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Camerata California Presents

Selections from Our Favorite Songs

December 5, 2004
4:30 PM
St. Luke’s Episcopal Church
Los Gatos, California
Program

The Llibre Vermell
- O virgo splendens
- Los set gotex recomptarem
- Mariam matrem virginem
- Imperayritz de la ciuitat ioyasa
- Ad mortem festinamus
- Polorum regina omnium
- Cuncti simus connentes

Anonymous (14th c.) Montserrat, Spain

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Anonymous French organum (ca. 1200)

Nowell, out of your sleep arise
Anonymous English carol (15th century)

Angelus ad Virginem
Anonymous English (14th century)

Dixit Maria ad angelum
Hans Leo Hassler (1564 – 1612)

Sweet was the song the Virgin sang
Anonymous (ca. 1615)

Weihnachtsgesang
Martin Agricola (1486 – 1556)

Psallite (Singt und klingt)
Michael Praetorius (1571 – 1621)

Audite Nova
Orlando di Lasso (ca. 1532 – 1594)

Das Gläut zu Speyer
Ludwig Senfl (ca. 1492 – 1555)

Gloucester Wassail
Traditional (arr. ca. 1864)

Camerata California is a vocal and instrumental ensemble dedicated to performing sacred and secular music from the medieval through the early Baroque eras. The ensemble was inspired by Dr. Vernon Read, who taught and led Early Music at San Jose State University for many years. The members all have varied, long-standing musical experience.

Camerata is always looking for skilled musicians to join us for rehearsals and performances throughout the year. Contact us at majames@rjweb.org.
The Llibre Vermell

The Llibre Vermell (or “The Red Book” for the color of its cover page) is a collection of late 14th century songs written by monks of the monastery of Montserrat in Catalonia, to provide pilgrims with an appropriately decorous repertoire of songs and dances during their visit to the Black Virgin of Montserrat. The songs are in the French Ars Nova style, and mostly in Latin (two are in Catalonian). They range from a hymn to the Virgin Mary of Monte Serrato to a “Dance of Death” (Ad mortem festinamus) – the oldest known surviving example with music addressing the Black Death which ravaged Europe from 1347 to 1348. An interesting part of the history of the Llibre Vermell is that, one fine day in 1811, someone borrowed the book from the library at the Monastery of Montserrat. While the book was on loan, the library was burned down in the course of the Napoleonic Wars, and the rest of the collection was lost.

O Virgo splendens

O Virgo splendens,
Hic in monte celso,
Miraculis serrato fulgentibus ubique,
Quem fideles conscendunt universi,
Eia, pietatis oculo placato,
Cerne ligatos fune peccatorum,
Ne infernorum ictibus graventur,
Sed cum beatis tua prece vocent.

Los set gotex

Los set gotex recomptarem, et devotament cantant,
Humilment saludarem la dolca Verge Maria.
Ave Maria gratia plena,
Dominus tecum, Virgo serena.

Mariam, matrem

Mariam, matrem virginem attolite,
Jhesum Christum extolite concorditer.
Maria seculi asilum defende nos,
Jhesu tutum refugium, exaudi nos,
jam estis vos totaliter diffugium
Totum mundi configuram realiter.

Imperayritz de la ciutat ioyasa

Imperayritz de la ciutat ioyasa,
De paradis ab tot gaug eternal,

Ad mortem festinamus

Ad mortem festinamus, peccare desistamus.
Scribere proposui de contemptu mundano,
Ut degentes seculi no mulcentur in vano.
Jam est hora surgere a sompno mortis pravo.

Polorum regina

Polorum regina omnium nostra,
Stella matutina, dele scelera.
Ante partum, Virgo Deo gravida,
Semper permansisti inviolata.
Stella matutina, dele scelera.

Cuncti simus

Cuncti simus concanentes: Ave, Maria.
Virgo sola existente, en affuit angelus,
Gabriel est appellatus atque missus celius,
Clara facieque dixit: Ave, Maria.

Domino (instrumental)

Domino is an example of organum of the Parisian Notre Dame school, in which a Gregorian melody is used as a cantus firmus and the top voice embellishes on the chant. Although the piece was originally sung, we have chosen to perform it instrumentally.

Free of sin, abundant in virtue,
Mother of God through divine grace,
Kind Virgin with angelic face,
Just as you are gracious before God,
Be merciful unto us humble children,
And intercede for us before the heavenly King.

Queen of all the heavens,
Star of the morning, redeem our sins.
Before the birth, Virgin, though pregnant,
You were still immaculate.
Star of the morning, redeem our sins.

Let us all sing together: Hail, Mary.
When the Virgin was alone, behold, an angel came to her,
It was the angel, Gabriel and he was sent from heaven,
With radiant countenance he exclaimed: Hail Mary.
**Nowell, out of your sleep arise**  
Anonymous English carol  
*(15th century)*

In England of the Middle Ages, a carol was a song in English or Latin with a refrain (burden) and several verses. These carols could be on any subject, though most were about the Virgin Mary or the Saints of Christmas, and some were even secular. The form stemmed from the French carole, a form of choreographed song that was popular in the 12th to 14th centuries.

‘Nowell, out of your sleep’ is a 15th-century processional carol that incorporates three polyphonic lines.

Out of your sleep arise and wake,  
For God mankind hath now y-take.  
All of a maid without any make;  
Of all women she beareth the bell.  
**Nowell!**

And through a maidè fair and wise,  
**Now man is made of full great price;**  
Now angels kneleyn to man's service,  
And at this time all this befell.  
**Nowell!**

Now man is brighter than the sun;  
Now man in heaven on high shall won;  
Blessed be God this game is begun  
And his mother the Empress of hell.  
**Nowell!**

**Angelus ad Virginem**  
Anonymous English (14th century)

‘Angelus Ad Virginem’ or, in its English form, ‘Gabriel, From Heven King Was To The Maide Sende,’ was a song that enjoyed widespread popularity and is mentioned by Chaucer in his Canterbury Tales. In The Miller’s Tale, poor scholar Nicholas sang it in Latin to the accompaniment of his psaltery.

