

University of California, Davis  
The Department of Music presents the UCD

# Early Music Ensemble

David Nutter, *director*

## Alta Sonora – a Renaissance Wind Band

on shawm, sackbut and recorders

### Program

I

**Alta Sonora** (2 shawms, sackbut)

Madame helas (*Odhecaton*, Venice 1501)

Josquin Desprez  
(ca 1455-1521)  
Henricus Isaac  
(ca 1450-1517)  
Johannes Martini  
(ca 1440-1497)

Helas (*Odhecaton*, Venice 1501)

textless piece (Florence, Ms Banco rari 229)

II

Mass Propers for the Conception of the BVM (8 December) from *Choralis Constantinus*

**Introit:** Gaudeamus omnes in Domino

Isaac

**Alleluia:** Alleluia conceptio gloriosae virginis

III

**Alta Sonora** (3 shawms, sackbut)

Noe, noe, psallite

Jean Mouton  
(ca 1449-1522)

Adieu mes amours

Josquin  
Isaac

Par ung chies do cure

IV

**Communion:** Diffusa est gratia (Conception of the BVM)

Isaac

Ave Maria...Virgo serena

Josquin

V

O quam tu pulchra es (Stephanie Beattie, soprano)

Alessandro Grandi  
(1586-1630)

*Ghirlanda sacra*, Venice 1625

VI

**Alta Sonora** (recorders)

Bruder Conrad

Isaac

Fortuna/Bruder Conrad

Palle, palle

VII

Salve Regina (Brook Ostrom & Dan Phillips, tenors)

Claudio Monteverdi  
(1567-1643)

*Selva morale et spirituale*, Venice 1640

VIII

**Sequence:** Conceptio Mariae virginis (Conception of the BVM)

Isaac

## THE EARLY MUSIC ENSEMBLE

### Soprano

Stephanie Beattie, Carole Hom, Carter Mills, Susanna Peeples

### Alto

Jacki Amos, Karesa Coston, Helen Nutter

### Tenor

Brook Ostrom, Dan Phillips, Navid Zamani

### Bass

Richard Chowenhill, Tom Dotan, Ron Holmberg, Richard Mix, Neil Willits

with Phebe Craig, organ

## ALTA SONORA

John Harris, tenor sackbut, recorder

Robin Houston, alto shawm, recorder

Peggy Murray, soprano shawm, recorder

Karen Nebelkopf, alto shawm, recorder

### Program note

Henricus Isaac (Yzac, Arrigo) was one of the leading Franco-Flemish composers of his generation. Like many other major figures of the period (Josquin, Obrecht, Martini), he was drawn to Italy by the prospect of employment at one of its major centers. Recruited by the Medici, Isaac arrived in Florence in 1485. Lorenzo de' Medici, called "the Magnificent" (1449-1492) is said to have arranged Isaac's marriage (to a Florentine woman, Bartolomea Bello), and Isaac may have been entrusted with the musical training of Lorenzo's children. Years later, his service was rewarded by one of Lorenzo's children, Pope Leo X (Giovanni de' Medici, 1475-1521), who provided Isaac with an annuity three years before the composer's death (in Florence on 26 March 1517). Lorenzo died on 8 April, 1492; two years later the Medici were driven from Florence, the Florentine republic reinstated, and the chapel disbanded. Subsequently, in 1497, Isaac was engaged as court composer to Emperor Maximilian I whose peripatetic court and Hofkapelle resided variously at Innsbruck and Vienna. While in Germany Isaac was commissioned in 1508 to compose for the cathedral chapter of Konstanz (Constance) the cycles of Mass Propers that appear in the second volume of the *Choralis Constantinus* (published posthumously in 1555). One of these forms the centerpiece of tonight's concert.

8 December is the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, the Blessed Virgin, offering an unplanned but fortuitous opportunity to present Isaac's Mass Propers (Introit, Alleluia, Sequence and Communion) written for this occasion; established by Pope Sixtus IV in 1476, church doctrine holds that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was conceived free of the stain of original sin (hence immaculate). It is worth noting that the settings of sequences in the *Choralis Constantinus* document a rich legacy of medieval music and poetry, since all but a handful of these (e.g., "Dies irae" from the Requiem) were excised from the liturgy by the Council of Trent (1545-63). Sequences are often constructed of pairs of verses, the music paralleling this structure. Isaac's setting of the sequence "Conceptio Mariae virginis" alternates plainsong and polyphony, the plainsong supplied from the Passau Gradual (*Graduale patavense*, Vienna 1511). Typically for Isaac the plainsong melody is paraphrased in the upper voice and the scoring is varied for each verse pair. The opening section ("De radice Jesse") is rhythmically complex with simultaneous triple and duple patterns and the conclusion ("O vera spes") adds a fifth voice in canon. The edition used in tonight's performance was prepared by Richard Mix. Josquin Desprez (d. 1521) and Isaac were both considered for a position at the Este court of Ferrara in 1502, the court recruiting agent reporting that Isaac would compose whenever asked and not, like Josquin, as he pleased. As you might expect, Josquin was chosen. His celebrated Ave Maria...Virgo serena, an early work, is justly famous for its judicious balance of elements.

