

Gotham Early Music Scene (GEMS) presents



Thursday, May 9, 2024 1:15 pm
St. Malachy's Church – The Actors' Chapel in New York City
Live Streamed to midtownconcerts.org and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com)

Medieval Voices

Music and Poetry of the 13th – 15th Centuries

Sarah Pillow ~ voice Christopher Preston Thompson ~ voice & harp
John Mark Rozendaal ~ vielle

Cosi pensoso Per quella estrada	Francesco Landini (1335–1397) Johannes Ciconia ((1370–1412)
Ballade 19: Amours me fait desirer Cinc, un, trese, huit, neuf d'amour fine Rondeau: Ma fin est mon commencement	Guillaume de Machaut (1300–1377)
Ha! Me non fai chantar foille ni flor Fleur Gracieuse Contre doulour	attributed to Albertet de Sestaro, troubadour canso (fl. 1194–1221) anonymous, ars subtilior, MS Torino J.II.9, f.119v, 15 th c. anonymous, ars subtilior, MS Torino J.II.9, f.151v, 15 th c.
Belle Doette La Quarte Estampie Roial	anonymous, trouvère chanson de toile, F-Pn fr. 844, 13 th c. F-Pn fr. 844, 104v, 13 th c.
Bon jour bon mois	Guillaume Dufay (ca. 1397–1474)

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www.gemsny.org

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The late Medieval/early Renaissance period was one of the most turbulent and secular of the Middle Ages, yet artistry was in full force. The musical style of *Ars Nova* emerged in France, with the polyphonic art song becoming the most important new musical genre of its time. The program demonstrates this luxurious music in solos, duets and trios.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Vocalist Sarah Pillow enjoys a unique career, drawing on her equal expertise in her interpretation of jazz, classical, and early music repertoire. Beginning her career as a jazz singer, Sarah won best vocal solo in a performance at the Montreux Jazz Festival. She went on to study classical singing and early music interpretation at Oberlin Conservatory, where she earned a Bachelor of Music degree. Sarah has toured the United States and Canada with her early music ensemble, Galileo's Daughters, connecting science with music based on the lives of Copernicus, Kepler and Galileo. She has performed as both chorister and soloist at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall in New York, and her performances in operatic works have resulted in critical praise, with “a genuinely genre-busting voice, full and vivid” by *The Washington Post* in modern operas by Gisle Kverndokk; and “splendid” and “radiating calm” by *The New York Times* for her portrayal of the Queen in the 12th-century *Play of Daniel* at The Cloisters and Trinity Wall Street Church. More information and recordings can be found at www.buckyballmusic.com

Christopher Preston Thompson is a New York-based tenor, historical harpist, and musicologist focused on early and new music. He has performed as soloist in venues throughout the United States including Carnegie Hall. Christopher is the founding Artistic Director of Concordian Dawn, ensemble for Medieval music, which was featured in the *Chamber Music America* Spring 2022 publication (vol 39, no 2). The ensemble’s “mesmerizing” (*Early Music America*) debut album, “Fortuna Antiqua et Ultra” (MSR Classics), was released in 2021 to critical acclaim. In 2022, Cornell University Press published a collaborative book-recording project with Christopher, the ensemble, and Medieval studies scholar, Sarah Kay, entitled *Medieval Song from Aristotle to Opera*. Christopher is also a regular member of Grammy-nominated ensemble for Renaissance polyphony, Pomerium, and has performed roles for such companies as Heartbeat Opera and Encompass New Opera Theater. Please visit: christopherprestonthompson.com

John Mark Rozendaal, early bowed strings, specializes in teaching and performing stringed-instrument music from the Medieval through Baroque eras. As founding Artistic Director of Chicago Baroque Ensemble, he performed and led seven seasons of subscription concerts, educational programs, radio broadcasts, and recordings for the Cedille and Centaur labels. John Mark served as principal violoncellist of The City Musick and Basically Bach and has performed both solo and continuo roles with many period instrument ensembles including the Newberry Consort, Orpheus Band, and the King's Noyse, Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra, the Catacoustic Consort, Philomel, Parthenia, The New York Consort of Viols, Empire Viols and the Kansas City Chorale. He is a member of Brandywine Baroque as well as Trio Settecento with violinist Rachel Barton Pine and harpsichordist David Schrader, and the consort, LeStrange Viols.

Next Week: Opera Essentia
Excerpts of “From Hell to Antigone”

Text Translations – Medieval Voices

Cosi Pensoso

Something pensive, as Love guides me by the green banks, I pass – I heard:
“Lift up that rock!” “Look at the crab, look! Look at the crab! Get it!”
“This is a great marvel!” Isabella started to cry: “Ow! Ow!” “What do you have? What do you have?”
“He bit me on the toe!” “O Lisa, the fish is getting away!” “I have him, I have him!”
“Ermellina’s got him!” “Hold him well, hold him well!”
And so arrived the amorous company where I found fair women and lovers
beckoning me to them with their lovely glances.

