bill Waddell, *in honor of Paul LaFerriere's birthday*
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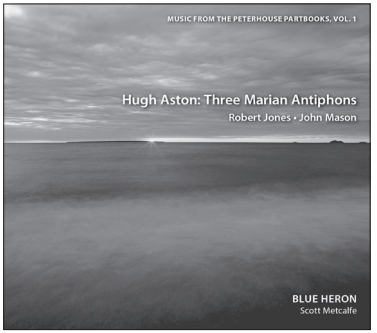
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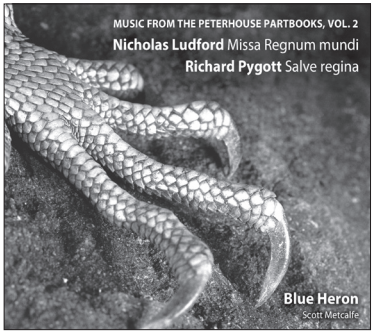
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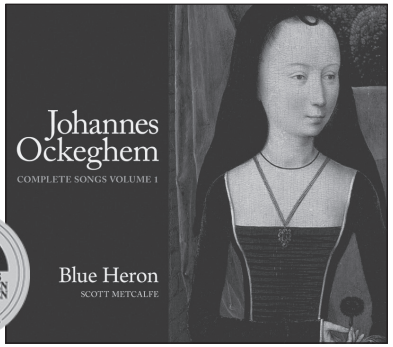
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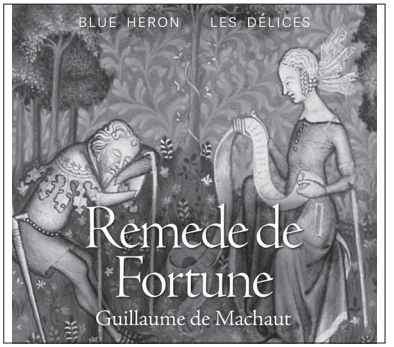




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Sunday, June 2, 2024 - 4 pm: Trinity Parish of Newton Centre

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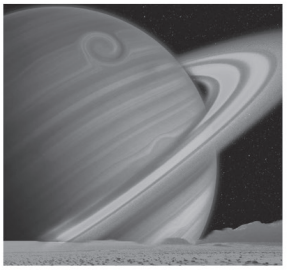
SUNDAY
December 3, 3:00 pm
in Cambridge



Inspired to Joy

SATURDAY
March 2, 8:00 pm
in West Roxbury

SUNDAY
March 3, 3:00 pm
in Cambridge



Stars and Planets

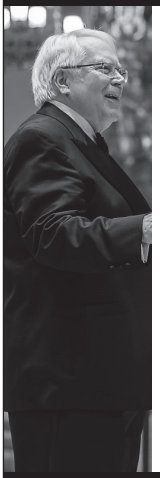
FRIDAY
April 26, 8:00 pm
in Chestnut Hill

In collaboration with the Boston Chapter of the American Guild of Organists

For details and in person and virtual tickets, visit www.seraphimsingers.org

Music Director John W. Ehrlich's Farewell Season

Celebrating his 44 years at the helm of The Spectrum Singers



NOVEMBER 18, 2023 | 7:30PM

A Christmas Prelude

Respighi's *Laud to the Nativity*, with soloists Sarah Yanovitch Vitale, Katherine Maysek and Marcio de Oliveira, plus other favorite seasonal choral works

SPECTRUM *Singers*

John W. Ehrlich, *Music Director*

MARCH 16, 2024 | 7:30PM

A Great SPECTRUM of Repertoire!

A concert reprising several of John Ehrlich's favorites from the chorus's 44-year history, including Brahms's *Liebeslieder Waltzes*, Schubert, Fauré, and other works from the Renaissance to the present day

MAY 18, 2024 | 8PM

Time, Space, Peace, Music, God

Vaughan Williams: *Toward the Unknown Region* and *Serenade to Music*, Schoenberg: *Friede auf Erden* and Ives: *Psalm 90*

**Programs subject to change*

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Heavenly Baroque Christmas
*Saturday, Dec. 9, 4 pm | First Unitarian Church, Worcester
Sunday, Dec. 10, 4 pm | Church of the Covenant, Boston

Blazing Italian Baroque
*Saturday, March 9, 4 pm | First Parish, Wayland
Sunday, March 10, 4 pm | Old South Church, Boston

Rustic Classical
*Friday, April 19, 8 pm | Old South Church, Boston
Sunday, April 21, 4 pm | Worcester Historical Museum

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Le Rossignol musical Study of a Bird: painting by Riza-yi 'Abbasi (Iranian), dated A.H. 1043/1634 CE. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Christmas in Medieval England Adoration of Magi and Shepherds: stained glass, Canterbury Cathedral, late 12th century.

Renaissance Portraits Portrait of a Woman and a Man at a Casement: Fra Filippo Lippi, c. 1440-44. Item no. 6 in the exhibition "The Renaissance Portrait from Donatello to Bellini, Metropolitan Museum of Art," 2011-12. Metropolitan Museum of Art. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Tasso & Wert Portrait of Torquato Tasso: Unknown artist, 1590s. Galleria Palatina (Palazzo Pitti), Florence.

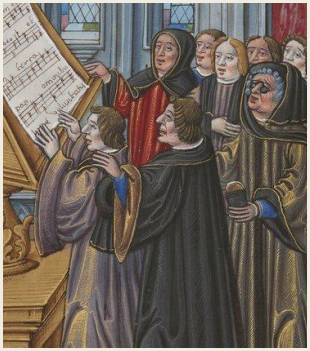
The World of Johannes Okeghem Johannes Okeghem and his choir. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS fr. 1537, f. 58v.

2023-2024











OCTOBER 14
Le Rossignol musical / The Musical Nightingale

DECEMBER 15 & 16
Christmas in Medieval England

JANUARY 20
Renaissance Portraits

MARCH 23
Tasso & Wert

APRIL 13
The World of Johannes Okeghem

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