Concerts at the Cathedral Basilica

Presents

Suspicious Cheese Lords

Washington, DC

Friday, October 17, 2014 | 8PM

Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina spent most of his life in Rome, working alternately at St. John Lateran, Sta. Maria Maggiore, and the papal chapel. His musical output is staggering, with well over a hundred Mass settings, 250 motets, 140 madrigals, and assorted offertories, hymns, lamentations, and litanies to his credit. It would take over a year of weekly concerts before a piece would have to be repeated. (The Cheese Lords graciously leave that endeavor to another choir to attempt.) Palestrina, who was quite well-known in his own day, was finally recognized with a statue in his hometown in 1921. People filled the town square to witness the unveiling of the 26-foot tall statue of Carrara marble. An inscription reads (in English translation), “To Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, The Prince of music.” After the unveiling, the choir broke out into the exuberant Exultate Deo.

Exultate Deo, adiutori nostro;  
Rejoice to God, our helper;  
Jubilate Deo Jacob.  
Sing aloud to the God of Jacob.

Sumite psalmum et date tympanum,  
Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel,  
Psalterium jucundum cum cithara.  
The pleasant psaltery with the harp.

Buccinate in Neomenia tuba  
Blow up the trumpet on the new moon  
Insigni die solemnitatis vestrae.  
On the noted day of your solemnity.

- Psalm 81:2-5
Salve Regina
Anonymous, c 16th-century Spanish

Natural disasters have contributed to the destruction of untold scores of music; however, the Guatemala earthquake of February 4, 1976, led to the rediscovery of a collection of Spanish colonial music known as “Guatemala MS 4.” Antigua Guatemala was one of colonial Spain’s administrative centers in Central America. Chant and polyphony was in use there as early as the 1542. This anonymous Salve Regina was used for services during Lent, and was among a number of works copied in 1602 by composer and organist Gaspar Fernandes. This highly valuable source contains a wealth of works by composers such as Cristóbal de Morales, Francisco Guerrero, Hernando Franco, and Pedro Bermúdez, some of which survive only in this manuscript. This Salve alternates chant and polyphony, a convention that was used to allow for participation by clergy who were not part of the choir.

Alleluia, noli flere, Maria
Jean Mouton (c. 1459–1522)

Alleluia, noli flere, Maria is one of about 100 motets by Jean Mouton, a Franco-Flemish composer who served the French Royal Court first with Queen Anne de Bretagne and then King François I. It is noteworthy that in some 16th century sources a significant number of Mouton’s works are attributed to other composers, in this case to Mathieu Gascongne, another member of the French royal chapel. The Easter text for this motet is derived from Matthew 28:5-7 and Mark 16:6-7. Each phrase of text is given its own melodic motive, which is treated imitatively among the four voices (often in answering pairs) until a cadence signals the end of that section and the start of the next one. Mouton’s music was a favorite of Pope Leo X. In fact, Mouton wrote a piece for Leo’s election; the Pope, in turn, awarded the composer with an honorary title. Mouton was the teacher of another significant Renaissance composer in his own right, Adrian Willaert, founder of the polychoral Venetian school of music.

Kyrie from Messe de Tournai
anonymous, 13th century

With Halloween two weeks away, the Suspicious Cheese Lords present “FrankenMass: A Tale of Parody.” In this context, “parody” has no connotation of mockery or satire, as in, say, Mel Brooks’ Young Frankenstein. In a broad sense, it is a compositional device in which a particular melody (called the cantus firmus) or even a more complex work, is deliberately incorporated or imitated in the structural framework for another piece of music.

Tonight, we present all five sections of the Mass: Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei. Together they are known as the ordinary because their texts remain unchanged throughout the liturgical year. But rather than sing one setting by the same composer, we’ve crafted a complete Mass setting from five different dead bodies (of work). The composers of four of those Renaissance Masses have based their setting on another work: a war song, a Gregorian chant, a polyphonic motet, and a love song, thereby “parodying” them. We’ve sutured these Mass parts together with the actual sources that inspired the composer. Thus we’ve reanimated these component parts into…FrankenMass!
We begin, however, with a work that is completely original, in the sense that it has no melodic precedent. The Messe de Tournai is a historically important work as it is the earliest complete polyphonic setting of the mass ordinary. As a whole it dates from the 14th century when Tournai’s cathedral was a major focal point of musical influence and activity. The “Tournai Mass” was rediscovered in 1862 within the church’s archives in a manuscript of mostly plainchant dedicated to the Holy Virgin. Each section is written for three voices, but there is no central unifying theme or structure. Research has confirmed that this Mass was compiled, rather than composed by one hand, meaning that it is also a “FrankenMass”! The Kyrie section dates to the late 13th century and recalls the arcaic ars antiqua form.

