

Gotham Early Music Scene (GEMS) presents



Thursday January 4, 2024 1:15 pm  
St Malachy's Church – The Actors' Chapel in New York City  
Live Streamed to [midtownconcerts.org](http://midtownconcerts.org) and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com)

## Angelica Women's Chamber Choir *A Battle of the Sexes: Italian Composers from 1300 to 1800*

*Marie Caruso ~ Artistic Director*

*Christina Bruno, Claire Collins, Joan Cornachio, Virginia Kaycoff, Anita Massengill, Kathleen McClafferty,  
Wilma Messenger, Mary Peck, Julia Perrin, Laura Ravotti, Susan Saslow, Amy Yoshizumi*

*Virginia Kaycoff ~ viola da gamba Claire Collins ~ percussion*

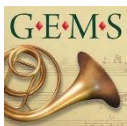
*Claire Collins, Wilma Messenger, Laura Ravotti ~ recorders Special Guest Artist: Richard Kolb ~ theorbo*

<b>Ave donna santissima, arr. Anna Gabriella Caldaralo</b>	Laudario di Cortona, 13th c. Italy
<b>Ecco la primavera</b>	Francesco Landini (ca.1335–1397)
<b>Sicut lilium</b>	Anon., attrib. Leonora d'Este (1515–1575)
<b>Son questi crespi crini</b>	Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1634)
<b>Morir non può il mio cuore</b>	Maddalena Casulana (ca.1540–ca.1590)
<b>Il ladro ch'a la strada</b>	Luca Marenzio (ca.1553–1599)
<b>Gaudete gaudio magno</b>	Claudia Francesca Rusca (1593–1676)
<b>Barechu et Adonay</b>	Salamone Rossi (1570–1630)
<b>Aure volanti</b>	Francesca Caccini (1587–ca.1630)
<b>Fammi una canzonetta capriciosa</b>	Orazio Vecchi (ca.1550–1605)
<b>Kyrie eleison (Mass for two voices)</b>	Sr. Delia Bonito (b. ca.1683)
<b>Cor mio, deh, non languire</b>	Alessandro Scarlatti (1660–1725)
<b>Hic vir despiciens mundum</b>	Maria Rosa Coccia (1759–1833)
<b>Magi videntes stellam</b>	Agostino Agazzari (1580–1642)
<b>Angelus ad pastores ait</b>	Sulpitia Lodovica Cesis (1577–ca.1619)

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## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Renowned male composers and lesser-known female composers take turns in this thought-provoking program by Angelica. Alongside pieces by Marenzio, Monteverdi, Scarlatti, you will hear music by Francesca Caccini, Maddelena Casulana, Leonora d'Este, and others. Despite living in a musical world historically dominated by men, these women overcame obstacles to create music of substance that today is becoming more recognized.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Lute and theorbo player **Richard Kolb** has performed throughout North America and Europe as a soloist and with a wide range of Baroque ensembles, including Opera Atelier, New York City Opera, Les Musiciens du Louvre, Chicago Opera Theater, Waverly Consort, Handel & Haydn Society, and Concert Royal. He has recorded CDs of lute music by Robert Ballard (Centaur CRC 3747), and songs from Barbara Strozzi's Opus 8 with soprano Elissa Edwards ("*Vago Desio*," Acis APL90277). Dr. Kolb's performing activities are complemented with scholarship, and he has published widely used editions of music by Barbara Strozzi and Antonio Francesco Tenaglia. These include the first modern edition of Strozzi's complete works, published in eight volumes by Cor Donato Editions (2014–2019). His edition of Francesca Caccini's *Primo libro delle musiche* is nearing completion. Dr. Kolb is Acting Director of the New York Continuo Collective and has held teaching positions at Case Western Reserve University, the University of Toronto, and the Royal Conservatory of Music (Toronto).

**Angelica Women's Chamber Choir** is a non-profit, Westchester-based women's choral ensemble formed in 1996 by Susan Ball and passed to founding member Marie Caruso, who has served as Artistic Director since 2005. The group has developed a rich repertory of music ranging from the 1st to the 21st centuries. Angelica sings in a wide variety of genres, including chant, Sephardic, and folk. Angelica collaborates with such esteemed artists as percussionist Rex Benincasa and lutenist Richard Kolb. The ensemble also accompanies itself on period and contemporary instruments, including the viola da gamba and recorders. Angelica performs in Manhattan, Westchester, and surrounding communities, and has also performed internationally at music festivals in Italy and Lithuania. Angelica has been hailed for its "perfect blend" and "beautiful, transcendent sound" by Eugene Sirotkine, former Assistant Conductor, Metropolitan Opera. The Chamber Choir has been Artist-in-Residence at the First Reformed Church of Hastings-on-Hudson since Fall 2018.



L to R, back row: Anita Massengill, Mary Peck, Julia Perrin, Claire Collins, Christina Bruno, Wilma Messenger, Joan Cornachio, Kathleen McClafferty, Amy Yoshizumi. Laura Ravotti is missing from photo.

