



**In the Chamber of the Harpers:  
Late Medieval Music from the Iberian Peninsula**

*Drew Minter, countertenor, harp, and percussion*

*Mark Rimple, countertenor, lute and harp*

*Marcia Young, soprano and harps*

*Longing for my beloved:* Martin Codax (fl. 1240 – 1270)

Ondas do mare de Vigo

Mina yrmana fremosa

*Praising the Virgin at court and in cloister:*

Cantiga: Gran dereit' Alfonso X, El Sabio (1221 - 1284)

Salve Regina glorie Las Huelgas Codex (13<sup>th</sup> c./copied 14th)

*Pilgrim songs from the road to Compostela* Llibre Vermell, (late-14th c.)

Virelai: Mariam Matrem Virginem

Ballada: Los set gotxs recomptarem (Instrumental)

*Excerpts from The Mass of Barcelona* Anonymous (mid-14th c.)

Kyrie

Sacro sanctus pater/Sanctus miro gaudio/Sanctus

*Courtly songs for consolation*

Helas pitie Trebor (fl. 1380 – 1400)

Elas mon cuer (I) Faenza Codex (ca. 1400)

Fuions de ci Jacquemin de Senleches (fl. 1382 - 1383)

*Music for the chamber of the harpers*

En attendant esperance Senleches

La Harpe de Melodie Senleches

Se Galaas Johannes Cuvelier (fl. 1372-87)

## Notes

The musical culture of the Iberian Peninsula in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was a *mélange* of various European musical influences forced together by necessity. The late 13<sup>th</sup> century was the age of Alfonso X (The Wise), a philosopher-king who oversaw the collection of over four hundred songs in the Galician tongue. Various musical and cultural influences have been suspected in the creation or documentation of this monodic repertory, including Arabic song (the *zajal*), the simple psalm-formulae of Gregorian chant, and the music of Occitan troubadours and French *trouvères*. It is known that many musicians fled the Languedoc in the aftermath of the Albigensian Crusade – a bloody episode of religious cleansing that brought the Languedoc culture to its knees. In the ensuing diaspora of Occitan culture, a number of troubadours and their minstrels settled in Alfonso's court, where they may have found employment as *jongleurs* (“*jograr*” in Gallician-Portuguese).

Alfonso and his court musicians employed the troubadour's art to moral ends. Instead of praising secular women and carnal love, the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* were written in praise of the Virgin, focusing on tales of miracles made through her intercession in the normal lives of pilgrims, monks, nuns, and hosts of other characters. In *Gran dereit*, for instance, a monk is rewarded for his ritualistic chanting of five Marian songs by the appearance of five roses springing from his open mouth after his death. Spanish rule allowed Jewish, Arabic, and Christian scholars to intermingle - a long tradition that began when Jewish translators of the late twelfth century who labored to translate ancient Greek works into Latin from their Arabic translations. Closer to the love lyrics of the troubadours and *trouvères* is the small group of secular *cantigas de amigo* of Martin Codax. Built upon a simple but elegant lyricism, they are quite unlike the dramatic and rustic narrations found in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*. Their focus on the female perspective of love is unique and perhaps indicative of an Arabic origin for such songs. Unlike Alfonso's monumental manuscript, the few surviving *cantigas de amigo* exist on a single, undecorated folio.

The music found in *Las Huelgas Codex* was compiled for the nuns of the Las Huelgas convent in Burgos, Spain in the first quarter of the fourteenth century. This manuscript is an important source of sacred music of the pre-Franconian period. This music is the first step away from the rhythmic modes of the Notre Dame School, and sits in between the *ars antiqua* and *ars nova* style periods. Here we have some of the first French polyphony to be copied and sung in Spain, a tradition that will continue throughout the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Gordon Anderson's transcription reconciles a curious notational feature of the codex, namely its frequent juxtaposition of melismas of varying metric lengths; our performance of *Salve regina glorie* therefore sounds somewhat similar in rhythmic style to the music of the *ars subtilior* of the following century heard later in the program. Here, the clearly text pulse (two beats per modern bar) is constantly reinterpreted by changing subdivisions of the pulse. The two-part simultaneous style of this composition is in some aspects a direct descendent of the earliest written two-part music of the St. Martial style from the

Limousin – favoring perfection of consonance at cadences but allowing for more imperfection – thirds, sixths and dissonances – between the beats.