L’homme armé anonymous, 15th century

Il sera pour vous conbatu/L’homme armé Robert Morton (c 1430-after 1479)

Gloria from Missa L’Homme armé Ludwig Senfl (c 1486–1542/3)

L’homme armé (“The armed man”) is an anonymous tune which dates to the 15th century. Scholars have used untold reams of paper arguing what it refers to: it has been surmised that the Armed Man references St. Michael, the Warrior Angel; that the melody is associated with the fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks in 1453; or that the first L’Homme armé Mass was written for a liturgy commemorating St. Longinus, the legendary Roman soldier who pierced Jesus’ side at the crucifixion. One of the tune’s early appearances is its incorporation in the hawkish rondeau Il sera pour vous conbatu/ L’homme armé of Robert Morton, an English composer whose tenure at the Burgundian court includes parts of the reigns of Philip the Good and Charles the Bold.

L’homme armé was one of the most popular tunes used in parody; indeed, it served as the imitative basis in over forty mass cycles from the 15th through the 17th centuries. In the Gloria of Ludwig Senfl’s version, the L’homme armé remains in the tenor line with little variation for most of the piece while the remaining voices fill in the varying harmonies. Throughout his composition Senfl demonstrates the mastery of his craft by deftly incorporating chant themes as well. Senfl was born in Basel, Switzerland, and as a child joined the Hofkapelle of the Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian I. By 1513, he had become the court composer. Senfl was receptive to many ideas of the Protestant Reformation and even corresponded with Luther. Although he left the priesthood, it is believed that Senfl remained Catholic. The political and religious climate in his homeland would have made it impossible to for him to practice his craft to its fullest extent, since Protestant reformer Ulrich Zwingli banned chanting, hymn-singing, and music, which was not based in the New Testament, and was reminiscent of the Catholic Church. After Maximilian’s death in 1519, Senfl struggled to find another permanent position. By 1523, he had secured a lifetime appointment in the Hofkapelle of Duke Wilhelm of Bavaria. Senfl’s international reputation was unmatched by any other Swiss composers until Arthur Honegger and Frank Martin, who worked in the first half of the 20th century.

L’homme armé / Il sera pour vous conbatu

(L’homme armé tune):

L’homme, l’homme, l’homme armé.
L’homme armé doibt on doubter.
On a fait par tout crier,
Que chacun se vigne armer,
d’un haubregon de fer.

The man, the man, the armed man,
The armed man is to be feared.
It has been declared everywhere
That each should arm himself
with an iron coat of mail.
Palestrina’s five-voice O admirabile commercium comes from a 1569 collection of six- and seven-voice motets. In this composition, he generally avoids counterpoint in favor of more declamatory block chords. Each phrase of text is generally sung twice, first with three or four of the upper voices, then with three or four of the lower voices, perhaps to create a double-choir effect.

Palestrina’s own motet serves as the basis for his parody Mass, Missa O admirabile commercium, which was published five years posthumously. Performance records over the centuries are understandably lacking, but this Mass was re-popularized by the turn of the 20th century. It was performed in 1893 by the Bach Choir of London, under the direction of Charles Villiers Stanford, and the following year in Regensburg Cathedral for the tercentenary of Palestrina’s death. In 1921, it was sung at a Mass preceding the unveiling of his statue in Palestrina. The 1911 edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica waxed, ”Palestrina-scholars will hardly think us singular for placing [O admirabile and some other Masses] on the same plane as the Missa Papae Marcelli.” We’ll let you judge for yourself as we perform the Credo.
Before we continue with FrankenMass, we’re going to detour to the town of Chiogga, one of the lagoon communities in the Republic of Venice, where composer Giovanni Croce was born. Located on the water, with canals and old, crowded buildings, Chiogga was in a way a miniature version of its larger, more well-known capital city, where Croce later worked. Bucinate in Neomenia appeared in Croce’s second book of eight-voice motets, published in 1605 by Giacomo Vincenti. Englishman Henry Peacham (1578-c 1644), writing in The Compleat Gentleman – a guidebook for young men on the art of good taste – counts familiarity with Croce as a sign of a good breeding, describing Croce as “that great Master, and Master not long since of S. Markes Chappell in Venice, fecond to none, for a full, lofty, and springtly veine…” The Cheese Lords agree moft heartily!
The Alma Redemptoris Mater chant is attributed to Hermannus Contractus (1013–1054), a Benedictine monk, scholar, composer, and builder of astrolabes who spent most of his life at the Abbey of Reichenau, located on an island in Lake Constance in present-day southern Germany. The prevalence of this sacred melody in the 14th century is evidenced by its mention in Geoffrey Chaucer’s Prioress’s Tale:

This litel childe his litel book lerning,
As he sate in the scole at his primere,
He Alma Redemptoris herde sing,
As children lerned hir antiphonere:
And as he dorst, he drow him nere and nere,
And herkened ay the wordes and the note,
Til he the firste vers coulde al by rote.

