The University of Washington School of Music
and the Division of Music History

present

"CHRISTMAS FEASTS OF THE MIDDLE AGES"

performed by the

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON COLLEGIUM MUSICUM
JoAnn Taricani, Director

The program will consist of two liturgical dramas:

"The Annunciation"
and
"The Nativity"

text and music of the dialogue from two medieval manuscripts
edited by JoAnn Taricani

translation of the dialogue
by Miceal Vaughan

followed by

chorale settings of Michael Praetorius

December 6 and 7, 8:00
Graduate Reading Room
U.W. Suzzallo Library
"The Annunciation"

Narrator: "Missus est Gabriel Angelus"
Conductus: Ave Maria
The Angel Gabriel: "Ave Maria, gratia plena"
Motet: Ave Maria/Ave Maria stella
The Angel Gabriel: "Ne timeas, Maria; invenisti gratiam"
Motet: Nobili precinatur/Eius
Mary: "Quomodo fiet istud, Angele Dei?"
Conductus: Osponea delecta
The Angel Gabriel: "Audi, Maria, virgo Christi"
Motet: Mater Dei/Eius
Mary: "Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum"
Conductus: Salve virgo virginum
Elizabeth: "Salve chara, deo gratia, te saluto"
Conductus: Ave nostra spei
Mary: "Magnificat anima mea Dominum"

—PAUSE—

"The Nativity"

Motet: Cum sit natus hodie/Hec dies
The Angel Gabriel: "Nolite timere, ecce enim evangelizo"
Shepherds: "Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax"
Motet: Alle. psallite cum luyal/Alleluia
Shepherds: "Pax in terris nunciatur, in excelsis gloria!"
Motet: Ex semine rosa
Shepherd: "Transeamus usque Bethlehem, et videamus"
Motet: Ecce ministerium/Domino
Cleric: "Quem queritis in presepe, pastores?"
Shepherd: "Salvatorum Christum Dominum infantem"
Conductus: Ex David origine
Midwife: "Adest hic parvulus cum Maria"
Cleric: "Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium"
Shepherds: "Salve, virgo, singularis, virgo manens"
Motet: Alle psallite cum luyal/Alleluia

—PAUSE—

Four Chorale Settings by Michael Praetorius (1571-1621)

In dulci jubilo
Puer natus in Bethlehem
Es ist ein Ros entsprungen
Psallite! Unigenito, Christo Dei filio!
Members of the Collegium:

Barton Nye Green, tenor
Laurie Haney, soprano
Cynthia Oeck, soprano
Cynthia Rogers, recorder, krummhorn, percussion
Elizabeth Rom, soprano
Erhard Rom, baritone
Tracy Russell, recorder, shawm

Singers in the dialogue of "The Annunciation"
Gabriel: Barton Nye Green
Mary: Laurie Haney
Elisabeth: Elizabeth Rom

Singers in the dialogue of "The Nativity"
Gabriel: Barton Nye Green
Shepherds: ensemble
Cleric: Erhard Rom
Midwife: Cynthia Oeck

Director's note:

These liturgical dramas exist in two medieval French manuscripts, one ("The Nativity") from the thirteenth century, the other ("The Annunciation") from the fourteenth century. As the name implies, these dialogues were originally intended to have been incorporated in the liturgy for the feastdays of the Annunciation (March 25) and Christmas Day (December 25). I have chosen to edit and to present these two particular dramas for this season because their dialogues present a straightforward version of the Biblical account of the Nativity.

In order to present these basically simple, chanted dialogues outside of their original liturgical function, I have added material to the dialogue of the plays by inserting a number of medieval polyphonic compositions between the monophonic (or chanted) speeches of the characters in the dramas. This technique of supplementing pre-existent texts with related material is a common medieval practice, and is sometimes referred to as a trope or gloss. The result will correspond dramatically and musically to the much later function of recitative and aria in opera: the dialogue will advance the action of the drama, while the polyphonic pieces reflect upon the themes touched upon by the various characters.

As you will note when you read the following text and translation, the polyphonic works are both motets and conductus (all from the 13th and 14th centuries). The medieval motet is a composition based on Gregorian chant, in which the chant (identified in the title of the motet) is played on an instrument while the voices above it sing one or two newly-composed lines of text and music. The conductus, on the other hand, is not based on chant, but is freely composed, and will be written for two or three voices, all of which sing the same text and usually move in a similar rhythm and in parallel motion.

After performing the two plays, we shall move to the relative modernity of the 16th century and present four settings of traditional chorale melodies by Michael Praetorius. In contrast to the medieval styles to which you will become accustomed in the next hour, these concluding compositions should sound relatively contemporary and familiar, as the chorale melodies are rather well-known. The texts of the chorales, moreover, provide further reflection and amplification of the themes found in the narrative of the plays.

J. Taricani