At the monastery of Montserrat, situated near Barcelona, pilgrims traveling the long route between the cathedrals of Canterbury in England and St. James in Compostela would find a convenient place to rest and intermingle much as they still do today. As in all large social gatherings, music was welcome refreshment for the weary palmers. A set of religious songs created expressly for their use is found in the *Llibre Vermell*, collected late in the fourteenth century. These songs range a wide gamut from monophonic *formes fixes* like the Catalan melody *Los set gotxs recomptarem*, 3-part Latin canons, and two and three-voice polyphony in the *ars nova* style. The notation of the polyphonic songs is French, and the influence of the duple meter songs of Guillaume de Machaut can be heard in *Maria Matrem*, a polyphonic virelai with an elaborate melody above the harmonic support of two lower voices. The variety of genres and styles of these songs speaks to the wide variety of social backgrounds and nationalities of the pilgrims who used this book for their own entertainment and edification.

Another late fourteenth century work is the *Mass of Barcelona*, which was likely sung at the chapel of Martin of Aragon. The *Kyrie* is set in *discant* style, partaking of the sweet parallel harmonies of thirds and sixths that would soon influence composers such as Dunstable and Dufay. The *Sanctus* is cast in the form of an isorhythmic motet with troped texts. The style of the Mass is that of the musicians of the Avignon papal chapel, where many singers were trained for export to foreign courts. Later in the century, the Avignon's most avant garde musicians seem to have been employed in Aragon. Avignon was the chief center of the *ars subtilior*, the late "mannerist" style first cultivated by French composers in the last three decades of the fourteenth century. This style seems to have been international in dissemination, with sources from England, Italy, and Flanders and even Germany. Payment records attest to the constant employment of French jongleurs, minstrels, and composers of this school of composition in the Northern part of Spain, including Navarre and Barcelona.

The composer Trebor, also known as Trebol or Robert Borlet, was employed in Barcelona and also in the town of Orthez. The chronicler Froissart relates a story of intrigue between Charles II "the Bad," King of Navarre and Gaston Febus, the Count of Foix and Viscount of Bearn. In this tale, Febus has two sons, one a bastard. The mother of the legitimate son had been estranged from Gaston due to his failure to pay her dowry, and so she resided at the court of her brother in Navarre. Charles sent the legitimate son back to Febus' court in Orthez with a "magic powder" that he guaranteed would bring they boy's estranged parents back together. The bastard son believed that his half-brother was attempting to poison his father, and great suspicion was aroused when the powder in his possession was tested upon one of the Count's favorite hunting hounds, which died immediately from poisoning. The King then imprisoned his son in the tower of Orthez, where he later died "accidentally" at the point of a knife held by his father during questioning. Only the tower of this keep stands to this day – the very place where the incident is reported to have occurred. *Helas Pitie*, Trebor's affective lament, is a perfect

meditation on a wrongful death – and given Trebor’s travel between both courts, the meaning of the poem seems less general. As noted by the scholar Maria del Carmen Gomez, whose investigations into payroll records at these courts twenty years ago opened many new avenues for understanding the circulation of these musicians between France and Spain, Trebol is the Spanish name for the Trefoil, the symbol of France. Musicians visiting from the French Court of Gaston III of Foix are well documented throughout the 1380s and 90s.

It is possible that Guillaume de Machaut may have befriended the young Charles II “the bad” King of Navarre, during the monarch’s imprisonment in France. Charles’ love of French music continued with his patronage of French musicians. Machaut’s *Le Jugement du Roy de Navarre* was written and dedicated to Charles. Machaut’s long poetical debates often include music, either in the written form or in the description of musical events. We offer an example of an anonymous composer’s intabulation, or elaborated instrumental arrangement, of a ballade text from Machaut’s *La Louange des Dames*. This virtuosic composition comes from the Northern Italian *Faenza Codex* and is a demonstration of the international currency of both Machaut’s poetry and the instrumental style of late 14<sup>th</sup> c. minstrelsy.

