

EARLY MUSIC FOUNDATION presents

EARLY MUSIC NEW YORK

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FREDERICK RENZ – DIRECTOR

*A Renaissance  
Christmas*

2016 ~ 2017

42<sup>nd</sup> Season

First Church of Christ, Scientist  
Central Park West at 68<sup>th</sup> Street  
Saturday, 10 December, 7:30 PM  
&

Artist in Residence  
The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine  
~ Saint James Chapel  
Amsterdam Avenue at 112<sup>th</sup> Street, New York City  
Sunday, 11 December, 2:00 PM  
Sunday, 18 December, 2:00 PM  
Sunday, 25 December, 2:00 PM & 7:30 PM

# *A Renaissance Christmas*

## 15<sup>th</sup>-Century France

Noel, noel (*motet*)

Antoine Busnois, d. 1492

Conditor alme siderum (*Advent hymn*)

Guillaume Dufay, ca.1400-1474

C'était a l'heure de minuit (*noel*)

Anonymous, arr. Renz

## 15<sup>th</sup>-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: Als I lay on yoolis night

arr. Renz

Alleluia: A newe work is come on hond

## From King Henry VIII's Book, ca. 1515

*Dreweries acordes*

*Anonymous*

Grene grow'th the holly (*carol*)

Henry VIII, 1491-1547

Quid petis, o fili? (*motet-carol*)

Richard Pygott, ca. 1485-ca. 1552

*Twenty Waies Upon the Bells*

*Thomas Robinson, c. 1560 – 1610*

Sweet Jesus is come to us (*strophic song w/ contrafactum text*)

*Anonymous*

## 16<sup>th</sup>-Century France/Burgundy

*Tant que vivray*

*Claudin de Sermisy- arr. Attaingant, mid-16<sup>th</sup> century*

*Vox in Rama (motet for Holy Innocents' Day)*

Jacob Clement, ca. 1510-ca. 1556

*Noe, noe (motet)*

Antoine Brumel, fl. ca.1500

## 16<sup>th</sup>-Century England

*Greensleeves*

Coventry Carol

Remember, O thou man

*Anonymous*

Anonymous, 1591

Thomas Ravenscroft, pub. 1611

## 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Germany

Es ist ein' Ros' entsprunge

Psallite, unigenite (Weihnachtslied), 1612

arr. Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621

Praetorius

## 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Spain

O magnum mysterium

(motet for the Feast of the Circumcision)

*Dumpe*\*

E la don don, verges Maria (villancico)

Tomás Luis de Victoria, ca. 1549-1611

*John Johnson, c. 1545 – 1594*

Anonymous, pub. 1556

\* *Dumpe* (*Dompe*) can refer to a dance, a dirge, a lament or a melancholic love song, perhaps derived from Irish 'dump' that means lament.

**NEXT EM/NY PERFORMANCES ~ SPRING 2017**

**FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST**

Central Park West at 68th Street in Lincoln Square

**Mozart Moniker**

*18th-century classical orchestra*

Saturday, 4 March, 7:30 PM

**Bach Brotherhood**

*18th-century baroque orchestra*

Saturday, 6 May, 7:30 PM

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FREDERICK RENZ – DIRECTOR

**Nathaniel Adams – tenor**

**Eric Brenner – alto**

**Jason Eck – bass baritone**

**Patrick Fennig – alto/baritone**

**Todd Frizzell – tenor**

**Michael Maliakel – bass baritone**

**Jonathan May – alto**

**Daniel Moody – alto**

**Wilson Nichols – tenor**

**Arash Noori – lute**

**Jason Priset – lute & theorbo**

**Adrian Rosas – bass baritone**

## 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 15<sup>th</sup>-century tune with the words 'C'était 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 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 15<sup>th</sup>-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 16<sup>th</sup> 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-15<sup>th</sup> 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. 'Lullay: 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 groweth 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. Yet his four-part harmonization of popular Christmas tunes 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.

Lute duets interspersed through the second half of the program are taken largely from Jane Pickeringe's Lute Book, one of the finest sources of the English lute repertory containing several settings as duets. Nothing is known of the life of its original owner: it is fortunate that her name is known, as the first section of the manuscript has been lost, narrowly missing the folio containing her signature and a date of 1616.

## **EARLY MUSIC NEW YORK**

Early Music New York (EM/NY), founded in 1974 and celebrating its 42nd season, performs music and music drama from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance as well as orchestra repertoire of the baroque and classical periods. EM/NY is Artist in Residence at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine, New York, where it is heard in an annual subscription concert series. Profiled on award-winning national news programs ABC *Nightline* and CBS News *Sunday Morning*, EM/NY tours throughout the United States and abroad, performing to critical acclaim in return engagements at international festivals including Athens, Brisbane, Caramoor, Charleston, Edinburgh, Hong Kong, Ilmajoki, Jerusalem, Krakow, Paris, Ravinia, Regensburg, Rome, San Antonio, Spoleto, Tokyo and Wolftrap.

### **FREDERICK RENZ - DIRECTOR**

Frederick Renz, founder of the Early Music Foundation, has for four decades researched and performed music and music drama from the eleventh through the eighteenth centuries. Internationally acclaimed for his work as a conductor, producer, director, and performer, Renz has received commissions from the Spoleto Festival, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Ingram Merrill Foundation, and an honorary doctorate from the State University of New York.

EARLY MUSIC NEW YORK compact disc recordings on the *Ex cathedra* Records label are available in the lobby at the conclusion of the performance and at [www.EarlyMusicNY.org](http://www.EarlyMusicNY.org)

**A Medieval Christmas  
A Bohemian Christmas  
Music of Medieval Love**

**A Renaissance Christmas  
A Dutch Christmas**

**A Baroque Christmas  
A Colonial Christmas  
Music of Renaissance Love**

**Music of Venice (17th-century instrumental)  
Colonial Capers (18th-century New England)  
Mass for Saint Martial (11th-century plainchant)**

(DVD with Metropolitan Museum of Art historical visuals)  
**Choirs of Angels**

and on the Lyrichord label:  
**Istanpitta & Istanpitta II**  
(the complete medieval dances in two albums)

Thanks to Todd Frizzell for music score transcriptions.  
Thanks to Leanne Mahoney - House Committee Chairperson,  
First Church of Christ, Scientist.

## YOUR VALUED SUPPORT

We are grateful for your patronage today. Your tax-deductible contribution helps bridge the gap between ticket income and the actual cost of producing this event.

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