Angelus ad Virginem  
Subintrans in conclave,  
Virginis formidinem  
Demulcens inquit, ‘Ave!’  
Ave regina virginum;  
Coeli terrae que Dominum  
Concipies  
Et paries  
Intacta  
Salutem hominum;  
Tu porta caeli facta,  
Medella crimini.’

Gabriel, from Hevene-King  
Sent to the maide swete,  
Broghte thire blisful tiding  
And faire he gan hir grete:  
‘Hail be thou, ful of grace aright!  
For Godes Sone, this hevene-light  
For mannes love  
Wil man become  
And taken  
Flesh of thee, maiden bright,  
Makin free for to maken  
Of sinne and devles might.’
**Dixit Maria ad angelum**  
Hans Leo Hassler (1564 – 1612)

Composers of the Renaissance often traveled about Europe and were influenced by regional styles. Hans Leo Hassler was born in Germany, but studied with both Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli, who composed glorious choral and instrumental work for St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice. Hassler composed madrigals and lieder, as well as Latin motets and Masses, Lutheran church music and instrumental music. The motet ‘Dixit Maria’ suggests the Italian style with its short phrases and clear harmonies.

**Sweet was the song the Virgin sang**  
Anonymous (ca.1615)

The consort song is a form especially associated with English composers of the Renaissance, in which the words of a poem are sung by a solo voice while a consort of viols provides accompaniment. (‘Viol’ is short for ‘viola da gamba’ – a bowed stringed instrument that came in several sizes, like the modern string quartet.) In the consort song, the instruments are not relegated to a subsidiary role, but are equal partners with the voice while providing a rich contrapuntal background for the comparatively straightforward delivery of the text by the singer.

For this first setting, we have chosen to use a consort of recorders rather than viols, and have doubled two lines with plucked instruments.

**Weihnachtsgesang**  
Martin Agricola (1486 – 1556)

Martin Agricola was a German composer and music theorist whose family name was Sohr or Sore (Agricola refers to his heritage as the son of a farmer). He composed hymns and motets but was mainly known for his writings on music theory, many of which were intended for use in Protestant schools. His Musica instrumentalis deudsch (1529, revised 1545) contains valuable descriptions of the musical instruments in use in his time, with details of their tuning, fingering and technique.

Weihnachtsgesang (Christmas song) is a mixture of German and Latin paraphrasing the Christmas story.

**Psallite (Singt und klingt)**  
Michael Praetorius (1571 – 1621)  
(performing instrumentally)

Like Hassler, Michael Praetorius also studied with Giovanni Gabrieli. He was an important organizer of Lutheran church music, and a prolific composer who explored all the forms and techniques of his time. In 1618, he wrote the most important source for late Renaissance musical practice – the Syntagma Musicum (Treatise of Music) – which includes descriptions and woodcuts of the various instruments in use during the 16th and early 17th century. Of interest are the number and variety of wind instruments, and the fact that all instruments (winds, strings, etc.) were built in families (consorts) from bass to soprano. Praetorius also describes and approves the doubling of voices with instruments.

Our rendition of ‘Singt und klingt’ makes use of a consort of crumhorns – capped double-reed instruments that were popular in the 16th century.

**Das Gläut zu Speyer**  
Ludwig Senfl (ca. 1492 – 1555)

Senfl’s ‘Das Gläut zu Speyer’ is a remarkable piece designed to imitate the sound of bells in the church of Speyer, a small town on the Rhine. Different texts and melodic fragments are passed from line to line while other parts imitate bell-like sounds such as “gling-glang,” “mir-mur-maun,” and “bon-bum.” The remainder is encouragement to the ringers to keep playing, a rather strenuous activity when applied to tower bells.

Ludwig Senfl of Switzerland was one of the first Germanic composers to work productively in all the forms of the time, composing Masses, motets, and over 250 lieder.

**Gloucester Wassail**  
Traditional (arr. ca. 1864)

Possibly to combine the ancient beliefs with Christianity, medieval wassailing took place on December 24th, the vigil of Christmas. The Anglo-Saxons (5th century) wished wes hal or wes ge hale, ‘be whole or be ye well’ toasting one’s drinking companions with
spiced ale. The Old North French of this salutation was waes hael and the Old Danish
was waes hail. By the Middle Ages, the English form was wassayl or wasseyl and the
Anglo-French was wassail.

Wassail is associated with caroling too. There are stories of men carrying a large vessel
(some reports say a bowl with twelve handles, some say wooden, and some used pitchers)
from house to house. They would sing, get the vessel filled again and go on to the next
house.

There is also a tradition of blessing the crops especially the apple trees. People gathered
by the trees to celebrate and poured some wassail as a blessing into the roots of the trees.

In the version you will hear, the wassailers drink to the health of all the benefactor’s
livestock, in addition to the family and the servants.

Wassail, wassail all over the town
Our toast it is white and our ale it is brown
Our bowl it is made of the white maple tree
With the wassailing bowl, we'll drink to thee.

So here is to Cherry and to his right cheek
Pray God send our master a good piece of beef
And a good piece of beef that may we all see
With the wassailing bowl, we'll drink to thee.

And here is to Colly and to her long tail
Pray God send our master he never may fail
A bowl of strong beer! I pray you draw near
And our jolly wassail it's then you shall hear.

Then here's to the maid in the lily white smock
Who tripped to the door and slipped back the lock
Who tripped to the door and pulled back the pin
For to let these jolly wassailers in.