

Early Music Foundation presents

EARLY MUSIC NEW YORK
FREDERICK RENZ – DIRECTOR

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~ The New York Times

“bulwark of the city’s period-performance community”

~ The New Yorker

A

Baroque Christmas

Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine
Amsterdam Avenue at 112th Street, NYC

Sunday, 11 December 2022 at 2:00 PM

Sunday, 18 December 2022 at 2:00 & 5:00 PM

Sunday, 25 December 2022 at 2:00 & 5:00 PM

EARLY MUSIC NEW YORK

FREDERICK RENZ ~ DIRECTOR

Zachary Fletcher - baritone

Todd Frizzell - tenor

Damon Hankoff - bass

Charles Humphries - countertenor

Morgan Mastrangelo - tenor

Alex McCoy - tenor

Daniel Moody - countertenor

José Pietri-Coimbre - countertenor/baritone

Dušan Balarin - theorbo, guitar

Wayne Hankin - musette, recorders

Tricia van Oers - recorders

Arnie Tanimoto - bass viola da gamba

Meet EM/NY artists at www.EarlyMusicNY.org

SCOTTISH AIRS

All sons of Adam

Anonymous, ca.1666

Folk Tunes

Anonymous, pub. 1700

Nou let us sing (*contrafactum*)

Anonymous, ca.1639

FRENCH NOELS

Les bourgeois de Châtres

arr. Marc-Antoine Charpentier, d.1704/Renz

Or, nous dites Marie

arr. Michel-Richard Delalande, 1657-1726/Renz

Joseph est bien marié

arr. Charpentier/Renz

Le triste état (folia)/

Anonymous/arr. Renz

Folie

Francisque Corbette, ca. 1615-1681

Viens vite, laisse ta houlette (*contrafactum*)

Vous qui desirez sans fin

arr. Charpentier/Renz

Noëls pour Musettes, 1730

arr. Esprit Philippe Chédeville, 1696-1762

SPANISH VILLANCICOS

Un ciego que contrabajo

Cumbees

Santiago de Murcia, ca.1720

Los que fueren de buen gusto

Francisco de Vidales, ca.1630-1702

GERMAN CHORALE (traditional)

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland

arr. Johann Herman Schein, pub.1618

Verses 2, 3, 4, 5

arr. Michael Praetorius, pub.1610

ITALIAN ARIA

Toccatà

Anonymous, Manuscrito Barberini Lat 4145 (1627)

O meraviglie belle

Marco da Gagliano, pub.1615

“Kapsberger”

Giovanni Geronimo Kapsperger, ca.1580-1651

ENGLISH BROADSIDE BALLADS

All you that are good fellows

Anonymous, English, ca.1642

Greensleeves and Pudding Pies, pub. 1686/

arr. John Playford, 1623-1686/87

Greensleeves

Beggar’s Opera, 1728

The old yeare now away is fled

Anonymous, English, ca.1642

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

SCOTLAND: The music of the realm of Scotland during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – music of court, cathedral and castle, kirk, burgh and countryside – is from a rich repertory of which only fragments have survived the passage of time and the destructive forces of man. Long years of civil war ensued for Scotland, and it is with a Restoration flourish that, in 1662, John Forbes, printer to the burgh of Aberdeen, made available to his countrymen for the first time a printed song-book of “musick fine”: *Cantus, Songs and Fancies*, containing not only a choice of English lute-songs and madrigals and continental pieces but also some of the best of the art-music of earlier Scotland. Hailed as a masterpiece in form and content, it was quickly reprinted.

“All sons of Adam” (The Christmas Medley), published in 1666 by John Forbes, is based on a French model, akin to the *fricassée* (Ger. *quodlibet*, Sp. *ensalada*) in which many textual and musical quotations are incorporated. Although the quotations here can no longer be identified, this three-voice composition is particularly noteworthy for its contrasting compositional styles, the throwback imitation of the fauxbourdon technique popular in the 15th century – “*lauda Deum tuum, Sion*” and the striking juxtaposition of motet (church) style and secular (dance) style.

