

Gotham Early Music Scene (GEMS) presents



Thursday June 23, 2022 1:15 pm
The Church of the Transfiguration in New York City
Live Streamed to midtownconcerts.org and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com)

Concordian Dawn *Medieval Song from Aristotle to Opera*

Kristina Boerger ~ soprano Niccolo Seligmann ~ vielle
Christopher Preston Thompson ~ tenor & medieval harp, artistic director

- Phebi claro nondum orto iubare (*Alba of Fleury-sur-Loire*)** anonymous
I-Vb Vat. Lat. 1462, fol. 50v, reconstructed by C.P. Thompson
- Qui sofrir s'en pogues** Aimeric de Peguilhan (troubadour, fl. 1170–1221)
contrafact, melody from Aimeric's "Atressi.m pren quom fai al jugador", I-MA R71 sup. 38r-v
- En greu pantais m'a tengut longamen** Aimeric de Peguilhan
I-Ma R71 sup. 35v
- Qui bien aime a tart oublie (*Lay de plour*)** Guillaume de Machaut (1300–1377)
Machaut MSS A, F-Pn fonds fr. 1584, 410v-12v, and C, F-Pn fonds fr. 1586, 187r-89r
- Ensement com la panthere** anonymous
F-Pn fonds fr. 844, 199v
- Can lo boschatges es floritz** Bernart de Ventadorn (troubadour, fl. 1147–1180)
contrafact, melody from Bernart's "En consirer et en esmai", I-MA R71 sup. 19r
- Nés qu'on porroit les estoilles nombrer (*ballade, Le livre du Voir dit*)** Guillaume de Machaut
Machaut MSS E, F-Pn fonds fr. 9221, 178r-v

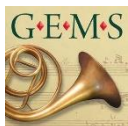
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www.gemsny.org

About the Program

While writing the forthcoming monograph, *Medieval Song from Aristotle to Opera*, renowned medieval studies scholar, Sarah Kay, teamed up with Concordian Dawn to produce a multimedia publication and recording project currently set for release in the late summer of 2022 (Cornell University Press/MSR Classics). The ensemble gives the GEMS audience a “sneak peek” into this exciting release.

About the Ensemble and Artists

Concordian Dawn, ensemble for medieval music, specializes in twelfth through fourteenth-century vocal repertoire, drawing on primary source material and focusing on socio-philosophical similarities between texts from centuries ago and the mindset of modern society. In so doing, Concordian Dawn produces a musical experience accessible to contemporary audiences, relating the human condition of the past to the familiar experiences of the present. The ensemble’s “mesmerizing” (*Early Music America*) debut album, *Fortuna Antiqua et Ultra* (MSR Classics), was released in December of 2021 to critical acclaim, and forthcoming releases include a collaboration with medieval studies scholar, Sarah Kay, in conjunction with her monograph, *Medieval Song from Aristotle to Opera* (Cornell University Press/MSR Classics). In 2022–23, the ensemble will return to the Santa Cruz Baroque Festival for an encore performance and deliver performances and presentations at universities across the country.

Christopher Preston Thompson is a New York City based tenor, historical harpist, and musicologist focused on early and new music. He has performed as soloist in venues throughout the United States, including New York City's Carnegie Hall and Merkin Hall, and is the founding Artistic Director of Concordian Dawn, ensemble for medieval music. He is a regular member of Grammy-nominated ensemble for Renaissance polyphony, Pomerium, and in 2019 he was honored to perform a solo concert for the Medieval Academy of America’s national conference. Christopher is on the voice faculty at New York University’s Steinhardt School for Culture, Education, and Human Development and is a member of the music faculty at Lehman College-City University of New York. He is a candidate for PhD in Performance Informed Musicology at the Graduate Center, CUNY.

Kristina Boerger, Augsburg University’s inaugural John N. Schwartz Professor of Choral Leadership and Conducting, holds the doctorate in Choral Conducting and Literature from the University of Illinois. She has directed independent choirs in Urbana-Champaign and New York City, public school choirs in Wisconsin and Illinois, and the choral programs at Carroll University, the University of Illinois School of Music, and the DePauw School of Music. Students under her direction have performed at the Obama White House, appeared in concert with Nine Horses, ETHEL, and The Rose Ensemble, toured programs of ancient and newly commissioned music through France and Italy, immersed themselves on location in Black South African choral communities, and shared global harmony traditions with inmates of the Putnamville Correctional Institute.