Jacomin de Senleches was a composer known to have played the harp for Charles III of Navarre and his wife, Eleanor of Castille. In this court, there was a “chamber of the harpers” which was built especially for her musicians to perform in, and her court abounded with foreign harpists. Senleches’ *La Harpe de Melodie* is a *chasse*, a canonic work of great intricacy and beauty. The piece exists in two sources. In one of them, the composition is arranged across the strings of a harp, and in both, the notation is among the most complex examples known to us, demonstrating the composers’ great theoretical and compositional skill. Senleches wrote his mournful yet strangely animated ballade *Fuions de ci* on her death in 1382, lamenting that her poor musicians will now have to seek their fortunes elsewhere. The composer wound up working in Avignon the following year for the next Pope. Such was the life of a traveling jongleur in the late middle ages, dependent upon the fickle nature of Dame Fortune.

Johannes Cuvelier was the chronicler of Bertrand du Guesclin, and “faiseur”(poet) to the King of France. His ballade *Se Galaas* is a standard invocation of the Nine Worthies (three heroes each from Biblical, classical, and chivalrous pantheons), and praises Gaston III of Foix – the estranged cousin of Charles II of Navarre – as an equal of Galahad, Tristan, Roger, and other proud warriors. His battle cry, “Febus avant!” closes each stanza of this elegant ballade. Febus’ rule over the mountainous southern French frontier allowed for frequent contact between musicians of the French and Spanish courts. Court records, in fact, show that at this time musicians from Foix were employed occasionally in Spanish courts.

Ironically, the musical exchange route was largely one-way: from France southwards across the Pyrenees. Cantigas in Gallician-Portuguese are not found in French manuscripts. French culture was spread far and wide, partly due to the military prowess of warriors such as the Lusignan family, who managed to take their musical culture to the

far-away isle of Cyprus, and partly due to the reach of the Papal court of Avignon, which for most Christians was the seat of the true church during the schism. French music of the *ars subtilior* style likewise dominated Northern Italian music at the close of the trecento. While today we look upon this exotic music as a historical curiosity, it was geographically widespread and truly cosmopolitan in appeal. But the French domination was not fated to last long. The rise of a truly Spanish musical form of expression would soon overcome the French influence, and the Renaissance composers of Spain would stand as equals to their French, Italian, German, and English counterparts.

### ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**TREFOIL** is a trio of singer-instrumentalists long active in early music, with experience in such ensembles as Concert Royal, Les Arts Florissants, New York's Ensemble for Early Music, Pomerium, Clarion Music society, Piffaro, My Lord Chamberlain's Consort, and other groups. The trio debuted in New York and Philadelphia early in 2000 with a program of 14th-century French *ars subtilior* song. The Philadelphia Inquirer tagged the performers as "a hearty trio of medieval music specialists" and their work as "an intricate, enigmatic vocal art." TREFOIL has appeared in concerts and master classes at The Cloisters, Temple University, Vassar College, Middlebury College, West Chester University, the Vermont Millennium Arts Festival, the Museum Series of Providence, Boston College, the Currier Museum of Art in Manchester, NH, the Neighborhood Music School in New Haven, the 2002 Amherst Early Music Festival, the New York Early Music Celebration, the Washington D.C. Early Music Festival, the Connecticut Early Music Festival, Howland Chamber Music Circle, and the 37th International Congress on Medieval Studies at the University of Western Michigan at Kalamazoo. The trio has also made joint appearances with Piffaro, the Renaissance Band in Philadelphia, the Folger Concert in Washington, D.C. and The Newberry Consort in Chicago, Illinois. 2007 season highlights include programs at Vassar College, Trinity Concerts at One, Early Music/Early Season at the Times Center, NY, and Franklin and Marshall College.