Per quella estrada lactea del cielo

Through the milky way of heaven where serenity is fixed among fair stars
I saw a wain go all ablaze; it brought crowns of green laurel
that from joy turned the world green.

Amour me fait desirer

Love makes me desire and love so madly in my heart
that I cannot hope or think or imagine in any way
that the sweet, noble face which has stolen my heart
might give me joy, if love does not act helpfully
so that I can have it without struggling.
So hard is what I have to endure that I cannot last for long;
for I wish to hide in my heart and carry around this love secretly
without seeking relief as in torment
I wish rather to end my life.

Cinc, un, trese, neuf d'amour fine

Five, one, thirteen, eight,
nine of true love
have set me to burning endlessly,
for Hope seeks of love no end to prove –
five, one, thirteen, eight, nine of true love.

So, true love doth all the chaff remove
from my heart, for loving perfectly.
Five, one, thirteen, eight, nine of true love
have set me to burning endlessly.

Ma fin est mon commencement

My end is my beginning; my beginning is my end. True to its tenor keeping,
my end is my beginning. My third, but three times singing, returns to reach its end.
My end is my beginning, my beginning is my end.

(Note: Machaut's music for this rondel uses reversal of roles, and retrogression, in a variety of ways. As an example, at the end of the first line the Tenor (third voice) begins to sing his part backwards. Meanwhile, the Triplum (first voice) and Cantus (second voice) exchange parts. The Triplum sings the Cantus in reverse, while the Cantus sings the Triplum in reverse. The end and the beginning of the musical flow are therefore identical.)

Ha! Me non fai chantar foille ni flor

Ah! I am not made to sing by leaf or flower, nor the birds' songs, nor the nightingale in May,
but by the best one of all the best, and the most noble of all the people I know.
I am made to sing of the valour that I gain from; because of her I am compelled to sing well.
And so I will, since that is her desire, for I do nothing except what she wants.
She is so very worthy, wise, and elegant.

Fleur gracieuse, plaine de grant valour

Graceful flower, plain of great valor, who is well dressed in virtue,
great beauty, your very kindness, and all the goods of which you are gifted,
for whom I have given my desires at your command, make me entirely
yours without any impediment.

Contre douleur, alegresse et plaisir

Against pain, joy and pleasure, against heavy weeping, laughter, and a joyous life,
against curses, salutations, and cheerful greetings
love has given to me what I desire.

Therefore I thank him and wish to ask of him that I may always have of him in courtesy,
against pain, joy and pleasure, against heavy weeping, laughter, and a joyous life,
for long have I borne displeasure in my heart because of envy
that gripped me in harsh sickness;
but thanks be to God, I can now truly say:
against pain...

Par maintes Foy

How many times are the skies filled with the sweet song of the nightingale!
But the cuckoo never joins in; he prefers to sing enviously
“Cuckoo, cuckoo” all his life. He wants his song to bring discord.
So the nightingale cries out: “I command that you shall be killed.
Slain, slain, killed, killed, fie upon you, fie upon you,
cuckoo who wants to speak of love.” “I beg you, dear skylark, thus to sing your song:
lire, lire, liron, as God tells you. It’s time for the nightingale’s little song;
killed, killed, they’re killed, those who wage war with you.”
“Flock together; bring the goldfinch and make him and the starling sing out.
Kill the cuckoo and silence him. He is taken, let him be killed.
In the lovely springtime praise the hawk, our friend, our friend; and praise the god of love.

Belle Doette

Lovely Doette sat at a window reading a book, but her heart was not in it; she recalled her friend Doon who
had gone journeying in other lands. See now what grief I have.
A squire dismounted at the staircase of the hall and untied his saddlebags. Lovely Doette ran down the steps,
not thinking to hear bad news. See now...
Lovely Doette asked him: Where is my lord whom I should love so much?” “In the name of God, lady, I shall
no longer seek to hide anything from you. My lord is dead; he was killed in jousting.”
Lovely Doette began to mourn. “Such sorrow as there, count Do, true noble man. For your love I shall wear a
hair shirt, and on my body I shall not wear a fur cloak. For you I shall become a nun in the church of St. Paul.
Lovely Doette began to build her abbey, which is very large, and now she will be the abbess. She will gather
there all those who for love have known pain and sorrow.

Benedicite! What dreamed of I this night? Me thought the world was turned up so down:
the sun, the moon had lost their force and light; the sea also drowned both tower and town.
Yet more marvel how that I heard the sound of one's voice saying:
bear in thy mind, thy lady hath forgotten to be kind.

Bon jour bon mois

Good day, good month, good year and happy New Year be given by Him to whom all belongs
riches, honor, health, boundless joy. Good fame, beautiful lady, good wine, to keep a creature in health.
And then may He have joy bestowed upon you, and give you happiness soon, night and morning,
good day, good month...
And then may he give you certain hope without sadness, without ugly thoughts; that all your desires be
achieved of pure heart. Without doubt you will be received above in perfection, and in sovereign glory.
Good day, good month...