Gotham Early Music Scene (GEMS) presents

Thursday, October 16, 2025 1:15 pm
St Malachy's Church – The Actors' Chapel in New York City
Live Streamed to YouTube

HESPERUS

Les Très Riches Heures

Tina Chancey ~ vielle, rebec & kamenj Mark Rimple ~ medieval lute, gittern & voice
Shawn Keener ~ projection design Oliver Weston ~ projectionist

January ~ Bache Bene Venies	Carmina Burana (ca. 1120)
February ~ #42	Codex Faenza (15th c.)
March ~ Istampitta Belicha	Anonymous (14th c.)
April ~ Bel Fiore Dança	Codex Faenza
May ~ La Spagna	Italy (15th c.)
June ~ Improvised Estampie	
July ~ Eisamen com la Pantera	Rigaut de Berzebeilh (fl. 1140–1162)
August ~ Como poden per sas culpas	Cantiga de Santa Maria (13th c.)
September ~ Rosetta, after Antonio Zacharia de Teramo	Codex Faenza
October ~ Dame vostre doulz vaiare	Guillaume de Machaut (1300–1377)
November ~ English Estampie	England (13th c.)
December ~ Divinum Stillant	Anonymous Catalonian versus (later 12th c.)
Reprise ~ Bache Bene Venies	Carmina Burana

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

This manifestation of **HESPERUS**' continuing celebration of its reincarnation as an Early Music Improv Collective features director, Tina Chancey and collective member Mark Rimple, with slides and other whimsy by Shawn Keener, ably brought to life by Oliver Weston. Our twelve, (well, thirteen, one reprise) medieval improvisations are inspired by these dozen manuscript illuminations from the Limbourg Brothers' Book of Hours, *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*. HESPERUS tries to reflect variety, narrative nature and immediacy through their choice of genres. Four pieces are dances: one Italian Istampitta, *Belicha*, an *English Estampie* that's surprisingly full of major thirds, an improvised *Estampie* in the style of the 13th century French Danses Royales, and *Bel Fiore* (Lovely Flower), from the *Codex Faenza*. The program has a variety of strophic songs; *Bache Bene Venies* from the *Carmina Burana* (a collection of student songs*), Eisamen com la Pantera* from the trouvère repertoire, and *Divinum Stillant* from the Aquitanian tradition. Only one piece is attributed to a composer – the haunting virelai *Dame, vostre doulz viaire* by Guillaume de Machaut. The Cantiga, *Como Poden per sas culpas*, is a Spanish form of virelai, or villancico. *La Spagna* is a bassadanza tune; another dance, but, improvised over the "Tenore del rey di Spagna," that first appeared in 1455 but continued to inspire composers over the next two centuries. The final two pieces from the *Codex Faenza*, *Rosetta* and an anonymous piece *#42,* are expressive and virtuosic; through-composed pieces that cry out for rhetorical gestures, which HESPERUS is only too happy to provide.

ABOUT THE ENSEMBLE AND ARTISTS

Since 1979, audiences from Maine to Hawaii and Borneo to Bolivia have celebrated **HESPERUS** for making connections between the rich musical past and curious 21st century listeners through collaborations with film, theater and world music. Founded by recorder virtuoso Scott Reiss, the ensemble has performed throughout the United States, Europe, the Far East and South America; been featured at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, the Cloisters, Ryman Auditorium and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival; and has two dozen CDs and DVDs and a score of prizes and honors to its credit. In 2024, the group said "Why not?" and reconstituted itself as an Early Music Improv Collective. www.hesperusplayszorro.com

Director of HESPERUS (currently known for its early music soundtracks for classic silent films), **Tina Chancey** has been described as "Practically a legend in the early music world" (*Fanfare*). She plays medieval and traditional fiddles and viol on roots music from Sephardic and Irish to Joni Mitchell and jazz, with a focus on multi-style improvisation. Her specialty is the pardessus de viole, with debut concerts at Carnegie Recital Hall and Kennedy Center and five pardessus recordings. Recent concert tours and artist residencies have taken her to Turkey, Australia, France, Germany, Switzerland, New Zealand and Hong Kong. In D.C., she was recently a featured artist at the Freer Gallery's Friends Day celebrations and the Hirschhorn Museum's SoundScene festival, as well as music director for Expat Theatre's *Scorched* and the InSeries' *Misticas*. A member of Trio Sefardi and Passio, and frequent guest artist with Magdalena, she is a former member of the Folger Consort, the Ensemble for Early Music and Blackmore's Night. www.tinachancey.com

Mark Rimple has appeared with The Newberry Consort, Piffaro, The Folger Consort, Severall Friends, Blue Heron/Les Delices, Seven Times Salt, Tempesta di Mare, Cygnus Ensemble, Network for New Music, and Trefoil, with whom he has recorded *ars subtilior* repertory. His solo lute recording *Tre Liuti* (available online) earned praise for his "expressive" and "extraordinarily sensitive playing", and he recently released an online recording, *Convergence,* featuring music for lute and guitar. As a composer, he often blends the contemporary with the antique. A sampling of his art songs and chamber works can be heard on his recording *January*. Last year his *Phantasmagoria* was

premiered by the ensemble counter)induction and this fall, Network for New Music will premiere his trio *Nonstandard Deviations*. Mark is a Professor in the Department of Music Theory, History and Composition at West Chester University of Pennsylvania. He currently serves as President of the Lute Society of America. www.markrimple.com