Secular output of the Josquin generation is cosmopolitan, comprising instrumental works, French chansons, German Lieder, and Florentine carnival songs (Isaac's "Palle, palle" refers to the Medici coat of arms). Popular songs were quoted and sometimes combined (Bruder Conrad/Fortuna). Ottaviano Petrucci's *Odhecaton*, the first music to be printed by the multiple impression process, contains French chansons for three voices with no text apart from an identifying incipit ("Helas"). Subsequently, the four-voice texture, with instruments to match (soprano, alto, tenor and bass ranges), became the norm; music for voices, with its imitative textures, is perfectly suited to instrumental performance ("Noe, noe"). The late 15<sup>th</sup> century "loud" consort of instruments comprised shawms, the ancestor of the oboe, and trombone (or sackbuts); pictorial sources often show these instruments playing at courtly dances held usually, and for good reason, out of doors.

After serving the Gonzaga family, rulers of the duchy of Mantua, for many years, Claudio Monteverdi was appointed chapel master at St Mark's Basilica, Venice (from 1613 to his death in 1643). Much of the church music he composed for St Mark's was collected in the *Selva morale et spirituale* of 1640. His brilliant setting of the Marian antiphon, *Salve Regina*, for two tenors, is written so as to create the effect of spatially separated voices - pauses in the music, letting it resonate, are as important as the notes. *Ab aeterno*, the Old Testament reading for Trinity Sunday, with a range of over two octaves, is a tour-de-force for bass solo. Settings from the Song of Songs were first cultivated by 15th century English composers as the cult of the Virgin became widespread. Composers, most of whom held church positions, were drawn to these texts like moths to a fire as the sultry love poetry needed only slight retouching so as to make it relate to the Virgin or to Christ. Alessandro Grandi was Monteverdi's assistant at St Mark's; Sigismondo d'India was a Sicilian composer who worked mostly in northern Italy. Both composers are indebted to Monteverdi, often imitated, never surpassed.

## texts and translations

### Introit

Gaudeamus omnes Domino diem festum  
celebrantes in honore Mariae virginis de cuius  
conceptione gaudent angeli et colaudent filium Dei.  
Versus: Eructavit cor meum verbum bonum.  
Dico ego opera mea regi.

### Alleluia

Alleluia conceptio gloriosae virgine Mariae  
ex semine Abrahae orta de tribu Juda  
clara ex stirpe David. Alleluia.

### Communion

Diffusa est gratia in labiis tuis propterea  
benedixit te deus in aeternum.

### Ave Maria

Ave Maria, Gratia plena,  
Dominus tecum, Virgo serena.  
Ave, cuius Conceptio,  
Solemni plena gaudio,  
Caelestia, Terrestria,  
Nova replet laetitia.  
Ave, cuius Nativitas  
Nostra fuit solemnitas,  
Ut lucifer lux oriens  
Verum solem praeveniens.  
Ave pia humilitas,  
Sine viro fecunditas,  
Cuius Annuntiatio  
Nostra fuit salvatio.  
Ave vera virginitas,  
Immaculata castitas,  
Cuius Purificatio  
Nostra fuit purgatio.  
Ave, praecilla omnibus  
Angelis virtutibus,  
Cuius Assumptio  
Nostra fuit glorificatio.  
O Mater Dei,  
Memento mei.  
Amen.

### O quam tu pulchra es

O quam tu pulchra es,  
Amica mea, columba mea, formosa mea.  
Oculi tui columbarum,  
capilli tui sicut greges caprarum  
et dentes tui sicut greges tonsarum.  
Veni di Libano, amica mea,  
columba mea, formosa mea,  
veni, coronaberis.  
Surge, propera, sponsa mea,  
dilecta mea, immaculata mea.  
Surge, veni, quia amore langueo.

- Song of Songs (adapted)

We all rejoice to God in this festival day celebrated in honor of Mary the virgin at whose conception the angels rejoiced and praised the son of God with her. Verse: My heart has brought forth a good word; I declare my works to the king.

Alleluia: the conception of glorious Mary from a virgin from the seed of Abraham, risen from the tribe of Judah, from the famous stock of David.

You have poured forth thanks since God has blessed you forever.

Hail Mary, full of grace,  
the Lord is with thee, serene Virgin.  
Hail, thou whose Conception,  
Full of great joy,  
Fills heaven and earth  
with new gladness.  
Hail, thou whose Nativity  
became our great celebration,  
like Lucifer, the morning star,  
going before the true sun.  
Hail, faithful humility,  
fruitful without man,  
whose annunciation  
was our salvation.  
Hail, true virginity,  
immaculate chastity,  
whose purification  
was our cleansing.  
Hail, glorious one  
in all angelic virtues,  
whose assumption  
was our glorification.  
O mother of God,  
remember me.  
Amen.

O how beautiful you are,  
My love, my dove, my beauty.  
Your eyes are like doves,  
your hair like a flock of goats,  
And your teeth like a flock of newly-shorn ewes.  
Come with me from Lebanon, my love,  
my dove, my beauty,  
Come, make a garland.  
Arise, hasten my bride,  
My delight, my spotless one.  
Arise, come, for I grow weak with love.

