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Music Review | Early Music New York
Sweet Renaissance Sounds From the Chancel

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Richard Termine for The New York Times

Members of Early Music New York performed at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine.

The next section featured anonymous 15th-century English carols, including the harmonically rich “Hail Mary Full of Grace.” The lively mood of “Nowell, This Is the Salutation” contrasted with the more poignant “Lullay, Lullay.”

The program also included songs from King Henry VIII’s Book, like the motet-carol “Quid petis, o fili?” The singers were sometimes accompanied by the lute player Christopher Morrongiello, as in the carol “Grene Grow’th the Holly.” Mr. Morrongiello also offered several attractive solos.

Throughout the concert the men sang with clarity, fine intonation and an impressive blend of voices, with performers adding distinctive touches to various pieces with brief solos.

The rest of the program featured works from 16th-century Europe, including Francis Cutting’s “Greensleeves,” the anonymous “Coventry Carol” and Thomas Ravenscroft’s “Remember, O Thou Man.” One highlight of the concert was the familiar “Es ist ein’ Ros’ entsprungen” by Michael Praetorius, a German composer whose oeuvre features four-part harmonizations of popular Christmas tunes. The event concluded with selections from Spain, including a motet by Tomás Luis de Victoria and a buoyant rendition of the anonymous “E la don don.”

The concert is repeated on Friday and Sunday at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, 1047 Amsterdam Avenue, at 112th Street, Morningside Heights; (212) 280-0330, earlymusicny.org.

Freezing temperatures and snow didn’t prevent a large turnout for Early Music New York’s annual holiday concert at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine on Sunday afternoon.

Male singers from this fine period ensemble, directed by Frederick Renz, offered selections from the Renaissance, including well-known songs and rarer carols and motets.

The program opened with the motet “Noël, Noël,” by Antoine Busnois. (The word “noël” was first used in songs in the early 15th century.) Adhering to a Renaissance technique called fauxbourdon, in which only two of three vocal parts are notated, the singers fluidly embellished the anonymous, monophonic tune “C’était à l’heure de minuit (noël),” performed here in an arrangement by Mr. Renz.