“Nou let us sing” (manuscript copy, John Forbes, 1662 and Thomas Wode’s part-books, c.1562-92, with later additions by other hands, after 1606 & c.1620) is a drinking song for four voices. Another poem, with identical opening words, no doubt associated with the same music, continues with four stanzas “In honour of our Lordis birth.”

FRANCE: The noel is a popular Christmas song, particularly of French origin. From the 17th to the 19th centuries innumerable noels were published (frequently as sheet music), in which semi-religious texts were set to secular melodies, dancing songs, drinking songs, *vaudevilles*, etc. In the 17th century, the name was applied to organ pieces designed to be played during the Christmas service. Most of these are simple variations on popular Christmas melodies.

Instrumental (chamber and orchestral) settings were arranged as well by composers such as Marc-Antoine Charpentier and Michel-Richard Delalande. It is from these settings that Mr. Renz bases his own vocal realizations. Four of the noel tunes heard on this program appear in Charpentier’s *Messe de Minuit* (Midnight Mass for the Nativity). These noel tunes were cast in prevailing 17th-century dance rhythms and forms; Mr. Renz combined this set in the sequence of a typical French suite: “*Les bourgeois de Chatres*” – as an *ouverture*, “*Or, nous dite Marie*” – a *loure*, “*Joseph est bien marie*” – a *gavotte*, “*Vous qui desirez*” – a *minuet*. “*Le triste etat*” is a *sarabande* as well as being constructed on a popular progression of harmonies having the name *folia*.

In order to round out the requisite dance forms for a French suite, Mr. Renz has incorporated Charpentier's own *gigue* tune (composed as an incidental drinking song for Moliere's *Le médecin malgré lui*, 1666). It is immediately recognized, particularly with its late 19th-century *contrafactum* text, as "Bring a torch, Jeanette, Isabella." Mr. Renz has borrowed a 17th-century text in his arrangement of Charpentier's well known tune.

SPAIN/MEXICO: During the seventeenth century, the Latin motets and psalms sung in Spanish cathedrals by professional choirs and instrumentalists were designed to invest the divine office with greater solemnity on specified days of the church year. The resulting office was indeed magnificent, but the common folk's participation could be no more than that of bystanders. On the other hand, the Baroque church carol (*villancico*), with its text in the vernacular, was the one part of the solemn office with a distinctly popular tinge.

At Christmas, Easter, and Corpus Christi, the public flocked to the great churches as on no other days of the year to hear these carols – which were doubtless livelier and worldlier than the Latin music. They also went to see them, for frequently the carols were sung and performed with some degree of stage art by the choristers. The walls of the churches were decked with sumptuous hangings, and the floor was covered with sweet-smelling leaves or pine branches on which the public could sit. Before the performances began, the choirboys richly attired and with silver salvers in their hands, passed out to the assembled crowd printed texts of the carols to be sung at the hours of nocturns, so that the public could follow the music and better appreciate the details of the often involved poetic texts. At times, these printed libretti for the *villancico*-cycles were even dropped from the dome in some churches, along with flower petals and colored paper birds. Salazar and Vidales, among other New World composers, brought the colorful *villancico* tradition from the motherland to Mexico City.

The *villancico* form consists of several stanzas (coplas) linked by a refrain (*estribillo*). In the 17th century, the religious *villancico* was comparable to the church cantata or anthem. Occasionally a short movement, called *repuesta* (in "Un ciego," the text "Tumba tumba") was appended. The *jácara* (or *xácara* and *xacarilla*) was a picaresque comic interlude inserted into stage plays and describing the antics of some objectionable person and, more generally, it connotes a light hearted trifle ("Los que fueren").

GERMANY: The chorale was a hymn tune of the German Protestant church. The importance of the chorale lies in its central position in German baroque music as the basis of numerous cantatas and of the whole tradition of the organ chorale.

Long before any other people, the Germans began to sing hymns in their native language. This continuous tradition came to full flower under Martin Luther (1483-

1546). An accomplished musician himself, Luther considered the chorale a pillar of his reform movement and played a very active part in building a repertory of texts and melodies suitable for this purpose. In conformity with his principle of congregational participation, he favored vernacular texts and simple, tuneful melodies. In his search for suitable texts Luther resorted chiefly to Roman Catholic hymns, many of which he (or his collaborators) translated into German, e.g.: “Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland” (“Veni redemptor gentium.”) The chief sources for his melodies were secular songs for which he or his collaborators provided new, religious texts.