### Ecce Sponsus venit

Ecce Sponsus venit: eamus obviam ei.  
O dilecte noster, o suavis, o pretiose,  
inebria cor nostrum,  
vulnere mentem nostram amore sancto tuo.  
Alleluia.

- Song of Songs (adapted)

### Salve Regina (Marian antiphon)

Salve, Regina, mater misericordiae:  
Vita, dulcedo, e spes nostra, salve.  
Ad te clamamus, exsules, filii Hevae,  
Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes,  
in hac lacrimarum valle.  
Eia ergo, advocata nostra, illos  
tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte.  
Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,  
nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.  
O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.

### Ab aeterno

Ab aeterno ordinata sum  
et ex antiquis, antequam terra fieret.  
Nondum erant abyssi, et ego iam concepta eram,  
necdum fontes aquarum eruperant;  
necdum montes gravi mole constiterant:  
ante [omnes] colles ego parturiebar.  
Adhuc terram non fecerat, et flumina,  
et cardines orbis terrae.  
Quando praeparabat caelos, aderam;  
quando certa lege et gyro vallaba[n]t abyssos;  
quando aethera firmabat sursum,  
et librabat fontes aquarum;  
quando circumdabat mari terminum suum,  
et legem ponebat aquis, ne transient fines suos;  
quando appendebat fundamenta terrae;  
cum eo eram, cuncta componens.  
Et delectabar per singulos dies,  
ludens coram eo omni tempore,  
ludens in orbe terrarum;  
et deliciae meae esse cum filiis hominum.

- Proverbs, 8: 23-31

Behold the bridegroom cometh: let us go to  
meet him. O our chosen, sweet, precious one,  
my heart makes my mind dizzy with  
the wound of your sacred love.  
Alleluia.

Hail, O Queen, mother of mercy  
Our life, sweetness and hope.  
We banished children of Eve call to thee,  
To thee do we sigh, mourning and weeping  
In this vale of tears.  
O you, our advocate,  
Turn on us thy merciful eyes.  
And after this our exile show unto us Jesus,  
the blessed fruit of thy womb.  
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

I [Wisdom] was appointed from eternity,  
from the beginning, before the world began.  
When there were no oceans, I was given birth,  
when there were no springs abounding with water;  
before the mountains were settled in place,  
before the hills, I was given birth,  
before he made the earth or its fields  
or any of the dust of the world.  
I was there when he set the heavens in place,  
when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep,  
when he established the clouds above  
and fixed securely the fountains of the deep,  
when he gave the sea its boundary  
so the waters would not overstep his command,  
and when he marked out the foundations of the earth.  
Then I was the craftsman at his side.  
I was filled with delight day after day,  
rejoicing always in his presence,  
rejoicing in his whole world  
and delighting in mankind.

### Sequentia

Conceptio Mariae virginis  
qua nos lavat a labe criminis  
celebratur hodie dies est laetitiae.  
De radice Jesse propaginis  
hanc eduxit sol veri luminis  
manu sapientiae suae templum gloriosae.

2. Stella nova noviter oritur,  
cuius ortu mors nostra moritur  
Evae lapsus iam restituitur in Maria.  
Ut aurora surgens egreditur  
velut Luna pulchra describitur  
super cuncta et sol eligitur virgo pia.

3. Virgo clemens et virgo unica,  
virga fumi, sed aromatica,  
in te celi mundique fabrica gloriatur.  
Te signarunt ora prophetica  
tibi canit Salomon cantica  
canticorum te vox angelica protestatur.

4. Verbum Patris processu temporis  
intrat tui secretum corporis,  
in te totum et totum deforis simul fuit.  
Fructus virens arentis arboris  
Christus gigas immensi roboris  
nos a nexus funesti pignoris eripuit.

5. O Maria, dulce commercium  
intra tuum celasti gremium,  
quo salutis reis remedium indulgetur.  
O vera spes et verum gaudium  
fac post vitae presentis stadium  
et optatum in coelis bravium nobis detur.

### Sequence

The conception of Mary the virgin  
who washes the stain of sin from us  
is celebrated today joyfully.  
From the root of Jesse's stock  
the sun of true light brought her forth  
by the hand of His wisdom; his temple of glory.

A new star rises  
by whose dawn our death dies  
Eve's fall now restored by Mary.  
She comes forth rising like the dawn  
in her course like the moon and the  
sun chooses this holy virgin above the others.

Virgin, unique and merciful,  
a twig of sweet smelling incense,  
in you the whole fabric of heaven and earth is glorified.  
The prophets foretold you  
Solomon sings his songs to you  
the voice of angels bears witness to you in their singing.

With the passing of time the word of the Father  
enters the mystery of your body,  
completely in you and outside at the same time.  
Living fruit from a withered tree  
Christ, the giant of immense strength,  
snatches us away from our death as fatal hostage.

O Mary, who hid this sweet communication  
within your womb, by whom  
safety is granted to us guilty ones.  
O true hope, true joy  
after this present life help us, soon let  
us be given the place in heaven we desire.