

Guts Baroque Duo presents:
Bicinia:
Two-Part Music of the Renaissance

Sunday, December 26, 2021, 4:00 P.M. PDT/7:00 P.M. EDT
YouTube Live



1881 painting of Josquin des Prez by Charles Gustave Housez, inspired by a 16th-century woodcut

featuring:

Sylvia Schwartz, baroque violin and viola da gamba
John Ott, viola da gamba

Bicinia

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Program

- Que Gabrielis from *Bicinia gallica, latina, germanica* vol. 2.....Heinrich Isaac (c. 1450-1517)
- Kanon from Glareanus' *Dodecachordon*.....Josquin des Prez (c. 1450-1521)
- Bicinium 1 from *Biciniorum*.....Josquin des Prez (c. 1450-1521)
- Bicinium 2 from *Biciniorum*.....Josquin des Prez (c. 1450-1521)
- Comme Femme III from *Segovia*.....Alexander Agricola (1446-1506)
- Agnus Dei I from *Il primo libro a due voci*....."Maitre Jhan" (c. 1485-1538)
- Agnus Dei VI from *Il primo libro a due voci*.....Perissone Cambio (c. 1520-1562)
- Bicinium 22 from *Il primo libro della musica a 2 voci*.....Orazio Vecchi (1550-1605)
- Duet 1 from *Il primo libro della musica a 2 voci*.....Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi (c. 1532-1609)
- Duet 2 from *Il primo libro della musica a 2 voci*.....Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi (c. 1532-1609)
- Ricercar 1 from *Ricercate a due voci*.....Annibale Zuccaro (fl. 1603-1609)

Fin

Program Notes

Heinrich Isaac (c. 1450-1517) was born in Flanders, and was given an excellent musical education. He was hired in 1485 by Lorenzo de Medici “il magnifico”, a great patron of music and the arts in Florence. Lorenzo even arranged a good marriage between Isaac and Bartolomea Bello, the daughter of a rich Florentine merchant. Isaac remained in the employ of the Medici family until 1496, when Lorenzo’s successor Piero was chased out of Florence. Isaac then was hired by Emperor Maximilian I in Vienna, and proceeded to tour throughout Europe with his patron. He returned to Florence near the end of his life, and was happily accepted by the Medici family, who had been returned to power in 1512. Isaac is remembered as one of a group of Franco-Flemish composers who became the most important musical figures in early Renaissance Europe.

In 1545 music publisher Georg Rhau, who worked with Martin Luther in Wittenberg, published two collections of *Bicinia gallica, latina, germanica*, for use as pedagogical materials to teach young musicians to sing in polyphonic parts. Rhau selected 228 works by an assortment of composers from all over Europe, including the Franco-Flemish masters such as Isaac. *Que Gabrielis* appears in this volume. The text is *Que Gabrielis archangeli dictis credidisti*, “who believed the words of the archangel Gabriel,” referring to Mary and the immaculate conception.

Josquin des Prez (c. 1450-1521) was the most famous of the Franco-Flemish composers. Born in what was then the kingdom of Burgundy, he studied music with the great Johannes Ockeghem. Josquin’s first recorded employment was in 1477 as a singer in the chapel at Aix-en-Provence, in the employ of Duke René of Anjou. After that Josquin worked in Milan from 1484-89, then gained a position in the papal cathedral. He continued working as a singer and composer throughout Italy and France over the next two decades. He often used his influence in the church to obtain benefices in his home territory of Burgundy, and retired to his family home in Condé-sur-l’Escaut.

Josquin’s music was beloved and republished for over a century after his death, and he is featured prominently in books like Glareanus’ *Dodecachordon* (1547) and Calvisius’ *Biciniarum* (1607). *Bicinia*, in particular, were used as pedagogical material in musical instruction.

Alexander Agricola (1446-1506) was another prominent Franco-Flemish composer. The illegitimate son of a prominent businesswoman in Ghent, his given name was Alexander Ackerman, but he was referred to as Agricola by the time his career took off in the 1490’s. He was valued as a composer and a viola player (at this time, a “viola” was any bowed string instrument). Records of his employment are scant, but he was variously discovered to be

working as a musician in France, Naples, Florence, Mantua and Rome before returning to Burgundy near the end of his career.

Agricola and many of his contemporaries frequently wrote polyphonic pieces based on popular French chansons, which were well-known throughout Europe. This setting of *Comme Femme Desconfortée* was preserved in the Segovia Manuscript, a comprehensive collection of Renaissance music from all over Europe written around 1500 for the Cathedral in Segovia.

“Maistre Jhan” (c. 1485-1538) is a name applied to a well-known French composer active in Ferrara in the early 16th century. This appellation appears on madrigals, motets, at least one Mass, and several other vocal works, indicating that he was famous enough that everyone knew who “Master Jean” was, though it is currently a mystery.

Perrisone Cambio (c. 1520-1562) was born in the south of the Netherlands, and studied singing and composition with Willaert. He made his career in Venice, performing at S Marco and the ducal palace. He was regarded highly enough that he was invited to compose a set of madrigals based on Petrarch’s poems, and was mourned when he passed away at a young age.

Both settings of the *Agnus Dei* appear in the collection *Il primo libro a due voci de diversi autori*, assembled by the composer Antonio Gardano in 1553. This is a collection of two-part sacred vocal music by a variety of composers, including Gardano himself.