To the present-day musician, chorales are best known through Bach’s harmonized versions. These familiar melodies were also arranged utilizing many techniques of counterpoint composition by Bach and his predecessor. In Herman Schein’s “Nun komm der Heiden Heiland,” from his *Opella nova* of 1618, the first verse of the chorale is heard intact in one voice (*cantus firmus*), against *ostinato* motives (melodic fragments), also derived from the chorale, sung by a vocal duet. A mainstay of the new baroque era, the continuo (instrumental bass accompaniment) supports the three voice parts.

In the collection titled *Musae Sioniae* (I-IX, 1601 ff.), a veritable encyclopedia of chorale arrangements, Michael Praetorius was particularly prolific in his variations of hymn tunes for all combinations of voices. In the settings chosen for this recording, the chorale melody pervades the contrapuntal interplay equally among all the parts. Reflecting the polyphonic ideal of the previous generation of composers, these are miniature masterpieces written for voices alone, without the support of an instrumental continuo bass.

ITALY: The birth of the baroque era in Italy, ca.1600, is best represented in the operas composed by Giulio Caccini, Marco da Gagliano and Claudio Monteverdi. The new monody, solo song, accompanied by harmonic support of an instrumental bass, was often framed by repeated interjections of a vocal or instrumental ensemble, a feature inherited from the grand *intermedii* of the latter Italian Renaissance.

Ritornelli delineated strophes of a song and served as a grand conclusion as well. Gagliano’s lovely “O meraviglie belle” illustrates an inventive command of the new Italian baroque style.

ENGLAND: The austere years of the Puritan Commonwealth ended in 1660, and Christmas returned to England with the restoration of Catholic King Charles II. And like the monarchy, Christmas came back shorn of some of its old cavalier flamboyance. Its festivities became more social than ceremonial, more middle-class than regal. Its chief celebrants were no longer kings and nobles but the country squire and the rich

merchant. No more aristocratic feasts of boar were carried in to the songs of minstrels or carolers, but a side of beef was served, or a pig, or turkey.

A domestic Christmas in London, both devout and quietly festive, is described in this entry from the diary of Samuel Pepys (1633-1703). It is 1666, the year of the great London fire:

“25 Christmas day. Lay pretty long in bed, and then rose, leaving my wife desirous to sleep, having sat up till four this morning seeing her mayds make mince pies. I to church, where our parson Mills made a good sermon. Then home, and dined on some good ribs of beef roasted and mince pies; only my wife, brother, and Barker, and plenty of good wine of my owne, and my heart full of true joy; and thanks to God Almighty for the goodness of my condition at this day. After dinner, I begun to teach my wife and Barker my song....”

In 16th-century England, the “ballad” was a simple tale told in simple verse. Ballad singers made a living by singing their newest productions in the streets and at country fairs, and by selling the printed sheets (broadsides) which usually gave a direction: “to be sung to the tune of...”, e.g.: Greensleeves.” In 1651, John Playford published *The English Dancing Master* with rules for dancing of Country Dances, with the tune to each dance. Many of the tunes are the same ones used for singing broadside ballads.

Special Thanks

Zachary Fletcher – 17th-century English pronunciation coach

Damon Hankoff – French pronunciation coach

48th SUBSCRIPTION SEASON ~ 2022 - 2023 ~ continues:

PUBLICK MUSICK ~ Bach in London ~ chamber orchestra

Saturday, March 4 at 7:30 pm

First Church of Christ, Scientist, Central Park West and 68th Street

CONCERTO PER VIOLINI ~ 18th-Century Italian Virtuosi ~ chamber orchestra

Saturday, May 13 at 7:30 pm

First Church of Christ, Scientist

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In memoriam

*The Very Reverend James Parks Morton, 1930-2020,
Dean Emeritus, Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine, NYC
Litsa Tsitsera, Patron of the Arts, 1932 - 2020*

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Administrative Office: 212-749-6600 ~ Box Office: 212-280-0330
E-mail: info@EarlyMusicNY.org – Website: EarlyMusicNY.org