Well-known to early music audiences for over twenty years, **DREW MINTER** appeared in leading roles with the opera companies of Brussels, Toulouse, Boston, Washington, Santa Fe, BAM, Wolf Trap, Glimmerglass, Nice, and Marseille, among others. A highly regarded specialist in the works of Handel, he sang at the Halle, Karlsruhe, Maryland and Goettingen Handel festivals, and was a guest at festivals such as Tanglewood, Ravinia, Vienna, Regensburg, Utrecht, BAM's Next Wave, Edinburgh, Spoleto and BEMF. He has sung with many of the world's leading early music ensembles, including Les Arts Florissants, the Handel and Haydn Society, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Freiburger Barockorchester. With over 60 recordings to his credit,

Mr. Minter is a founding member of the Newberry Consort and performs regularly with My Lord Chamberlain's Consort, ARTEK, and the Folger Consort. His medieval trio TREFOIL, founded in 2000, specializes in music of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. A lauded opera director, Minter directed productions for Caramoor, Lake George Opera, St. Luke's Orchestra, Opera Aperta, The Göttingen Handel Festival, the Boston Early Music Festival, and many schools and universities. He is now the artistic director of Boston Midsummer Opera. In addition, he is a regularly featured writer for *Opera News*. Minter lives in the Catskills and teaches music full-time at Vassar College.



**MARK RIMPLE** has garnered critical praise for his lute playing and singing from national newspapers (Chicago Tribune, Washington Post, Philadelphia Inquirer, The New York Times) and early music journals (Early Music, Early Music America Magazine, The Lute Society of America Quarterly). Most recently, a Philadelphia Inquirer critic wrote that his lute playing has “the specificity of a great vocal performance.” He has appeared as countertenor and lutenist with The Newberry Consort, The Folger Consort, Ex Umbris, Piffaro, the Renaissance Band, The New York Collegium, and New York's Ensemble for Early Music. He has appeared as accompanist for Julianne Baird, Drew Minter, and Ellen Hargis. He can be heard on recordings of fourteenth century music by Trefoil (MSR) and the Newberry Consort (Noyse Productions). He is a specialist in the notation of medieval through baroque music and has taught at summer workshops around the country. He has an interest in the history of music theory and has written and presented a number of papers and a recent book chapter on the influence of Boethius in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. In addition, Mark is an accomplished composer: his works have been performed by The League/ISCM, Parnassus, Mélomanie, Baritone Randall Scarlata and Pianist Carl Cranmer, Saxophonist Marshall Taylor and Harpischordist Joyce Lindorff, and The Network for New Music. He has also performed new music for guitar, mandolin, lute and countertenor with Network for New Music and the Cygnus Ensemble and in recital. He has premiered and recorded modern compositions by Matthew Greenbaum (Centaur), Jonathan Dawe (Furious Artisan Recordings), Kristen Hevner, Raoul Pleskow, and Larry Nelson. He holds a DMA in composition from Temple University, and is an Associate Professor of Music Theory and Composition at West Chester University, where he also directs the Collegium Musicum. He is currently writing and implementing a new, stylistically neutral music theory textbook with theorist and West Chester University colleague Alexander Rozin.



Soprano and historical harper **Marcia Young** was cited by the *Washington Post* for her “elegant, dark-hued soprano voice” and “winning mixture of formal restraint and emotional intensity.” She is a regular member of the renaissance groups My Lord Chamberlain's Consort and Duo Marchand, with lutenist Andy Rutherford. Recent highlights include a solo recital, *Ancient Airs*, presented by the Musical Instrument Collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art; joint performances with Parthenia, Piffaro, and the Folger and Newberry Consorts; and

concerts at the Yale Center for British Art, The Cloisters, the CityMusic Series in Columbus, the Yale University Collection of Musical Instruments, Amherst and Boston Early Music Festivals, and the Lute Society of America Conference and Seminar in Cleveland. Young has toured and recorded with Pomerium and Early Music New York, and has taught vocal and instrumental classes at the San Francisco Early Music Society's Medieval and Renaissance Workshop. During the academic year, she serves as Director of Performance Studies at Manhattan's Stern College, Yeshiva University. Also a music journalist, Young writes regularly for *Playbill* and *Opera News* and is heard on the air over WNYC-New York and the classical channels of Sirius Satellite Radio.