

extreme refinement the complaints of chivalric love. *Joie, plaisance* is sung by the figure of Hope to the poet to cheer his heart. Hope seeks to restore the poet/lover's faith in love by refuting each of his arguments against Fortune and Love. *Dame, a vous sans retollir* is the concluding virelai sung with joy by the finally united couple as she offers her hand (literally her little finger) in an invitation to dance and sing with the poet.

We draw this evening's program to a close with what we are calling our "American Twist," songs written by Americans for a musician who has devoted the majority of her career to European medieval music, but who has steadfastly maintained strong connections and a great love for modern American music. Your esteemed faculty member, Robert Kyr, and I have collaborated for many years on a variety of compositions ranging from orchestral works with soloists, to three and four part extended pieces for my two long-lived ensembles, **Ensemble Project Ars Nova** (P.A.N.) and **Tapestry**, to an unaccompanied solo song on a text I wrote entitled *Fourth River*. Rob composed this piece for Tapestry's CD, "The Fourth River: The Millennium Revealed," released in celebration of the year 2000. The text of the song describes an intimate communication with God about the convergence of three great religions into one river flowing from the heavens down to earth at the site of the holy city of Jerusalem. It is based on a concept borrowed from a poem by Jalaluddin Rumi (13th c. Persian mystic) and from the writings of the Grand Mufti Ja'abary of El-Aksa (a Muslim mystic).

Boston composer Patricia Van Ness, along with **Tapestry**, found her muse for many years in the exquisite music of the medieval mystic and composer Hildegard von Bingen, and from this inspiration springs *Ego sum custos angela* written for Shira and me in the 1990's.

Continuing in the tradition and rare honor of having music written expressly for our voices and souls, Robert Kyr has just recently composed this closing *Vocalise* for the exact foursome performing it for you this evening. I would like to dedicate this performance and piece to the late Dean Trotter who was Dean when I went to undergraduate school here, and in whose honor my past week of guest teaching, and this concert, have been supported, through the Robert M. Trotter Visiting Professorship.

In Peace, Laurie Monahan

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108th Season, 12th program



SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DANCE

Beall Concert Hall
8:00 p.m.

Friday evening
October 26, 2007

THE VANGUARD SERIES

presents

GIFT OF MY HEART A Medieval French Sojourn With An American Twist

Laurie Monahan, mezzo-soprano

Eric Mentzel, tenor

Shira Kammen, vielle & harp

Joanna Blendulf, cello

Members of UO Collegium Musicum



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

PROGRAM

Songs of the Trouvères

Gaite de la tor Anonymous (c.1200)

Voulez vous que je vous chant Anonymous

Le Robardel arr. Shira Kammen

Chanterai por mon corage Guiot de Dijon (fl. late 12th c.)

Compaignon je sais tel cose Gace Brulé (ca. 1160–1215)

Bele Li Gossi arr. Shira Kammen

Belle Doette Anonymous

Parisian Motets from the Montpellier Codex

O Maria virgo/O Maria maris stella/Veritatem Anonymous

Pucelete/Je langui/Domino

Ave virgo regia/Ave gloriosa/Domino

On parole/A Paris soir/Frese nouvele

Songs of the Troubadours

A Chantar La Comtessa de Dia (2nd half of 12th.c)

Pois preyatx me, senhor Bernart de Ventadorn (ca.1130–1190)

Fortz chausa es Gaucelm Faidit (fl. 1170–1205)

Estampie 12th century

L'autrier jost' una sebissa Marcabru (c. 1127–1148)

INTERMISSION

Music from St. Martial de Limoges

Nuptialis hodie Anonymous

Divinum stillant

Lillium floruit

Annus novus

Virgin Mary's wedding day. The mystical song *Divinum stillant* is written for two equal voices in a note-against-note style, producing an embroidery of consonance and dissonance on the text. The two voices move in contrary motion and in so doing yield up the contrary motions of the text: divine dew rains down from heaven and buds rise up from the earth. As the two voices cross and trade registers a profound transformation takes place: the bitter gall turns to honey and the dark night radiates light.

In contrast to the last two polyphonic pieces, the Easter text of *Lillium floruit* is a single line composition that harkens back to the well-known earlier sacred style of the era. The opening phrase is on a single recitation tone while the body of the piece is mostly syllabic with the exception of a closing melisma. The joyful closing song, *Annus Novus* is in celebration of the New Year. Here the regularity of the text gives over to a regularized rhythm and is intended as a travel piece for moving the clergy and choir around within the church. We sing the verses in unison to a single line of melody and it is only the response that breaks into note-against-note polyphony and then ends with a flourishing cadential melisma.

