

Celebrating Over 15 Years of World-Class Chamber Music



The Orlando Consort

'Food, Wine and Song'

Music and Food in Medieval and Early Renaissance Europe

March 1, 2013 • A. F. Siebert Chapel

Upcoming Chamber Music Series Events

April 5, 2013 • 7:30 p.m.

Trio Antigo

Additional Chamber Music Events

March 3, 2013 • 3 p.m.

Fifth House Ensemble

March 10, 2013 • 3 p.m.

Muzika Piano Trio



Carthage

2001 Alford Park Drive
Kenosha, WI 53140-1994
www.carthage.edu

'Food, Wine and Song'

The Orlando Consort

Matthew Venner: Alto
Mark Dobell: Tenor
Angus Smith: Tenor
Donald Greig: Baritone

PROGRAMME

France, c.1220-1363

In paupertatis predio Anon, Notre Dame de
Paris.

Chançonette / Ainc voir / A la cheminée / Par verité Anon, Montpellier
Codex

Nes que on porroit Guillaume de Machaut

England, c.1330-c.1450

Apparuerunt apostolis v. Spiritus Domini Anon, Fountains Abbey 1st
Manuscript

Nowell, nowell: The boarës head Smert

Si quis amat Anon

Italy, c.1450-c.1500

Canto de cardoni Anon, Florentine
Carnival Song

Donna di dentro / Dammene un poco Heinrich Isaac

Canto di donne maestre di far cacio Anon, Florentine
Carnival Song

INTERMISSION

Burgundy, 1426-c.1490

Adieu ces bons vins de Lannoy Guillaume Dufay

Un franc archier Loyset Compère

Sile fragor Loyset Compère

La plus grant chière Anon

Spain and Portugal, c.1480-c.1530

La tricotea Anon

Ave color vini clari Juan Ponce

Oy comamos y bebamos Juan del Encina

Quem tem farelos Anon

Germany, c. 1500-c.1585

Von Eyern Matthias Greiter

Von edler Art Ludwig Senfl

Trinkt und singt Anon

Program Notes

“I want to eat, sing and make merry - that's what I like!”

These words come from a 13th century French song, yet who today could possibly disagree with them? Throughout the ages music and dining have been natural partners, the combination of the two satisfying many of the senses at the same time. Whether it be a grand feast or a small intimate gathering, the choice of an exquisite menu in combination with perfectly selected music has the magic to create an immense feeling of well-being. This anthology of music and recipes has been chosen to give a glimpse of how our distant ancestors might have enjoyed these delights and a very clear picture emerges to indicate that they knew all too well how to have a very good time!

The music presented here was composed over a period of some 350 years. During these years the world witnessed some extraordinary artistic events and achievements: the construction of the great European cathedrals, the flowering of the Renaissance (in painting, sculpture, literature and architecture), the spawning of universities, and the invention of the printing press. The work of medieval and renaissance musicians was no less remarkable and innovative, and the diversity of style in this collection is a vivid testimony to the inventiveness of composers and, by association, the virtuosity of performers.

The majority of the pieces in this programme are about specific items of food. They take in the different stages of the journey from cultivation to consumption. They tell us of the different contexts for eating, whether it be a picnic, a grand feast or a session at the local inn. And there are times when it becomes all too evident that the texts may purport to be about food but are really about sex.

Other items have been included for their association with food, such as etiquette and shopping in the market. Indeed such songs are very important, for they build up information and answer questions about medieval and renaissance eating habits that cannot be ascertained from the recipe books alone.

In such a collection it has been impossible to avoid the subject of alcoholic beverages. It is said that beer was not as potent in medieval times as today, and that wine was regularly drunk in watered down form. However, the inescapable conclusion must be that, however weak the drink, intoxication was a regular condition for many of these musical revellers!

France, c.1220-1363

In these years, France, and more particularly Paris, may with good reason have claimed to be the world's centre for education and culture. The great university attracted students from all over Europe to study with men such as Peter Abelard and St. Thomas Aquinas, and the building of the cathedral of Notre Dame in the second half of the 12th century was the inspiration behind the influential school of composition that flourished under the leadership of such men as Leonin and Perotin. Much of the polyphonic music (in two, three and four parts) was in the style of *organum*, where the parts were built around a pre-existing chant. However, *In paupertatis predio* is a *conductus* where the tune is newly composed; its elegant meandering is very typical.