Jean Mouton spent most of his career working at the French court, but his compositions were widely known in other countries as well, not only during his own lifetime but also for the rest of the 16th century, and were praised by such notables as Pope Leo X and the Swiss music theorist Heinrich Glarean, both of whom knew him personally. In his 1547 treatise Dodecachordon, Glarean described the distinguishing features of Mouton’s style as “a certain freedom of texture” and an easily flowing melodic line, which can easily be heard in the Sanctus performed today. Glarean also noted that Mouton “composed some very important masses, approved by the Supreme Pontiff, Leo X, such masses as Alma Redemptoris and very many others which are in all hands,” clearly a reference to their widespread dissemination and continuing popularity fully a quarter-century after the death of the composer.

Alma Redemptoris Mater, Nurturing Mother of the Redeemer,
quae pervia caeli porta manes et stella maris, you who are the open door of heaven and star of the sea,
  succurre cadenti, surgere qui curat, populo: help your fallen people, striving to rise again;
tu quae genuisti, natura mirante, you who gave birth, while nature marveled,
tuum sanctum Genitorem. to your own sacred Creator.
  Virgo prius ac posterius, Virgin before and after,
  Gabriellis ab ore sumens illud ave, receiving that greeting from the lips of Gabriel,
  peccatorum miserere. have mercy on sinners.

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Holy, holy, holy
  Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Lord God of Hosts.
  Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua. Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
  Osanna in excelsis. Hosanna in the highest.

Benedictus qui venit Blessed is he who comes
  in nomine Domini. in the name of the Lord.
  Osanna in excelsis. Hosanna in the highest.
Se mieulx ne vient

P. Convert (15th century)

Agnus Dei from Missa Se mieulx ne vient

Elzéar Genet (c 1470-1548)

Se mieulx ne vient is a three-voice rondeau that is ascribed to the composer “P. Convert,” although it’s anyone’s guess as to who that may be, as there are no other records of such a composer from that era. The music was quite popular as it is found in five extant sources with only minor variations or copy errors. The text’s origins are equally murky, with scholars in disagreement about the author. Regardless, the poet seems rather embittered by unrequited love, and is tired of playing the game and waiting for a women’s love.

The subject matter of Se mieulx ne vient may make it seem odd to be used as the musical basis for Mass settings by Elzéar Genet. In his Agnus Dei, Genet begins with four voice parts, reduces to just two, and then ends in a lavish six-voice finale. In 2002, the Cheese Lords released a CD devoted entirely to the works of Elzéar Genet, whose moniker “Carpentras” probably indicates his home town, about 15 miles from Avignon. Genet sang in the papal chapel under Pope Julius II and in the court of the French king Louis XII. In 1513 Pope Leo X, a lavish patron of the arts, summoned him back to Rome and appointed him Master of the Papal Chapel, the first composer to have that title. Genet’s tenure lasted only as long as Leo’s pontificate and in 1521 he returned to Avignon, where in semi-retirement he became dean of Saint-Agricol. None of his Mass settings date from his time in Rome, but were printed in Avignon in the early 1530’s. Genet seems to have developed fairly severe tinnitus (i.e., ringing of the ears), but he worked through his ensuing depression to become the first composer to publish his collected works.

Se mieulx ne vient

If it doesn’t get any better, I’m not content with love.
I serve a woman who is fully capable
of satisfying a grand duke or a king.
I really love her, but she not me.
There is no reason that I should be proud of that.

How lively, beautiful and gentle she may ever be,
so excuse me from being delighted at this moment,
for I see nothing of it.

Se mieulx ne vient, d’amours peu me contente;
une j’en sers qu’est assez souffisante
pour contenter ung grant duc ou ung roy;
je l’aime bien, mais non pas elle moi;
ja n’est besoing que de ce je me vente.

If it doesn’t get any better, I’m not content with love.
I serve a woman who is fully capable
of satisfying a grand duke or a king.
I really love her, but she not me.
There is no reason that I should be proud of that.

