

LIONHEART

Lawrence Lipnik, countertenor
John Olund, Michael Ryan-Wenger, tenors
Richard Porterfield, Jeffrey Johnson, baritones
Kurt-Owen Richards, bass

MY FAYRE LADYE: IMAGES OF WOMEN IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

the regal

SALVE REGINA MISERICORDIE Sarum Chant Processionale ad Usum Sarum
(1502)

the maternal

AVE MARIA MATER DEI William Cornysh (d. 1523) Eton Choirbook
BEATA DEI GENITRIX Sarum Chant Processionale (1502)
QUID PETIS, O FILY? Richard Pygott Henry VIII's Book

the beloved

IBO MICHI AD MONTEM MIRRE Sarum Chant Processionale (1502)
QUAM PULCRA ES John Dunstable (c. 1390-1453)
QUAM PULCRA ES Sarum Chant Processionale (1502)
WHO SHALL HAVE MY FAYRE LADYE? Anonymous Fayrfax Ms. (c.1500)
IFF I HAD WYTT FOR TO ENDYGHT Anonymous Henry VIII's Book
TOTA PULCRA ES Sarum Chant Processionale (1502)

the unfathomable

A, ROBYN Cornysh Henry VIII's Book
ADEW MES AMOURS Cornysh “

the hunted

AND I WAR A MAYDYN Anonymous Henry VIII's Book
BLOW THY HORNE, HUNTER Cornysh “

the sorrowful

MY LOVE SCHE MORNETH FOR ME Cornysh Henry VIII's Book
UP I AROSE Anonymous Ritson Ms.
ANIMA MEA LIQUEFACTA EST Sarum Chant Processionale (1502)

the triumphant

O REGINA MUNDI CLARA John Browne (fl. 1490) Eton Choirbook

-- The program will run without intermission --

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Sarum Chant was the music of a Catholic liturgy, which dominated English practice up until the Reformation. Several variant rites developed in such places as Canterbury, York and Hereford, but the Use of Sarum (that is, the order and form of ritual observed at Salisbury Cathedral) eclipsed the others, spreading its influence throughout Britain and even onto the Continent. A Processionale ad Usum Sarum printed by Richard Pynson in Paris in 1502 gives detailed instructions on the music and ritual of the elaborate processions before Mass under the Sarum Rite. Most of these processions sought the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, devotion to whom was a central element of the religious life of late medieval England.

Just before retiring to bed, the choir of the monastery, college or cathedral gathered before an image of the Virgin to sing an antiphon in her honor. An astonishing collection of large-scale polyphonic settings for this purpose is preserved in the Eton Choirbook, a single volume large enough for 20 men and boys to sing from together. The choirbook, which dates from the 1490's, once included a major work, now missing, attributed to John Dunstable, who died in 1453. The attribution to him of music in the Eton Choirbook and in the 16th-century court manuscript known as Henry VIII's Book demonstrates Dunstable's remarkable influence and staying power, for the other composers represented in these manuscripts lived one or two generations after him.

Little is known for certain about the lives of the composers of the period. There were two musicians named William Cornysh, father and son: the elder died around 1500, the younger in 1523. Cornish Jr. served as

Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal under Henry VIII. The style and accomplishment of the music ascribed to John Browne in the Eton Choirbook suggest that he reached the height of his powers in the late Fifteenth Century.

Henry VIII's Book contains secular songs popular in the court of Henry VII and Henry VIII. Some of these songs harken to the medieval tradition of Courtly Love, wherein the lover becomes the devoted slave of an idealized and often unattainable beloved. Others offer less flattering portraits of women: the double entendres of *Blow thi horn, hunter depend* on the listener's ability to compare the act of sexual union with the process of bagging a deer.

Nevertheless the prevailing image of Woman in the music and poetry of the period is that of the Virgin Mary. Upon Mary were projected the feelings and attitudes of men toward all women, and a man's perception of women in general was filtered through his image of Mary. The highly charged erotic poetry of the *Song of Solomon* chanted in honor of the Blessed Virgin provided a common ground for divine love and carnal desire. A man able to comprehend the Divine Woman as sensual and physically palpable would thus have the capacity to recognize the sensual and physically palpable woman as divine.

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