L to R, seated: Susan Saslow, Marie Caruso (Artistic Director), Virginia Kaycoff.

For biographies of Angelica members, scan the QR code below:



**Next week: Members of La Forza della Stella**  
*Une femme, due donne, a woman*

## TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

### Ave donna santissima

The *Laudario di Cortona* is a collection of 13th-century religious songs discovered in a monastery archive in the small Tuscan town of Cortona in 1876. The manuscript contains 66 *laudes*, or songs of praise, written in the vernacular tongue. Thematically, they follow the liturgical year of Advent, Nativity, Epiphany, Easter, and Pentecost. The manuscript originated in the Brotherhood of *Santa Maria delle Laude*, a group of monks devoted to Marian worship. Indeed, themes surrounding the Virgin Mary are present in many of the songs, including the one we sing today, “*Ave donna santissima.*”

*Ave donna santissima  
Regina potentissima.*

La vertu celestiale  
colla gratia supernale  
en te Virgo Virginale  
discese benignissima.

Tu se porta, tu se domo  
di te naque Dio et homo  
arbore con dolce pomo  
che sempre sta florissima.

*Hail most holy Woman  
Most powerful Queen.*

Celestial power  
through grace from above  
in Thee, spotless Virgin,  
descended most graciously.

You are the door, you are the home  
from which God and man was born.  
A tree with a sweet apple  
that is always in bloom.

### Ecco la primavera

One important source of collected works from the *Trecento* is the Squarcialupi Codex, named for its owner, the Florentine organist Antonio Squarcialupi. The piece we sing today is from this codex and is by Francesco Landini, a blind composer, organist, singer, instrument maker, and poet from Florence. Landini’s music was enormously popular during the *Ars Nova* in the later part of the 14th century. Of his secular polyphonic music, Landini preferred the simple dance-like *ballata* style of this piece, “*Ecco la primavera,*” a joyous welcoming of spring.

Ecco la primavera,  
che 'l cor fa rallegrare,  
temp' è d'annamorare  
e star con lieta cera.

Noi vegiam l'aria e 'l tempo  
che pur chiam' allegria.  
In questo vago tempo  
ogni cosa vagheça.

L'erbe con gran frescheça  
e fior' coprono i prati,  
e gli alberi adornati  
sono in simil manera.

Behold the springtime  
which makes the heart rejoice;  
it is the season to fall in love  
and to be happy.

We enjoy that air and weather  
which itself may be called happiness;  
in this lovely season,  
everything takes on loveliness.

The grass with great freshness  
and flowers cover the fields;  
and the trees, all decked out,  
are wearing the same fashion.

### Sicut liliun inter spinas

“*Sicut liliun inter spinas*” is one of 23 anonymous motets from *Musica quinque motetta: maternal lingua vocata*, published in Venice in 1543. There is a lively debate as to the identity of its author, but recently, musicologist Laurie Straus has created a strong argument that the collection was written by Suor Leonora d’Este, daughter of the infamous Lucretia Borgia and her third husband, Duke Alfonso d’Este of Ferrara. There is ample evidence that it was written for the nuns of *Corpus Domini*, the convent Leonora entered when her mother died. The convent was renowned for its music-making and fine organ, and Leonora was its abbess by age 19.

The motets are written polyphonically, which was a controversial compositional style for nuns, thought by some as the devil’s work: convent polyphony was banned in 1539 by the Bishop of Verona. Indeed, this 5-voice

motet with its melodic lines weaving around each other and creating a sensual hypnotic web, makes some uneasiness understandable. In her day, the fact that Leonora was female, a nun, from a noble family, and creator of polyphonic motets, would have kept her from taking ownership of the motets.

Sicut lilium inter spinas,  
sic amica mea inter filias.

As the lily among thorns,  
so is my love among the daughters.

### Son questi i crespi crini

Italian composer, gambist and singer Claudio Monteverdi served at the Mantuan court, first as a string player and then as *Maestro di Cappella*. His first publications, at age 15, were of sacred music. Two years later, he published secular music with his *Canzonette a tre voci*, a collection of light, playful works, scored for three voices. These were typical of their time, as they reflected the notoriety of three famous virtuoso female singers known as the *Concerto delle donne*, who worked nearby at the Palace of Ferrara.

The texts of “*Son questi i crespi crini*” and the other *canzonette* in the collection are drawn from anonymous poems.

Son questi i crespi crini  
e questo il viso  
ond’io rimango ucciso?  
Deh, dimelo ben mio  
che questo sol desio.

Are these the curls,  
and is this the face  
that leaves me slain?  
Ah, tell me, my love,  
for this alone I desire.

Questi son gli occhi che,  
mirand’io fiso  
tutto restai conquiso?  
Deh, dimelo ben mio  
che questo sol desio.

Are these the eyes, which,  
when I gazed intensely upon them,  
left me completely conquered?  
Ah, tell me, my love,  
For this alone I desire.