How lively, beautiful and gentle she may ever be,
so excuse me from being delighted at this moment,
for I see nothing of it.

Se mieulx ne vient, d’amours peu me contente;
une j’en sers qu’est assez souffisante
pour contenter ung grant duc ou ung roy;
Ja n’est besoing que de ce me vente.

When I tell her of my wishes and longing
and offer her my heart and body and all my goods,
for all this I receive no remedy.
I have decided – do you know what? –
to quit her and the game and the waiting.

Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace.
O admirabile commercium

Thomas Stoltzer (c 1480–1526)

Thus ends FrankenMass. But wait...there’s more! As soon as Halloween is done, the Christmas decorations go up; so now that we’ve finished with FrankenMass, we’ll give you a taste of music that’s more liturgically appropriate for the Advent and Christmas seasons. Thomas Stoltzer is regarded as one of the most important German composers of the early 16th century. From 1519 to 1522, he worked as a priest at Breslau (modern day Wrocław, Poland) Cathedral. From then until his death, he worked for the Hungarian royal court of Lajos II and María de Austria. Stoltzer was sympathetic to the Reformation, but he composed music mainly for the traditional Catholic liturgy. In this setting of O admirabile commercium, each of the upper four voices begins with an imitation of the original O admirabile chant melody.

Vigilate

William Byrd (c 1540 or 1543 –1623)

A favorite among scholars and singers alike, William Byrd's five-voice Vigilate showcases the virtuosic merger of words and composition. Published in his Cantiones Sacrae (1589), this motet shows evidence of the growing popularity of the English madrigal style. Byrd masterfully paints the text from Mark 13: 35-37 in vivid musical phrases. Listen for these particular texts: the upward-moving choppiness at an galli cantu (“at cockcrowing”); the quick syncopation at repente (“suddenly”); the drowsy descending line at dormientes (“sleeping”); and all voices joining together at omnibus (“all”). Byrd urges the listener to keep “watch” (vigilate), a command repeated multiple times at the beginning and end of the piece.

- Program notes by George P. Cervantes and Christopher G. Riggs.

Translations: Most translations are from public-domain sources. Alleulia, noli flere, Maria by Clifton N. West, III, and Sr. Therese-Marie Dougherty, S.S.N.D., Ph.D. Bucinate in Neomenia by Clifton N. West, III. Se mieulx ne vient by Peter Woetmann Christoffersen.

All four of the parody Mass movements – more precisely, the entire Mass settings – have been recorded by the Suspicious Cheese Lords. In fact, the Cheese Lords were the first ones to record each of these Masses (except Tournai) as part of our mission to explore strange new works, to bring out new life from old civilizations, and to boldly sing what few men have sung before.
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Concerts at the Cathedral Basilica
2014-2015 Season

**Concerts at the Cathedral Basilica**

**2014-2015 Season**

**Fri, Dec 19, 2014 | 7 PM**

**George F. Handel**

Ama Deus Ensemble
Baroque Instrumental Orchestra
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A Philadelphia Tradition! Original Baroque instruments, Handel’s Messiah celebrates the Story of the Season. Bright trumpets, grand voices of choristers and dazzling soloists stir, awaken, excite and uplift. From haunting melodies to the great “Hallelujah Chorus”, this is Christmas at its best!

**Sun, Mar 15, 2015 | 3 PM**

**Temple University Concert Choir**
Dr. Paul Rardin, Director

The Temple University Concert Choir presents Swiss composer Frank Martin’s Mass for Double Choir. One of the great masterpieces of the 20th century a cappella repertoire, this piece is both modern and ancient at the same time, weaving together chant-inspired melodies into an ethereal tapestry of harmony. The program also features works composed for great spaces by Anton Bruckner, Gabriel Jackson, Joan Szymko, and Franz Bleibl.

**Fri, Mar 20, 2015 | 8 PM**

**Stephen Paulus**

To Be Certain of the Dawn

Cathedral Basilica Choir
Bryn Mawr Presbyterian
Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia
Jeffery Brillhart, Director

Join us for the Philadelphia Premiere of acclaimed composer Stephen Paulus’ “To be Certain of the Dawn”. Under the direction of Jeffery Brillhart, this concert will feature the Philadelphia Chamber Orchestra and the choirs of the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul and Bryn Mawr Presbyterian.

“To be Certain of the Dawn” is a Holocaust Memorial Oratorio to honor two important anniversaries: the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi death camps and the 40th anniversary of the publication of Nostra Aetate (Latin for “In Our Times”), the seminal Vatican II document that condemned blaming Jews for the death of Christ.

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