

C666
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The School of Music

DAT # 14.363

presents

"A Medieval Christmas"

The Collegium Musicum, directed by JoAnn Taricani

Craig Grayson, *bass*
Markdavin Obenza, *countertenor*

Kari Ragan, *soprano*
Benjamin Albritton, *lute*

December 14, 2002

Mary Gates Hall

CD# 14.364

Chant from France, ca. 1000 A.D.

1 ALLELUIA

2 ALLELUIA

3 KYRIE ELEISON

4 ALLELUIA

5 *Antiphon: "O MARIA, JESSE VIRGA" (from the third Mass for Christmas Day)*

6 *Sequence: "NATUS ANTE SAECULA" by Notker Balbulus*

7 *Sequence: "CONGAUDENT ANGELORUM," by Notker Balbulus*

8 *Sequence: "FESTA CHRISTI," by Notker Balbulus*

--- *brief pause* ---

Polyphony from Paris, Cathedral of Notre Dame, ca. 1200 A.D.

9 *Organum: "ALLELUIA: [EX SEMINE]"*

10 *Motet: "EX SEMINE ABRAHE / EX SEMINE ROSA / EX SEMINE"*

11 *Organum: "ALLELUIA: [EX SEMINE]"*

Anonymous laude from 12th-century Italy

12 "SOVRANA SÌ NE' SEMBIANTI"

13 "A VOI, GENTE, FACCIAM PREGO"

14 "REGINA PRETIOSA, MADRE DEL GLORIOSO"

15 "GLORIA IN CIELO, È PACE IN TERRA"

Please hold all applause until the pause and the conclusion

Thanks to:

Professor Mícéal Vaughan for his assistance in translating Notker's poetry;
August Denhard of the Early Music Guild for his coaching of the lute accompaniment

Program notes

This concert presents the earliest notated music that has survived from Western Europe. By the year 1000, several rudimentary systems of notation were in place, which document elaborate melodies as well as the liturgical music used in the medieval church. Tonight, you will hear liturgical music used in France around the year 1000 A.D., followed by music from the later middle ages.

The first half of the program presents chant that would have been used in Masses and other liturgies around the year 1000 in France. You may notice is that the melodies are different from those more commonly heard today in liturgical music. These earlier melodies tend to have broad leaps and a wider range than later chant, especially the "Alleluias" on the program.

Three of the works on the first half of the concert are sequences, a poetic form of 12-18 stanzas, in which every two successive stanzas are sung to the same melody. These were written by a monk at the Abbey of St. Gall in Switzerland, who turned his creative energies to helping himself and others memorize long wordless Alleluias you will hear. This monk, Notker Balbulus (Notker the Stutterer, ca. 840 - 912 A.D.) complained that the long Alleluias taxed his "little memory," so he began to write poetry to be sung to those melodies.

In the second half of the program, we have included some pieces of polyphony written for the newly constructed Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris around the year 1200 A.D. Two of the works are organum, a new type of polyphony that adds layers of music to existing chant; one is a motet, a new type of work that layers both new text and music.

You will also hear some Italian *laude* from about around 1200 A.D. You will notice that these compositions are more rhythmic and that the texts are more informal than the liturgical chant from the first half of the program. These Italian pieces are medieval songs intended for use in processions and other non-liturgical occasions, but their religious connections are quite clear. Although instruments would not have been used in the church liturgy, they could well have been included as accompaniment for the *laude*, so you will hear lute accompaniment for two of these works.

The Collegium Musicum is an ensemble of the UW School of Music, including both undergraduate and graduate students studying approaches to the performance of early music.

Mary Gates Hall was dedicated in May 2000, the result of a combination of state funding and a generous gift from Melinda and William H. Gates III, after whose mother the building is named. It is a renovation of the old Physics Building, to which was added the new section of the building in which you are seated. The former exterior wall of the old Physics Building is the brick wall behind your seats, and the building is now focused on serving undergraduate education. We have tried to select music that is enhanced by the acoustics of this hall.

-- JoAnn Taricani

Notes and translations

*Please hold all applause for the mid-concert pause and the conclusion,
and kindly turn off all devices that may chirp, beep, or ring – thank you!*

Chant from France, ca. 1000 A.D.

Two Alleluias (*melodic melisma on the word "Alleluia"*)

Kyrie eleison (*from a manuscript of the early 1000s*)

Kyrie eleison/ Lord, have mercy

Christe eleison/ Christ, have mercy

Kyrie eleison/ Lord, have mercy

Alleluia (*melodic melisma on the word "Alleluia"*)

Antiphon: O Maria, Jesse virga (*from the third Mass for Christmas Day, ca. 1000 A.D.*)

O Maria, Jesse virga/ O Mary, of the root of Jesse, Queen of Heaven, star of the sea: Behold now the fullness of time has come. You have brought forth the Child promised so long ago.

O domina/ O noble lady, we pray that since we have won the merit of acknowledging you as the mother of Christ, we may receive your loving kindness.

Et pium ut singularum/ And may you by your singular merit, cause your Son to look kindly upon us. And in these days concentrated on your bearing a Child, in your holy virginity for your sake, O most gracious lady, cause this temporal festival to nourish us for eternal joy. Alleluia!

Natus ante saecula (*sequence by Notker Balbulus, ca. 900 A.D.*)

Natus ante saecula/ You were born before the ages as the unbounded Son of God, through Whom the machinery of heaven, earth, sea, and all who live in them came into being.

Per quam dies/ Through whom the days and hours flow forth, and again turn back upon themselves; about whom the angels in the arch of the heavens sing with harmonious force.

Hoc corpus/ Thus he assumed this fragile body without the stain of original sin, from the flesh of the virgin Mary, from whom he cleansed the lascivious guilt of the first parent and Eve.

