

Howland Chamber Music Circle presents



EARLY MUSIC
NEW YORK
FREDERICK RENZ
DIRECTOR

HOLIDAY CONCERT

6 December, 2009 at 4 PM
St. Mary's Church in the Highlands

EARLY MUSIC NEW YORK
FREDERICK RENZ - DIRECTOR

James Blachly - alto, Eric Brenner - alto, Corey-James Crawford - alto
Todd Frizzell - tenor, Matthew Hensrud - tenor, Scott Mello - tenor
Scott Dispensa - baritone, Thomas McCargar - baritone
Mark Sullivan - bass, Christopher Moringiello, lute

A RENAISSANCE CHRISTMAS

15th-Century France

Noel, noel (*motet*) Antoine Busnois, d.1492
Conditor alme siderum (*Advent hymn*) Guillaume Dufay, ca.1400-1474
C'etait a l'heure de minuit (*noel*) Anonymous, arr. Renz

15th-Century Anonymous English Carols

Hail Mary full of grace
Marvel not Joseph
There is no rose of such virtue

Nowell: This is the salutation
Lullay, lullay: Al I lay on yoolis night arr. Renz
Alleluia: A newe work is come on hond

From King Henry VIII's Book, ca.1515

Grene grow'th the holly (*carol*) Henry VIII, 1491-1547
Quid petis, o fili? (*motet-carol*) Richard Pygott, c.1485-c.1552
Philip's Dumpe Anonymous, early 16th-century
Sweet Jesus is come to us (strophic song w/ *contrafactum* text) Anonymous

16th-Century Europe

France/Burgundy

Noe, noe (motet) Antoine Brumel, fl.ca.1500
Vox in Rama (*motet for Holy Innocents' Day*) Jacob Clement, c.1510-c.1556

England

Greensleeves Francis Cutting, fl.1595
St. Nicholas Daniel Bacheleer, 1572-1619
Coventry Carol Anonymous, 1591
Remember O thou man Thomas Ravenscroft, pub.1611

Germany

Es ist ein' Ros' entsprungen (Weihnachtslied)
Psallite, unigenite (Weihnachtslied), 1612 Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621

Spain

O magnum mysterium (motet for the Feast of the Circumcision)
Tomas Luis de Victoria, ca.1549-1611
Calata alla spagnola Joan Ambrosio Dalza, fl 1508
E la don don, verges Maria (villancico) Anonymous, pub.1556



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The word *noel* (from Fr. *nouvelle*) first makes its appearance in songs of the early fifteenth century; a variation, equally popular, is *noe* (Lat. *nova*). And the English equivalent, of course, is *nowell*. There are several motets, like the setting by Busnois, which are sung entirely to the word *noe* or *noel*.

The 15th-century tune with the words 'C'etait à l'heure de minuit' was used as well for an Easter text, the setting we recognize as the familiar hymn 'O filii et filiae' ('O Sons and Daughters'). Mr. Renz has adorned this monophonic tune with improvised 'harmonization' in three parts, a practice of the early Renaissance called *fauxbourdon*. It is a technique used mainly by the French, in which a melody is accompanied by a parallel part moving along at the lower sixth with an occasional octave, while a middle part is extemporized by singing in parallel fourths below the melody. Dufay's setting (in alternation) of the plainchant hymn tune 'Conditor alme in siderum' is a contemporaneous example of this technique.

The word carol (F. *noel*, Sp. *villancico*) is thought to be derived from the medieval French word *carole* - a round dance. This term is associated with early pagan dance-songs performed in celebration of the winter solstice, a ritual that was later merged with Christmas. It should be noted, however, that originally the carol was not exclusive to this holiday. The numerous examples in 15th-century sources show that the distinguishing characteristic of the carol was not its subject matter but the presence of a *burden* or refrain sung in alternation with a number of uniform stanzas called verses. In the 16th century the carol became more varied in form and style but more focused in subject matter, the emphasis being on Christmas.

English carols and Latin *cantilena*e of the mid-15th century are from four manuscripts: the Trinity Roll, the Seldon Manuscript, the Egerton Manuscript, and the Ritson Manuscript. These two- and three-part carols were probably performed by skilled Franciscan monk/musicians who wrote and sang them during their long struggle with paganism. These non-liturgical compositions may have been introduced in church, civic or courtly procession. The pagan *carole*, with its origin as a dance/song, probably explains its ecclesiastical association with physical movement in the form of processions. 'Nowell: This is the salutation of the Angel Gabriel' is set to a monophonic tune, likely one of a vast body of popular melodies now lost and akin to the *Meistersingers'* art of a former generation. 'Lully: Als I lay' survives as a monophonic tune as well. Court records indicate that on Twelfth Night, 1488, "when at the Table in the Medell of the Hall sat the Deane and thoos of the kings Chapell, which incontynently after the furst Course sange a Carall."