Trained as a music historian, **Shawn Keener** is a graphic designer, translator, and book indexer based in Chicago. Her dissertation examining the intersection of vernacular song and cultural memory in 16th-century Venice was supported by a Fulbright grant (Italy, 2007–2008) and a Harper Dissertation-Year Fellowship at the University of Chicago. Since 2012 she has curated and designed projections for live performance that are visual extensions of historically informed performance. She has collaborated with the Newberry Consort (Chicago), Severall Friends (Santa Fe), Trobár (Cleveland), Les Délices (Cleveland), and Blue Heron (Boston). Before launching Keener Editorial in late 2019, Shawn worked for several years at the Newberry Library in Chicago and was for three years a staff editor in the Recent Researches series at A-R Editions (Middleton, WI), the leading North American publisher of scholarly editions of music. www.keenereditorial.com

A note from Shawn: Like all books of hours – Christian prayerbooks for private, lay devotions modeled on the monastic recitation of canonical hours at fixed times of day – *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* (created ca. 1415 and held at the Musée Condé) begins with a calendar of feast days followed by the Hours of the Virgin, Gospel excerpts, Penitential Psalms, the Office of the Dead, and a litany of saints. It also contains votive offices and Masses. The precise program of prayers and rituals was highly individualized, reflecting the taste (and means) of the patron as well as local devotional practices (think local patron saints, onomastic saints, etc.). As one of the most lavishly illuminated exemplars of the genre, its depictions of monthly labors are justly famous for their vivid, endearing, and illuminating details of both courtly and peasant life. Framed by these calendar pages, today's concert unfolds as a playful musical exploration of the labors, devotions and preoccupations of the month, manifested as medieval improvisations, with supporting images drawn from a wide range of medieval sources. These include two additional books of hours (*Jeanne d'Evreux*, ca. 1324–1328, The Met; *Charles the Noble, King of Navarre*, ca. 1404, Cleveland Museum of Art); two of the four extant collections of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* (*Códice Rico*, ca. 1280–1284, and *Códice de los Músicos*, ca. 1280–1300, both at Escorial); the *Queen Mary Psalter* (ca. 1310, British Library); the *Roman de Fauvel* (ca. 1315, Bibliothèque Nationale de France); and three bestiaries (*Aberdeen*, ca. 1200, [Aberdeen University Library], *Worksop*, ca. 1185 [Morgan Library]; and *Hugh of Fouilloy*, ca. 1270 [Getty Museum]), among others.

Next Week: Midnight Viols
England's Glories

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HESPERUS
TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Bacche, bene venies gratus et optatus,
Per quem noster animus fit letificatus.

[Refrain] Istud vinum, bonum vinum, vinum gererosum,
Reddit virum curialem, probum, animosum.

Bachus forte superans pector virorum
In amorem concitat animos eorum.

Bacchus sepe visitans mulierum genus
Facit eas subditas tibi, o tu Venus.

Bacchus venas penetrans calido liquore
Facit eas igneas Veneris ardore.

Bachus lenis leniens curas et dolores
Confert iocum, gaudia, risus et amores.

Eisamen com la pantera
Qui porta tan bon odor
Et a si bela color
Que non es bestia salvatge,
Qui per fors e per outratge
Sia tan mal ni fera,
Que si loing com pot chauzir,
Non anes pres lei morir:
Et en altretal semblansa
Mi ten amors en balansa,
Quem fai segre que non posc aver,
E sec mon dan per far lo seu plazer.

Ni ja per so nom planhera
Negun journ del tort d'amor,
Ans, prenderai en gaug dolor
De son gent corps de paratge,
Mas, quel agues en coratge Merse,
que noi es enquerra.
Aissi no.m pot res garir
De mon maltrait e merir
Fors ab sa simpla semblansa
Et a sa dous acoindansa
On a tan gran beltat en son poder,
Per que non posc laissar de leis veder.

Divinum stillant de super celi rorem
Ab alto nubes depluunt conditorem
fecunda terra germine profert florem
protulit virgo filium preter morem.

Fit nosturm luctus gaudium
amarum mel absinthium
dat nox obscura radium.

Bacchus, you are welcome, pleasing and desired
Through whom our spirits are made joyful.

[Refrain] This wine, good wine, noble wine,
Makes a man courtly, find and spirited.

Bacchus perhaps conquering the hearts of men
Stirs to love their spirits.

Bacchus, often visiting the race of women
Makes them subject to you, oh you, Venus.

Bacchus, entering their veins with hot liquor
Sets them afire with the heat of Venus.

Gentle Bacchus soothes cares and sorrows
Brings jolly, joys, laughter and love.

Just like the panther
Who carries such a sweet scent
And is of such a beautiful color
That there is nary a wild beast,
Fell or savage by force or rage
Could be so cruel or violent
That, whenever it might choose,
would not lay down and die beside her,
In just this sense,
Love dangles me in her scale:
For she makes me seek what I cannot gain
And thus, I pursue my peril for [Love's] delight.

Nonetheless, I shall not complain
Any day about Love's slights
On the contrary, I will enjoy the pain
From her noble, gentle body.
But, if only she might find within her heart
Some Mercy - for there is none there yet!
Thus, no balm can cure me
Of my anguish or wounds
But her pure visage
And her sweet gracious way,
For she has in her power such great beauty
That I cannot cease gazing upon her.

Divine drops of heavenly dew fall from on high;
The creator sends rain down to the fertile earth
A flower is brought forth from its bud,
A virgin miraculously brought forth a son.

Our sorrow is turned to joy
bitter wormwood is turned to honey
Light shines in the dark.