Guillaume de Machaut (c.1300-1377), French composer and poet, was the most important figure of the new French Ars Nova musical style of the 14th century which, in contrast to the preceding part of our program, represents a large leap forward in terms of the development of rhythmic notation and sophistication of 2 to 4 part harmony. The elegant sense of courtly love and the beautiful ring of the northern French language remain. Now these qualities are paired with the transparent and delicate interplay of a highly evolved rhythmic style of notation. Machaut began his compositional career by drawing upon the traditional form of the motet but turned increasingly toward secular polyphonic songs as his career progressed.

We open with the triple texted motet *Quant en moy/Amour et biauté/Amara valde*, a perfect polyphonic disposition for our ensemble. The poetic theme, courtly love from afar and in silence, is summed up in the last line of the top voice: It is great madness to Love so much that One be made bitter by suffering. The ballade *Je puis trop bien* is again a perfect three-part piece for this group and discourses on the perfection of ideal love, yet the love falls on deaf ears. *Doulz amis* is a two-part ballad with an intimate intensity which expresses the longing of the poet. *Joie, plaisance* and the dance-like *Dame, a vous sans retollir* are both taken from the most influential *dit amoureux* of courtly love poems in Medieval Europe, Machaut's *Remede de Fortune*. Written around 1340 for the extravagant court of Jean of Luxembourg, King of Bohemia, the poem codifies with

the watchmen in the tower wake, and the robbers creep through the underbrush as the hush of night is broken. *Voulez vous que je vous chant* and *Compaignon je sais tel cose* are elegant songs in praise of a lady, and *Chanterai por mon courage* is the plaintive song of a woman desperately singing of a lover who is gone on a pilgrimage and who she fears is in grave danger of perishing. We end the set with the haunting dialogue *Belle Doette*. Doette awaits the return of her lover but instead receives the devastating news from the messenger-squire of her lover's death in a jousting match.

The second group is a set of Parisian motets from the 13th century. These compact, finely crafted miniatures are distinctive for their unusual 3-part texture: a bottom line, usually untexted, featuring a short melody which is repeated several times, and two upper voices singing entirely different texts with related themes.

Our troubadour set opens with *A Chantar*, one of the few surviving texts and songs believed to have been written by a woman, the Countess of Dia. The singer sings a bitter tale of being rejected by her lover and how her high birth, courtliness and beauty are of no avail in changing the situation. Here is a heartfelt case of elegant, courtly anger! In *Pois preyat me, senhor*, a man celebrates his love, but mourns the fact that he is far away from his lover. *Fortz Chausa est* is from the genre of songs called *planh* and laments the death of Richard the Lionhearted in 1199. We end the set with the lively and funny *pastorela*, a courtly song in mock-popular style presenting a verbal duel between a knight and a shepherdess. He expects a willing roll in the hay with the "courtly" peasant girl but instead comes face to face with a smart, saucy peasant woman who has no intention of being a passing fling to the "courtly" knight!

From the 9th through the 12th centuries the Abbey of Saint Martial in Limoges, France (also within the scope of the southern Aquitanian tradition) witnessed the flowering of two-part sacred polyphony composed to a fresh new genre of rhymed Latin poetry. The notation of this music is what we refer to as unmeasured, meaning that there is little or no rhythmic information notated on the page. Instead, an understanding of word-stresses, syllabic accents and syntax organically shapes the lines. This is also the case for the troubadour and trouvère repertoires you heard earlier in the evening.

All four pieces are in verse-response form, but the striking range of moods and poetic settings illustrates the diversity of compositional styles found within this early polyphonic genre. The celebratory mood of *Nuptialis hodie* is conveyed through a florid, melismatic top voice in counterpoint to the tenor-like underpinnings of the lower voice. The song is an expression of the joyous preparations for the

Music of Guillaume de Machaut (c. 1300–1377)
Quant en moy/Amour et biauté/Amara valde

Joie, plaisance
Comment qu'a moy

Doulz amis

Je puis trop bien
Dame, a vous san retollir

Music of the 20th & 21st Centuries
Ego sum Custos Angela Patricia Van Ness (b. 1951)
Improvisation Shira Kammen

The Fourth River Robert Kyr (b. 1952)

Vocalise

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The School of Music and Dance wishes to thank The Oregon Humanities Center's Endowment for Public Outreach in the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities for their generous support of tonight's concert.