Maryland-based multi-instrumentalist **Niccolo Seligmann** is an improviser, composer, arranger, producer, and educator with a special focus on performing historical and traditional music. He plays over twenty acoustic instruments from around the world and designs his own software instruments. You can hear him on viola da gamba, vielle, and more on the soundtracks of the PC game *Civilization VI* and the 2017 feature film *Papillon*. Niccolo is a member of the medieval ensembles Concordian Dawn, Alkemie, The Broken Consort, Hesperus, and many others. He has toured across North America and Europe, fondly recalling performances at the Kennedy Center, in a bustling plaza in Nogales, Mexico, and inside a 2,000-year-old Northern Californian redwood. He holds a degree in viola da gamba performance from the Peabody Conservatory Johns Hopkins University and plays Irish and Swedish tunes with his husband's family band when not on tour.

NEXT WEEK: Midnight Viols
Among Friends: English Consorts and Country Dances

Medieval Song from Aristotle to Opera Text Translations

Alba of Fleury-sur-Loire Text MS Vatican Reg. lat. 1462, fol. 50v. Edition and translation by Sarah Kay.

The bright radiance of Phoebus not yet risen, Aurora sheds her pale light on the earth. The lookout calls to the sleeping ones, Arise! *The dawn, on the further side of the wet sea, draws the sun; then it steps forth, watchful, to destroy the shadows.* Beware, the snares of your enemies spread out to catch unawares the heedless and the slothful whom the herald calls and urges to arise. *The dawn, on the further side of the wet sea, draws the sun; then it steps forth, watchful, to destroy the shadows.* The north wind withdraws from the company of the Great Bear; the stars in the sky bury their rays as the Seven Oxen swing toward the rising sun. *The dawn, on the further side of the wet sea, draws the sun; then it steps forth, watchful.*

Qui sofrir s'en pogues (PC 10.46), stanzas 1-3, 5, and tornadas 1 and 2. Text from Shepard and Chambers, *The Poems*, Song 46, 217-18. Translation by Sarah Kay.

If one could refrain, it would be good to hold off from later reproving what one had [earlier] praised. That's why I'd prefer to bear harm with no benefit, misery with no relief, or a burden without any assistance, than endure a dishonor from which I could not hide or which I would not dare avenge: that I could not do. And yet leaving a false love is a good revenge! Did I leave one? Not at all. On the contrary my thoughts keep returning to her whose wrongdoing is so close to my heart. Yet I have left at least insofar as in my thoughts I feel contempt for her base behavior; for another lady, in whom more good qualities than I can describe are born and grow, makes me dislike her and drive her from my heart—and yet she [still] causes me to love so much that Andrew of France was never so painfully torn by hesitation. For like her serf or her prisoner I have declared myself her liegeman, and no one who ever loved was so easily made a conquest. For when she drew off her glove, and I kissed her lovely hand, that kiss so penetrated me that it drew the heart from my body with the breathing out of a sigh, so that it makes me unable to tell the difference between living and dying. A man cannot protect himself nor hide from Love's lance once she takes straight aim at him. Lady, if Love were to seize and compel you as she has seized me, and if she were to show favor to you as she is wont to do, you would have true affection for me. Do not disdain me even though my hair is gray for my heart [body?] is fresh and gay; and I know how to praise good deeds and discern honorable acts and be discreet about what should be kept secret. I wish you would pardon me for just this one thought; I never acted amiss toward you in any other way. The incomparable queen of Toulouse is well able to act and speak so that her honor is exalted and increased daily. One can indeed praise the Infante of Castile—whom God protect—for there is no one in the world of such youth so directly bent on Merit.

En greu pantais m'a tengut longamen (PC 10.27), stanzas 1, 2, and 5 Text from Shepard and Chambers, *The Poems*, Song 27, 150–52. Translation by Sarah Kay.