Orazio Vecchi (1550-1605) was born in Modena, and trained as a musician and priest. He became famous for his madrigals and other multi-part vocal works, including sets of humorous madrigals that told a story, a traceable ancestor to the opera. He worked in and around Modena for his whole life, until poor health forced him to retire.

Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi (c. 1532-1609) was born in Carvaggio, near Cremona. He worked first as a deacon in Mantua, where he started singing and teaching music to the novice choristers at the Basilica S Barbara. His talents gained him the notice of the local duke, Guglielmo Gonzaga, who installed him as *maestro di cappella* at S Barbara, where he worked for the rest of his life. Gastoldi composed a large number of works for multiple voices, but is most famous for his balletos, secular dances for 3 and 5 voices. Despite his efforts, his sacred works never gained the same notoriety.

In 1598 Gastoldi published a collection of two-part music titled *Il primo libro della musica a due voci*. The parts are untexted and intended for either voices or instruments. The first half of the book are pieces by Gastoldi, and the second half are similar pieces by other composers, such as Vecchi.

Annibale Zuccaro (fl. 1603-1609) is known only from a single collection of *Ricercate a due voci, Libro 1*, published in 1606. This collection was dedicated to Giulio Cesare Martinengo,

who at the time was the maestro di cappella in Udine, close to Zuccaro's hometown of Spilimbergo. Martinengo shortly thereafter became the maestro di cappella at S Marco in Venice, where he would become infamous for lowering the quality of the music and placing the organization in debt before dying of illness, giving Claudio Monteverdi the chance to take over, clean things up and create the Baroque era of music. Zuccaro's attempt at notoriety likely did not fall into the right hands to propel him to fame.

Ricercate a due voci, Libro 1 (there was never a Libro 2) is a collection of 22 instrumental ricercars, explorative polyphonic fantasies in a late Renaissance style. Instrumental ricercars were among the most complex instrumental pieces written at the time.

About Us

Cellist and gambist **John Ott**, a native of Los Angeles, received his Bachelor of Music degree in cello performance from UC Irvine in 2004, studying with Dr. Margaret Parkins, and in 2016 completed his Master of Music degree in Early Music, viola da gamba at the Longy School of Music in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he studied with Jane Hershey. In between, he performed with Symphony Irvine, Dana Point Symphony, Montage Civic Orchestra, and South Orange County Chamber Orchestra, played in the string quartet *Elegie Quartet*, and played chamber music all over Los Angeles and Orange County. During his two years in Massachusetts, aside from his Longy ensembles, he performed with Boston Camerata and Boston Opera Collaborative. He has played with the Orange County-based early music group *L'Esprit Baroque* since 2014. He maintains a large teaching studio, primarily at Vienna Music Institute in Irvine, CA, and has been the cello coach for three high schools in Irvine Unified School District. Since moving to Maine in 2020, he performed with *Portland Bach Experience*, and is on the faculty at the *Palaver Strings After-School Program*.

Fascinated and deeply inspired by the relationship between music, movement, and dance, violinist and Dalcrozian-in-training **Sylvia Schwartz** is a passionate chamber musician in both modern and historical performance practices. A native of Boston, Sylvia has performed with *Guts*, *L'Esprit Baroque*, *Musica Angelica Baroque Orchestra*, *LA Chamber Chorale*, *The Meistersingers*, *Eudaimonia—A Purposeful Period Band*, *Harvard Baroque Chamber Orchestra*, *Harvard Early Music Society*, *New Bedford Symphony*, *New England Classical Singers*, and *Lizzie and the Flakjackets* throughout the United States and Canada, in Estonia, Latvia, and at *Shostakovich Hall* in St. Petersburg, Russia. Sylvia earned a M.M. in Violin Performance from the Longy School of Music, where she studied violin with *Laura Bossert* and early music with *Dana Maiben*, *Na'ama Lion*, *Vivian Montgomery*, and *Ryan Turner*. She also holds a B.S. in Engineering from *Olin College*. Sylvia teaches privately in person and online, for the *Irvine Unified School District*, and at *Vienna Music Institute* in Irvine, California, and concertizes frequently with *Guts* and *L'Esprit Baroque*.

About Historically-Informed Performance Practice

The mission of Guts is to bring the music of the Baroque era to vivid life, recreating the distinct sound of the time in which it was composed. In tonight's program, Sylvia will be playing a baroque violin, constructed in 2016 by Douglas Cox to replicate a Guarneri violin of the early 1700's, with a long baroque bow made by Louis Bégin. John will play a viol built by Lu Mi based on a model by Nicolas Bertrand, with a baroque bow also made by Louis Bégin, and an early 20th-century cello by an unknown French maker, with yet another bow made by Louis Bégin. All three instruments are strung with pure-gut strings, the way they would have been in the 17th or 18th century. Gut strings sound warmer, though quieter, than their modern metal equivalents, and baroque instruments are under less tension, so they sound more open, though not as projecting. Like most Baroque music, all of the music on tonight's program has a basso continuo line forming the foundation of the ensemble, typically shared by the cello or gamba and the keyboard, usually a harpsichord or organ. We are presenting these works without a keyboard instrument for this concert.

As performers, we will be adding ornaments such as trills and turns to the music as we play. The practice of decorating music was unique to the performer and to the circumstances of performance, and helped each musician put their own stamp on a piece of music. Decorating this way both adds to the expressiveness of the music and allows us to share our personalities as performers with our audience. Also, since the music of this time is generally imitating sung text, even though the music we are playing has no specific text we will be shaping our phrases and melodies as if they were sung with words.

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