Chançonette is a *motet* in four parts, now to be found in the Montpellier Codex but certainly written in the north of France. The earliest times of the motet have one especially bizarre feature, namely, that the different voices sing different texts, posing a question as to how the listener was supposed to be able to discern what was going on. Adam de la Halle was one of the most famous Trouvère of his day (the Trouvère being the northern French equivalent of the southern Troubador). He probably studied in Paris and while his death is reported in a poem from 1288, his presence is also recorded in England in 1306. *Prenés l'abre* is a short 'incidental' piece from the play *Le jeu de Robin et de Marion*.

Guillaume de Machaut (b1300? - d.1377) was the most important composer of his day and a landmark figure in the development of song; indeed, his music deserves to be ranked alongside that of Schubert, Brahms and Wolf. Moreover, it is known that he wrote much of his own poetry. Having worked in the service of John of Luxembourg, King of Bohemia, and John, Duke of Berry, he lived his later years in the city of Reims.

England, c.1330-c.1450

By the second half of the 14th century, England's reputation as a musical nation was already established. Many of the famous choir schools that exist today had been established and English singers and instrumentalists were generally admired throughout the continent. It is also known that a huge repertoire of music was composed in England during the 14th and 15th centuries but sadly only a small percentage has survived until today. The loss is not simply due to natural decay; indeed, the biggest wastage occurred during the Reformation when cathedral and monastery libraries were ransacked on the orders of King Henry VIII. Much of the parchment on which the music was written was 're-cycled' as material for lining shoes or wrapping fish, but some of it was used for lining new books and it is by reconstructing the notes from these that musicologists have succeeded in rescuing previously lost pieces.

Apparuerunt apostolis comes from a manuscript that had been owned at Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire. It was composed around 1350 but it is not certain that it would have been written at Fountains or even sung there; the Cistercians had a reputation for austerity that would seem to run counter to the 'frivolity' of polyphony. *Nowell, nowell: The boar's head* is a carol. At this time 'carol' was the term used to define a particular musical structure that alternates verses and a refrain. It was much later that its special relationship with Christmas evolved. *Si quis amat* is a short round or canon. The technique is one that appears to have been especially popular in England.

Italy, c.1450-c.1500

That Italy was the birth place of the Renaissance has been well documented. The late 14th and early 15th centuries saw the rise of the great family dynasties in such cities as Milan, Ferrara, Padua, Pavia, Bologna and Naples. For the rulers of these mini-empires, a major part of the pleasure of being in this exalted position was having the opportunity to display to those less fortunate just how magnificently wealthy they were. Patronage of the arts provided the perfect opportunity to do just this. Artists and musicians suddenly found themselves in a position where their services were being sought by the good and the great: in the case of singers and composers (at this time the composers were all singers!), the best were offered positions in ranks of the cathedral or chapel choir, and their appointments would have also entailed their involvement in the secular musical affairs of the court. Nor were these talents only displayed in the residence of the patron, for if the Duke or Prince took to the road, so did the musicians.

The three songs in this concert are all from Florence and form part of the *Canti Carnascialeschi* tradition, which celebrated the various festivals associated with particular seasons of the year. The earliest songs were very much a street tradition, to be sung during torchlight processions and when stopping in squares and courtyards. During the reign of Lorenzo the Magnificent (1469-92) the proceedings became much more elaborate and formalised. Decorations and costumes were added to the poetry and music, although one feature would appear to have remained constant: all the songs are seething with innuendo and 'double entendre'.

Burgundy, 1426-c.1490

Outside Italy, the most lavish and continuous patrons of music through the 15th century were the Dukes of Burgundy. Indeed, the list of musicians who served at the court reads like a 'Who's Who' of 15th century music.

Guillaume Dufay was probably born in or around Cambrai around 1400 and was a chorister at the Cathedral there from 1409-1412. Some time before 1420 he must have entered the service of the Malatesta family in Pesaro, Italy, and there is evidence to suggest that he held positions in Cambrai and Laon between 1426-1427. In December 1428 Dufay became a singer in the papal choir, the most famous musical establishment in Europe. Whilst in Italy he formed close associations with the d'Este family of Ferrara and with the Court of Savoy. It would appear that from 1440 he was based almost entirely in Cambrai where, incidentally, one of his duties was to purchase wine for the entire clerical community. He died on Sunday 27th November 1474 after many weeks of illness.

