

Of a rose singe we

Songs to celebrate the union of England and France

Program Notes

From the moment she disembarked onto Flemish soil to wed Charles the Bold of Burgundy at the house of St. Jean d'Angely in the tiny port town of Damme, Margaret of York (sister of King Richard III) was to join a long line of capable women who channeled political savvy and keen resolve to successfully promote Burgundian interests and culture over the course of the tumultuous 15th century. Beginning with her name-sake, Marguerite of Flanders, whose inheritance first united Flanders and Burgundy at the end of the 14th century, to the strong-willed Isabel of Portugal, the dowager duchess who shrewdly pursued the union between Charles and Margaret to align English and Burgundian interests against an ascendant France, Margaret of York would in turn solidify and shepherd Burgundy through some of its most perilous moments. Outliving both her husband and her daughter-in-law, Margaret's actions to pair the princess Mary with the heir to the powerful Hapsburg empire following the untimely battlefield death of Charles saved Burgundy from total annexation by France.

As with her predecessors, Margaret's legacy was nuanced, and transcended power and politics. She was also a great patroness to the arts and herself an avid collector of vividly illuminated manuscripts. A late 15th century painted miniature depicts Margaret receiving an original copy of the *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* from no other than the celebrated humanist English printer William Caxton, who would later go on to publish numerous romantic works, including Malory's seminal collection of Arthurian stories, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, and the *Fais et prouesses du chevalier Jason*, containing stories related to Jason and the Golden Fleece, in 1477. Caxton's connections to the ducal household during the 1470s should come as no surprise in light of a general taste at the Burgundian court for stories inspired by Arthurian romance, extravagant chivalric displays and courtly ceremony that included regular pageants, tournaments and the permanent employment of some of the most famous singers and composers in Europe (duke Charles was himself a composer and singer of chansons).

It is in this context of flourishing arts and patronage at the court of Burgundy in the third quarter of the 15th century that the musical form that would later be referred to as the Burgundian chanson reached unprecedented heights. This new program of songs and motets written by composers active during the time of Margaret and Charles features English and French language music that may well have been heard in noble residences from Bruges to Beaune, from Kent to Cambridge.

The title of today's program, "Of a Rose Singe We" reflects both the formal allegory of the rose as a symbol of Mary and, simultaneously, that of virtuous love. It also alludes, by happy coincidence, to the presence on the continent of yet another symbolic rose, that of the white rose of York, as embodied in the person of Margaret herself.

Program

Goday, My Lord (solo luth)

Anonymous English – 15th century

Of a rose singe we

Anonymous English – 15th century

Of a rose singe we
Mysterium mirabilis
This rose is white of color bright
Through whom our joy gan alight

Pryncesse of youthe

Anonymous English – 15th century

Pryncesse of youthe and floure of gentylesse
Ensaumple of vertu grounde of courteysye
Of bountee roote queen and ek maystresse
To alle wymmen how they shal hem guye

So ys emprented

Walter Frye (d. 1474/1475)

So ys emprented in my remembrance
Your womanhede iour yowght your gentillesse
Iour goodly port your frely continance
Your prysid beaulte with iour kyndenesse

Plus jay le monde regarde

Robert Morton (~1430-1476)

Plus jay le monde regarde
Plus je voy mon premier chois
Avoir le bruit et le vois
De los de grace et de beaulte

*[The more I have regarded the world
The more I recognize in my chosen one
The nobility, the voice, and
The gifts of grace and of beauty.]*

Quant ce vendra

Antoine Busnoys (1430-1492)

Quant ce vendra au droit destaindre
Comment pouray mon veul constraintre
Et mon cueur faindre a mon douloureux partement
De vous mon leal pencement, a qui nulluy ne peut actaindre

*[When it comes to true torment
How shall I be able to contain my desire?
Alas - my heart falters at my sad parting
From you, peerless, to whom I direct my loyal thoughts]*

Mi verry joy

Bedingham - XVe s.