Henry VIII's Book did not belong to the King but was given that title to acknowledge the fact that it contains many of his own compositions. Thirty-three pieces in all bear the superscription: 'the kynge h.viii'. Moreover it is indisputably a document of court music in the early years of Henry VIII's reign. The dating of this songbook to the years 1510-20 is supported by the fact that in this period fantastic sums of money were spent on court entertainments such as chivalric 'disguisings' and seasonal revels. "On Twelfth Night ...the pageant with which the Christmas revelries concluded -- a mountain which moved towards the king and opened, and out of which came Morris-dancers."

'Grene grow'th the holly' belongs perhaps to a Christmas revels. The setting of the words 'Sweet Jesus is come to us' is referred to as a *contrafactum*, having been written after the fact to the song with the more worldly words 'And I were a maiden but twelve years of age.'

In the Pageant of the Shearmen and Tailors, the Coventry Carol was sung by the women of Bethlehem just before Herod's soldiers came on to slaughter their children. 'Remember O thou man' is one of many brief, homophonic songs and humorous catches published by John Playford for popular entertainment after the turn of the century. The poem is inspired by a Responsory in the service of Ash Wednesday "Memento homo quia pulvis es et in pulverem reverteris" ("Remember, O man, that dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return"). The tune is metrically cast as a galliard.

Standing at the threshold of the baroque, Michael Praetorius is best known for his comprehensive treatise 'Syntagma musicum.' It includes a compendium of all known musical instruments of his time, each represented in a careful engraving and now a favorite resource for graphic illustrations. His substantial collection of instrumental dances entitled 'Terpsichore' is a staple for Renaissance bands. He also was a composer of complex polychoral works for voices and instruments in the style of his teacher Gabrieli. His four-part harmonization of popular Christmas tunes on the other hand display an ability to compose with simplicity and austere elegance.

'E la don don' and 'Riu, riu chiu' are fine examples of the Spanish counterpart to the English carol. *Villancicos* in form, they feature a repeated refrain for four voices before and after each monophonic verse. Like 'Nowell: This is the salutation,' the texts tell stories in the several monophonic verses. The rhythmic language is unmistakably Spanish, however, and is highly characterized by considerable, evocative syncopation.

ABOUT EARLY MUSIC NEW YORK

Now celebrating its 35 Anniversary season, EARLY MUSIC NEW YORK – FREDERICK RENZ, DIRECTOR captivates audiences worldwide with its scintillating performances of music and music-drama from the medieval and Renaissance periods. Profiled on the award winning national news programs, *CBS Sunday Morning* and *ABC Nightline*, EMNY performs an annual subscription series before sellout audiences in New York City. EMNY has performed at the Lincoln and Kennedy Centers, regularly performs at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and has toured throughout the United States and abroad, winning critical acclaim at many of the world's most prestigious music festivals including Spoleto, Brisbane, Jerusalem, Hong Kong, Edinburgh, Krakow, Ravinia, Caramoor, Charleston, Paris, Athens, Regensburg, and Tokyo. EMNY records for *Ex cathedra* Records, Lyrichord, Musicmasters, Musical Heritage Society, Nonesuch, and Foné, and has produced several recordings in collaboration with the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Frederick Renz, Founder/Director of the Early Music Foundation (EMF), is a unique figure in the early music movement. Equally adept in all forms of music and music-drama from the 11th through the 18th centuries, he has reaped international acclaim for his work as conductor, producer, director and performer while leading Early Music New York (EM/NY) to preeminence in the field. Among his numerous accolades are commissions from the Spoleto Festival and The Metropolitan Museum of Art as well as Producer's Grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. Mr. Renz was conferred a doctorate *honoris causa* by the State University of New York.

ABOUT THE EARLY MUSIC FOUNDATION

EARLY MUSIC FOUNDATION (EMF) was founded in 1974 by Frederick Renz and other members of the legendary New York Pro Musica Antiqua. Upon its inception, the EMF was invited to be in residence at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. The mission of the Early Music Foundation is to enrich public understanding of western culture through the highest quality, historically informed performances and recordings of music and music drama from the 11th to the 18th centuries.

The EMF presents EARLY MUSIC NEW YORK (EM/NY), administers an in-house recording label *Ex cathedra Records*, and provides services to New York City historical performance artists

COMPACT DISCS (*Ex cathedra* Records label)

A Medieval Christmas, A Renaissance Christmas, A Baroque Christmas
A Colonial Christmas, A Dutch Christmas, A Bohemian Christmas,
Music of Medieval Love, Music of Renaissance Love, Music of Venice
Available at www.EarlyMusicNY.org

ADMINISTRATION

Frederick Renz - Founding Director
Craig Feder - Manager
Dorothy Olsson - Development Associate
Michael Gordon - Fiscal Associate
Renee Barrick - Managing Associate

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