Love has kept me in grave torment for a long time, never either releasing or retaining me, and has tested me with all her sorrows reducing me to complete obedience; and because she knows me to be committed and patient she has so burdened me with love's misery that the 100 best [lovers] would not endure so much [as I]. For she me makes me despite myself love truly the one whom she made me pick from among the noblest; it would have served me better had she made me pick elsewhere, for it's better to win in silver than lose in gold, to my mind. But I am acting like a true lover, fleeing what's good for me and pursuing my downfall. Raising me up will be of little concern to you if you just heed the worthiness of your own worth, your sweet look and fresh complexion, for your smiling eyes are still in my heart, and your lovely, loving words. And as I don't go more constantly in your presence my eyes almost go there on their own, despite myself!

Le Lay de plour, "Qui bien aime a tart oublie" (L22/16) Text from Hoepffner, *OEuvres de Guillaume de Machaut* I: 283–91. Translation by Sarah Kay.

Whoever loves well is slow to forget; and a heart that is slow to forget resembles a burning fire that is difficult to put out. In the same way, anyone who has a sickness that pleases them is unwilling to give it up. In this state, so God watch over me, Love holds and rules me, and my Pleasure in it binds me so that the dart of love will not be pulled out of my heart, not even a third or a quarter of the way, whatever anyone may say. For it has been with me so long that there is no question of its leaving or of its wound being healed by any art... for one can hardly uproot a big tree without leaving behind some of the root, which can then be seen flowering and fruiting, in a short while, and its branches growing and sprouting. Certainly, this is what it is like to love: for when a heart resolves to graft itself in true love, it cannot forget its love but on the contrary, through remembering it, is constantly submissive to it... for the water that falls onto the root that remains causes it to grow green again and to flower and bear fruit. In the same way my heart, that weeps deeply all the time, makes my memory grow day and night. And this is what consumes me; this is what covers my face in tears; this is what I sigh for. To this I am brought by true Love who pursues me along with Goodness who gives Love greater savor: and that they should not be able to reach me, destroys me. Reason and Uprightness, Delight and Nature, make every creature that has a pure heart incline to be more worthy. And I draw confidence that, as long as I live, I will not be able to see a Love so sure, or a Goodness so mature or with so much understanding. And so it is clearly to be seen that hearts which, loyally and without folly, love with a very true love, often imagine that they place their love in those who are better and nobler [than they in fact are]: for delight in love and its rule teaches them to do so. Now I know for certain that [my love] was without a doubt the *fine fleur* of those who have the most honor, for everyone, and the best of men, used to concur that all worth, in its entirety, was his. And since there is no one so good, nor braver nor cleverer nor so handsome or so acquainted with honor, then to judge rightly, no

one should be surprised if I have no wish to be pierced anew by the amorous shaft of another love. And so I don't seek to change and I'm right not to; for love for him is so firm in my heart and so bonded that it cannot be unbonded; for a committed heart that would not know how to deceive determines me entirely, mindful of him, to continue on, not undertaking another love or acquainting myself with one, for the acquaintance of another would make my situation worse. And so the good recall [*recoert*] that I recall of him makes me accord never to be in accord with taking another lover; but disconsolate, without any consolation, with all my strength I wish to lament and bewail his death, saying this: "Lover, my comforts, my joyous enjoyments, my peace, my recourse, and all my chances of love, lay in you. Now, in return, I have a single grief for you that gnaws at me and pierces me so hard that with your loss all my well-being is dead and buried." Sweet lover, I grieve so greatly, my heart weeps and laments for you so much, I have so much sorrow that, by my faith, I gather up every woe; and so my eyes that are often wet, my aching heart, my pale discolored face, joyless and full of anguish, manifest my sorrow. Sweet lover, on your coffin are my weeping and laments and there I find pleasure, there I see you in my mind's eye; there more than ever I wish to be, there are my desires, there dwells my heart. I beg death to take me there: there I offer myself, there, I think, I should pass the threshold of death. There my heart sighs, there it is distressed, so great is its suffering [*martyrdom*] and mortal pain, and so much distress that, to tell the truth, no human creature could describe its woe. And bit by bit, there [in my heart] it gets worse, there it does nothing but melt and burn, there it abandons itself to grief, there without smiling it is martyred, there it kills itself, there it desires immediate death. Sweet friend, I have so much grief, such intense suffering, so much sorrow, so much melancholy at never seeing you again, that pain pierces and cuts me through the heart with such a deadly blade that I will end my days in despair over you. In you were all my hope and trust, my joy and sustenance. Wretched me! Now I have lost them. You can easily tell from my appearance and my way of speaking, for I am so full of grief and distress that I have no more countenance or strength. With a melancholy heart, I lament and praise your high merit that I so value, as is proper; and it seems to me that I see you face to face, sweet love, and have you always in my thoughts. My spirit, my heaven, were set on you; and so it is fitting that my heart should be a phoenix: both dead on account of being wretched, and revived when life preserves it. My love, I would be very glad if you had more a coward's heart: this would have been better for me than such a bold will. But honor, chivalry, and your reputation that spreads everywhere throughout the world have brought about our separation. Your death grieves me so, and brings me so many woes, my love, that my heart is breaking. But before I die, my heart humbly petitions the true God who watches over us with such a loving look that we may be written in his book of eternal life.