Compère's first name is a diminutive of 'Louis', pronounced in three syllables 'Lo-y-set' (King Louis XI always signed his letters 'Loys'), and his surname translates as 'godfather', though it also meant 'gossip'! It is hard to trace his early life: conflicting early reports give his birthplace as St Omer, Arras and somewhere in the nearby county of Hainault. There are good reasons for thinking that he may have studied in Paris in the years around 1460, but it appears that towards the end of the decade he too had joined the court circle in Burgundy. Soon after that Compère was in Milan, where he sang in the chapel of Galeazzo Maria Sforza from July 1474 until that Duke was assassinated at the end of 1476. From 1486 Compère is documented as a singer at the royal court of Charles VIII, and he accompanied Charles on the Italian campaign of 1494. The years from 1498 show Compère in administrative posts, as Dean of St Gery in Cambrai, provost of St. Pierre in Douai and latterly as a canon of St Quentin, where he died in 1518.

Spain and Portugal, c.1480-c.1530

Acquiring territory through conquest and marriage, and wealth through the 'development' of lands in South America, the Spanish monarchy came relatively late to the cultural high table of Europe. Stylistically, the music - in particular the sacred music - shares many of the characteristics of the other European centres, but gradually the nation shifted from being an importer of compositions to an exporter of composers and singers. Nevertheless, the secular music always maintained a unique character.

Juan Ponce (c.1480-after 1521) served in the Aragonese chapel of Ferdinand the Catholic. Twelve songs are attributed to him in the *Cancionero Musical de Palacio*. Juan del Encina (1468-1530) was a poet and dramatist, as well as a composer. He was in service to the Duke of Alba prior to working at the papal court in Rome. On the death of Leo X in 1521 he returned to Spain and spent the last years of his life as a prior at León Cathedral.

Germany, c.1500-c.1585

Perhaps as a result of an extended period of political fragmentation, German music in the Middle Ages remained somewhat insular until the 16th century. It was really with the emergence of Heinrich Isaac (see Italian section) and Ludwig Senfl that German music began to receive a much wider audience. Senfl (c.1486-1543) was a pupil of Isaac and joined the chapel of Maximilian I as a choirboy in 1496. He succeeded Isaac as composer to the court chapel in 1517, before transferring to service in Bavaria at the court of Duke Wilhelm IV. Senfl left much sacred music as well as 206 songs, a good percentage of them concerned with the subjects of wine and beer. *Von Eyern* ('Of Eggs') would appear to be the only extant song by Matthias Greiter and nothing is currently known of his life.

In researching this project The Orlando Consort has benefited enormously from the generous help and great expertise provided by friends and colleagues, including Wyndham Thomas, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, David Fallows, Tess Knighton, Anne Stone, Leofranc Holford-Strevens, and Susan Weiss.

The Food

Even the briefest look at a collection of medieval recipes will reveal the ingenuity and creative skills of medieval chefs. But then, perhaps this should come as no surprise. The period covered by this musical anthology was one of great innovation in the food world; with the opening of trade routes to the east cooks had access to new and exotic spices. These could be combined with a staggering array of existing produce. Markets abounded with the freshest produce: vegetables, salads, meat, fish, dairy products, grain and flour, sauces, herbs, etc. Moreover, all the produce was organic!

Certainly in preparing medieval recipes one notices a few 'absentees'; potatoes, tomatoes, chilies, the cultivated (as distinct from wild) strawberry and certain types of peppers did not arrive in Europe until after the settlement of the Americas. Yet the list of non-available goods is remarkably small and medieval diners would not have lacked for variety.

Of course, not everybody ate 'well' in medieval times; wealth and status accounted for just how lavish a style people lived. Of course there were grand feasts at which the lucky few consumed vast quantities of food over courses too numerous to count and drank obscene volumes of alcoholic beverages. And at the other end of the scale, there were those who subsisted on meagre sustenance and who fell victim through ill-nourishment to plague and other diseases. Yet the 'norm' surely lies somewhere between these two extremes. Medieval cooks were very health conscious in the preparation of meals, taking great care to prepare balanced diets, and were used to working with the ingredients available. Shopping was not organised in advance according to pre-prepared lists. This was an age where what the cooks bought and prepared was determined by the season - flexibility and imagination was all important.

This is reflected by the recipe collections of the day. Most were prepared by chefs at privileged institutions, but while many of the recipes are quite ambitious and lavish, others are extremely simple. The intention would seem to have been to have provided ideas suitable for a variety of occasions. In some regards the recipes could be regarded as being quite vague. However, they were not intended to be definitive. Instead, they were regarded as an 'aide-de-memoire', assuming that chefs in the home would already know the techniques for cooking and make their own choices as to which herbs and spices to use based on availability and taste. And recipes were sometimes grouped in ways which would be unfamiliar to some modern cookbooks, the selection being on the basis for what might be suitable consumption for invalids with a variety of 'medieval' diseases, or for clerics who were supposed to observe periods of fasting and abstinence.

Programming and program notes by Angus Smith