Mi verry joy and most parfit plesere
Whiche are of me and alle I have maystres
So willith me to se yow lo dowlles
That half how moche y kan not say you here

Le souvenir de vous me tue

Robert Morton

Le souvenir de vous me tue
Mon seul bien quand je ne vous voy
Car je vous jure sur ma foy
Sans vous ma liesse est perdue

*[The memory of you kills me,
My one treasure, when I cannot see you.
Because I swear to you upon my honor,
Without you my joy is lost.]*

~PAUSE~

Ave Maria

Chant grégorien

Ave regina coelorum

Walter Frye

Ave regina coelorum
Mater regis angelorum
O Maria flos virginum
Velud rosa vel liliū

*[Hail Queen of the heavens,
Mother of the King of angels.
O Mary, flower of virgins,
Like a rose or a lily]*

Tisis non

Anonymous English – 15th century

This ys no lyf alas that y do lede

It is but deth as yn lyves lyckenesse
Endeles sorrow assured owte of drede
Past all despeyre and owte of all gladenesse

Alles regretz

Hayne van Ghizeghem (1445-1497)

Allez regrets vuidez de ma presance
Allez ailleurs querir vostre acointance
Assez avez tourmente mon las cueur

*[Go, Regrets, leave my presence.
Go elsewhere to seek a friend.
Enough you have tormented my weak heart]*

Myn hertis lust

Bedingham

Myn hertis lust sterre of my confort
which is the guide unto my parfaite liffe
Cherati that welle of plesance and disport
whom that y serve with herte atentiffe

Gentilz gallans

Hayne van Ghizeghem

Gentilz gallans soions toujours joyeux
Et je vous en prie tres humblement
Et si servons les dames loyaulment
Sans reposer le vrai cueur amoureux

*[Gentle Gallants, let us be always joyful
And I pray you very humbly
And thus, let us serve the ladies loyally
Without hiding the true, loving heart.]*

Alas alas

Walter Frye

Alas alas alas is my chief song
ffor peyne and wo none other can y syng
Insteade of rest asobbe y tale among
ffor myn onese and deathe along siching

There is no rose of such virtue

Anonymous English – 15th century

There is no rose of such virtue
As is the rose that bare Jesu - Alleluya

Artist Bios

ASTERIA burst onto the national Early Music scene in 2004, winning Early Music America's first Unicorn Prize for Medieval and Renaissance Music with a performance heralded by the New York Times as "intimate and deeply communicative...meltingly beautiful." This engaging duo brings out the passion and emotional impact of late medieval vocal and instrumental music with timeless love songs of wide appeal, transporting their listeners back to the age of chivalry.

Eric Redlinger's skill on the lute and sweet tenor voice are complemented by his expertise in early music, earned through study at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis and extensive archival research into original sources. Following graduation from Middlebury College, Eric spent several years immersing himself in the European musical archives of the Hague, Basel and Marburg. During this time he also did post-graduate studies in composition and musicology at the Frankfurt Conservatory of Music, worked in the studio of New York based avant-garde composer Philip Glass and studied medieval lute with Crawford Young and voice with Richard Levitt at the Schola. He now makes his home in New York, where he has studied with Drew Minter and Gary Ramsey.

Sylvia Rhyne brings to the partnership not only her quicksilver soprano but also a strong dramatic connection with the audience, gained from a professional career in musical theater. She has starred internationally as Christine in "The Phantom of the Opera," and on Broadway as Joanna in "Sweeney Todd" under the direction of Harold Prince, Susan Schulman and Stephen Sondheim.

Raised in London and the Pacific Northwest, Sylvia grew up surrounded by classical music, opera and dance. She pursued a passion for early music at Carleton College, guided by Stephen Kelly, taking leading roles in early operas and operettas on her way to a degree in music. She studied also with Wesley Balk at St. Olaf College and recorded with Dennis Russell Davies and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. Arriving in New York, Sylvia was invited to sing with the New York City Opera and began ongoing coaching with Marcy Lindheimer.

Upon meeting, Eric and Sylvia immediately discovered their mutual interest in earlier repertoire and began to rendezvous regularly in New York's Central Park to work on late Medieval and Renaissance pieces, gradually developing their passionate approach to the music - seeking out the musical and emotional center of these richly nuanced songs.

To further their study, they have spent much of the past decade in Burgundy, where this music originated. Asteria's artistic vision lies not only in delving into ancient manuscripts for the songs themselves, but in an intense study of the daily life, social mores and political tensions of the time, lending a tremendous depth to their performance of these emotionally charged texts.

Following their presentation at the Boston Early Music Festival by Early Music America in 2005, Asteria has found themselves in demand around the world. They have enjoyed appearances at international festivals and venues such as The Cloisters, Chartres Cathedral, Dumbarton Oaks, the Berkeley Early Music Festival (featured artists), Simon Bolivar Amphitheatre in Mexico City, The Regensburg Tage Alter Musik and at the Landshüter Hofmusiktage, Germany.

To learn more about Asteria, and to hear songs from their highly acclaimed albums, visit their website: www.asteriamusica.com. Their albums can be purchased on their website or from Amazon.com and itunes, and downloaded from www.magnatune.com.