Hoc praesens/ This exceptionally bright short day, extended in length, announces that the true Son, born in shadows, drives away the old age of the earth with the radiance of his light.

Nec nox/ Night does not empty the new light of the star which struck awe into the eyes of the Magi which recognized it; nor does light depart from the shepherds, the masters of the flock, whom the brightness of the angels of God struck dumb.

Gaude, Dei/ Rejoice, Mother of God, whom the singing angels surrounded in the manner of midwives; O Christ, only begotten Son of the Father, who assumed human form for our sake, refresh us.

Et quorum/ Receive worthily their prayers, Jesus, who shared our life on earth; so that you, the only begotten Son of God, may choose us to share in your divinity.

Congaudent angelorum (*sequence by Notker Balbulus, ca. 900 A.D.*)

Congaudent angelorum/ The choirs of angels rejoice in the glorious virgin.

Quae sine virili commixtione/ Who, without union with a man, brought forth a Son who healed the world with his blood.

Nam ipsa laetatur/ For she rejoices that she already has caught the attention of the Prince of Heaven; she, a virgin on earth, offers him nourishment.

Quam celebris angelis Maria/ How much Mary, the mother of Jesus, trusted the glorious angels who acknowledged themselves as her devoted servants.

Qua gloria in caelis/ With what glory this virgin is honored in heaven, she who offered a dwelling place to the Lord in her most blessed body; how splendidly the Star of the Sea brightens the northern sky, she who gave birth to the light of all the stars, men, and spirits!

Te, caeli regina/ You, queen of the heavens, these little people celebrate with pious souls; these little people, with the angels, raise you above the ether with melodious song.

Te libri, virgo/ You, O virgin, are sung about in the books of the prophets; the chorus of priests praise you, and the apostles and martyrs preach about you.

Ecclesia ergo/ Therefore, the church is venerating you with hearts and songs

Precatute supplici/ Imploring you, Mary, with prayerful supplications, and displaying their devotion to you, so that you might be their help before Christ the Lord until the end of time.

Festa Christi (*sequence by Notker Balbulus, ca. 900 A.D.*)

Festa Christi/ Let all Christendom celebrate the feast of Christ, which should be venerated by all people, through the advent of the all-powerful One.

Ut natus est/ When Christ was born, a great bright star was seen, and the Magi carried gifts for the Child the star announced. They sought Him in the transitory manger, the golden bed of the emerging Prince.

Hinc ira saevi Herodis/ Here the hot anger of savage King Herod, foolishly envious at his ruler, ordered the children of Bethlehem to be destroyed with a cruel sword. O Christ, learned young man, sucking in such great sorrow at your mother's breast, you will collect a great army of your Father by preaching to the people.

Anno hominis trigesimo/ At the thirtieth year of man, here below, the hand of God descended to His servant, consecrating baptism for the absolution of sins. Behold the spirit in the shape of a harmless bird, who comes to rest in the tabernacle of His heart.

Patris etiam/ The pious voice of the Father sounds forth: "You are my true Son, pleasing to Me, in whom I am pleased. Today I have begotten you, my Son.

Huic omnes/ Listen, all you people, to this invocation.

brief pause – 5 minutes

Polyphony from the Cathedral of Notre Dame, Paris, ca. 1200 A.D.

These selections were written for the newly constructed Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris around the year 1200. All are based on an "Alleluia" for Christmas, which includes the words "Ex semine Abrahe" ("from the seed of Abraham"). Each piece uses the chant in the lowest voice, and adds new music on top of it. This space in Mary Gates Hall is the type of large, reverberant acoustics which this music was intended to highlight.

Alleluia [ex semine] (*polyphonic melisma on "Alleluia"*)

Ex semine rosa / Ex semine Abrahe / Ex semine (*motet*)

(you will hear each voice being added in this motet, until all voices are singing the different texts simultaneously)

Ex semine (lowest voice)/ From the seed

Ex semine (middle voice)/ From the seed of Abraham, by divine control, you have brought forth a fire, O Lord, and by a virgin birth, from the tribe of Judea you have brought forth man's salvation. And now for this new birthday, you sent forth an egg, and you will give us fish and bread for this birth without seed.

Ex semine (highest voice)/ From the seed of a thorn springs a rosebud; its fruit is from the mellow olive vine; a virgin arises from a descendent of Judea; a ray of the morning star arises from the mists of a cloud, the sun from the ray of a star; the rock flows with honey; the maid's flower bears the Word, without seed.

Alleluia [ex semine] (*polyphonic melisma on "Alleluia"*)

Anonymous laude from 12th-century Italy

These *laude*, or songs of praise, started to appear in Italy in the late 12th century. They are religious in nature, not intended for liturgical use, but for events such as processions. You will notice that these pieces are much more rhythmic than the chant of the first half of the program, because of the metrical nature of the poetry and the innovations in musical notation and rhythm in the 12th century. Most *laude* have a refrain which is repeated after each verse.

Because these pieces lie between the realm of liturgical music and secular music, we have added instrumental (lute) accompaniment to two of the pieces.

Sovrana sì ne' sembianti

Refrain: *Sovrana sì ne' sembianti*/ Regal in her countenance, a treasure full of piety.

Con più parla/ The more she speaks, the more pleasing that fragrant rose becomes; with sweetness she gave birth to God who brings us great goodness.

Gratiosa, che portasti/ O full of grace, you who bore God and man, you nursed him and put him in a manger; he was the picture of poverty.

A li pastor/ The shepherds were given the joyous news and they were shown where the Lord was born so that they knew with certainty.

L'uno a l'altro/ They began to say to each other, "We want to go to Bethlehem and find out what has been said that brings such great joy."