ABOUT TONIGHT'S ARTISTS

Laurie Monahan, mezzo-soprano, is a wonderful and spirited singer of early and contemporary music, and tours actively both as a soloist and with her ensemble, Tapestry. Most recently her group recorded their newest CD, *Faces Of A Woman*, on the MDG label featuring a series of stories in song of remarkable women who inspired nations and generations. Their previous recording, *Sapphire Night* won the 2005 Ecco Award in Europe. Tapestry made its concert debut with Steve Reich's *Tehellim* at Jordan Hall in Boston, in a performance deemed "a knockout" by the Boston Globe. Since that point the group has made four recordings for the Telarc label, and the most recent two recordings for MDG. Upcoming performances with Tapestry include a tour in Latvia with the Latvian group Putni, concerts in Moscow, Russia, and a tour to Brazil in the coming season. Further Tapestry touring includes concerts in Quebec, Canada, Washington D.C., Arizona, Oregon, Iowa and New Hampshire. Monahan has

made twenty-some recordings, with one of the most recent being Monteverdi's opera *Orfeo* recorded with Aston Magna in which she sang the roles of Music and the Messenger. She is on the faculty at the Longy School of Music in Cambridge, MA. and is also well known as a co-founder of Ensemble Project Acs Nova (P.A.N.).

Eric Mentzel, associate professor of voice at the UO, holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in early music performance from Sarah Lawrence College in New York. He has enjoyed an international career as a singer of early music, oratorio, and contemporary music and has appeared at major festivals and concert venues across Europe, including the Holland Festival, the Edinburgh Festival, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, the Brussels Palais de Beaux Arts, and the Alte Oper in Frankfurt. Mentzel has appeared on more than 40 CDs for Sony, Decca, BMG, Harmonia Mundi, Arcana, Opus 111, Raumklang, Naxos, and Capriccio.

Multi-instrumentalist **Shira Kammen** has spent well over half her life exploring the worlds of early and traditional music. A member of the early music Ensembles Alcatraz, Project Ars Nova, and Medieval Strings, she has also worked with Sequentia, Hesperion XX, the Boston Camerata, the Balkan group Kitka, the Oregon, California and San Francisco Shakespeare Festivals, and is the founder of Class V Music, an ensemble dedicated to performance on river rafting trips. Shira performs currently with The King's Noyse (a Renaissance violin band), Fortune's Wheel (a medieval ensemble), a new music group, Ephemeris, and an eclectic ethnic band, Panacea. She has played in several television and movie soundtracks, including *The Nativity Story*, and "O" (a high school retelling of the Othello story).

Joanna Blendulf, cellist, holds performance degrees with honors from the Cleveland Institute of Music and Indiana University, where she studied with Stanley Ritchie, Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi and Alan Harris. In 1998, she was awarded the prestigious Performer's Certificate for her accomplishments on baroque cello from Indiana University. Newly relocated to Eugene, Ms. Blendulf is currently performing with the Portland, Seattle and Indianapolis Baroque Orchestras, Musica Angelica and American Bach Soloists. She is also an active chamber musician, touring with Cello 4, La Riche and Co., American Baroque, Ensemble Mirabile, Reconstruction, the Streicher Trio and Wildcat Viols.

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PROGRAM NOTES

The majority of our program this evening presents a rich tapestry of lyric poetry and music that flourished in the northern and southern regions of France during the 12th and 13th centuries. While the distance from north to south can now be traversed in a very long one-day car ride, this distance in the medieval era took weeks on horseback. Due to the far greater sense of distance between regions and their relative isolation, the languages and poetry developed quite distinctive flavors.

The troubadour poetry and songs are in the language of the south, called *langue d'oc*, and the trouvère repertory of the north is in *langue d'oïl*; both of these terms simply describe the word for "yes" in the respective language. Each area had a rich and varied history, and it is important to keep in mind that both these northern and southern vernaculars had equal status as languages: neither was a "dialect" of the other. The language of the troubadours shares the distinct coloration of Italianate open vowels and no nasalization, while the northern language you will hear as being much closer to the sounds of modern French.

The flowering of medieval song in the south centered on the Duchy of Aquitaine, the County of Toulouse, and the County of Champagne. In these territories troubadour poetry was born with William IX (1071-1127), who was succeeded by his son, William X, and his famous granddaughter, Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122-1204). The very distinctive northern cultivation of lyric medieval song began around 1150, about a generation later than the troubadours. The melting pot created by the pilgrimages, crusades and the travels of the troubadours themselves were large factors in spreading the new song style. However, the northern courts later took the form and found their own distinctive voices.

At the root of both styles is the concept of "courtly love" in poetry, a concept of the high ideals of love and the medieval term of *fin'amours* (refined love). While these ideals were not new in the 12th century, they gave birth to unique genres of songs with very particular themes and motifs stretching from the central courtly love theme to dawn songs where lovers lament separation, to songs based on dance tunes, to laments on the death of Kings, to mention just a few of the types you will hear this evening!

We open our program with a set of the northern trouvère songs, beginning with the alluring "dawn song", *Gaite de la tor*. Here the lovers have just enjoyed a night of love-making but as the dawn is signaled by the songs of birds, the lovers are forced from their reverie,