Ensement com la panthere (PC 461.102)

Text edited by Gouiran (unpublished; reproduced by permission). Translation by Sarah Kay.

Just like the panther that emits such a sweet scent and whose coat is such a lovely color that there is no wild beast, however dangerous or ferocious in strength or aggression, that from however far away it sees it does not go and die beside it—in just the same way Love holds me in the balance, causing me to follow what I cannot have, and so I follow my downfall to do her pleasure. Yet I shall never complain of any pain of love, but hold the suffering as joy that comes to me from her fair person; but even if, in her heart, she had the mercy that is not yet there, I could not be cured or find reward for my suffering except in her simple demeanor and the pleasure of her company for there is such beauty at her command that I cannot prevent myself from looking at her.

Can lo boschatges es floritz (PC 70.40), stanzas 1, 3, 6, 8, 9, and tornada

Text edited by Lazar, song 42, 224–29. Translation by Sarah Kay.

When the woodland is in flower and I see the season is new again and every bird seeks its mate and the nightingale sings and calls, I am so overwhelmed and lost to the world through joy that I can turn my mind to nothing else. It makes me sigh night and day, so tightly does it bind the root of my heart. How mocked and derided I am by her! Tongue, why do you run on so?—For she is capable of accusing me of less than this, and so I strike my own mouth. Yet why is it so cruel that I am destroyed? She will never find that I protect myself in any way. But the sweet feeling of a kiss would quickly revive me from this suffering. May she be thanked for both the good and the bad, since she condescends to let me woo her. Now I am going crazy with my empty claims and it is right that I should be contradicted! Lady, don't be upset if my tongue says things that my heart/body has never been able to think. Be silent, mouth! You wag your tongue too much and much ill will come of it. Lady, if I had been heard by you with as much fondness as I show to you, the first time we began to love each other we would have exchanged our life forces. I would have gained perfect impressions [of you], for then I would have known how things were with you, and you with me, as one equal with another, and with our two hearts/bodies we would be as one. Oh, how despondent I am! How unfortunate! I cannot endure the melancholy, and so much pain makes me faint, when she so adamantly refuses me her friendship. I am betrayed by her fair appearance. What can help me? Nothing can put me right! Come, death, to anyone who wants to reproach me for not loving her, [for I would do so] even if I were dead and buried! I leave her sadly and against my will. She can easily kill me but I was barely nurtured [by her]. I feel such distress slice through my heart that I die and want only to depart this world. But only through her can I be healed.

Nés qu'on porroit les estoilles nombrer (B 33), *Le Livre du Voir dit*, 1626-46.

Text edited by Imbs, presentation Cerquiglini-Toulet. Translation by Sarah Kay.

No more than anyone could count the stars when one sees them shining at their brightest, nor drops of rain or water in the sea, nor the grains of sand on the sea shore, or measure the circle of the firmament, could anyone conceive the great desire I have to see you. And yet I am unable to go to meet you, for Fortune forbids it. Because of this, I have to stifle many a sigh when I think of you in company; and when I am on my own privately, then the great desire I have to see you makes me feel all manner of pain. For it makes me lament and grieve, and long for your noble face, your matchless sovereign beauty, and the immense sweetness it casts. And so the great desire I have to see you makes me languish pitifully, inflames my heart and snuffs out my hope.