Ma se quest’è che non mi,  
par bugia  
godianci anima mia  
et l’alma al duolo avvezza  
mora de la dolcezza.

But if that is so,  
which does not seem false to me,  
let us enjoy ourselves, my beloved,  
and my soul, accustomed to sorrow,  
Will die of sweetness.

### Morir non può il mio cuore

Maddalena Casulana was an Italian composer, lutist, and singer of the late Renaissance. Her three books of madrigals are the first printed music by a female composer, and they are contained within a volume alongside pieces by Orlando di Lasso and Cipriano de Rore, among others. In dedicating her *First Book of Madrigals for Four Voices* to Isabella de’ Medici, Casulana wrote: “[I] want to show the world, as much as I can in this profession of music, the vain error of men that they alone possess the gifts of intellect and artistry, and that such gifts are never given to women.”

Casulana was well respected during her life, as is demonstrated by the reprinting of her music and the many composers who dedicated works to her. This madrigal, “*Morir non può il mio cuore*,” is based on a poem by Jacobo Sannazaro.

Morir non può 'il mio cuore  
E ucciderlo vorrei  
poi che vi piace  
Ma trar non si può fuore  
Del petto vostr’  
ove gran tempo giace,  
Et uccidendol’ io come desio  
So che morreste  
voi morend’ anch’io.

My heart cannot die:  
I would like to kill it,  
since that would please you,  
but it can’t be ripped  
from your breast  
where it has lived so long;  
if I were to kill it—as I want to—  
I know my death  
would be your death, too.

## Il ladro ch'a la strada

Luca Marenzio was a prolific Italian composer of the late Renaissance. He worked in the service of several aristocratic Italian courts, including the Gonzaga, Este, and Medici families.

Marenzio was one of the most renowned composers of madrigals and *villanelle* and wrote some of the finest examples of the form in its late stage of development. “*Il ladro ch'a la strada*” is found in his first book of *villanelle* for three voices, which he favored. Like Monteverdi, Marenzio may have been influenced by the three Ladies of Ferrara. The piece is written in a chordal style with clear, simple rhythm.

Il ladro ch'a la strada  
v'a rubare,  
per forza vuol danar  
i panni e poi  
ti lasci'andare  
per li fatti tuoi.

The thief steals from you  
in the street,  
takes your money and clothes  
by force  
and then leaves you free  
to go about your business.

Ma voi Donna crudel  
di mezzo giorno,  
rubate i cori  
e con gli occhi uccidete  
quante persone  
per hora vedete.

But you, cruel lady,  
in broad daylight  
rob hearts  
and slay with your eyes  
as many people  
as you come across.

Castig'Amor costei che ti conviene  
O fa che 'l suo bel viso  
e fiamma ardente  
non habbia forza  
d'amazzar le gente.

Punish her, Cupid, as you see fit  
Or see to it that her fair face  
and burning flame  
Have not the power  
to slay people.

## Gaudete gaudio magno

Claudia Francesca Rusca (1593–1676) spent her adult life at the convent of *Santa Caterina* in Brera, Milan. An organist, composer, and singer, Rusca taught music and singing to her convent sisters. A collection of her works from 1630 had resided at the *Biblioteca Ambrosiana* in Milan until 1943, when the library was destroyed during a bombing raid. Fortunately, the collection was preserved—thanks to amateur Swiss scholar Walter Jesinghous, who had made a photographic copy prior to the bombing. Still, it wasn't until the 1990s that Rusca's music finally came to light.

The piece we perform today, “*Gaudete gaudio magno*” (“Rejoice with great joy”), is scored for two voices and an obbligato instrument. We chose the recorder.

Gaudete gaudio magno  
martyres Christi  
gaudete et exultate,  
quia merces vestra magna  
est in Caelis.

Rejoice with great joy,  
martyrs of Christ.  
Rejoice and be glad  
for your reward is great  
in Heaven.

## Barechu et Adonay

Italian violinist, teacher, and composer Salamone Rossi occupies a unique place in Renaissance music culture; he was the earliest outstanding Jewish composer to work in the European art music tradition. From 1589 to 1628, he flourished as a court musician at the Mantuan court. Rossi's ducal patrons absolved him from wearing the onerous “yellow patch” designating him as a Jew. Thus, he was allowed free passage throughout the duchy.

In addition to writing madrigals and other secular music of the day, Rossi remained faithful to his own religious community, composing Hebrew works for the synagogue. He lived between the Jewish and Christian worlds, composing Italian madrigals and instrumental pieces for the Gonzaga court in Mantua, as well as unique music for the city's synagogue. "*Barechu et Adonay*" is part of the Jewish prayer service, functioning as a call to prayer.

Barechu et Adonay,  
hamevorach  
leolam vaed.

Praise the Lord,  
the source of all blessings,  
forever and ever.

### **Aure volanti**

Hailing from an extraordinary musical family, Francesca Caccini became the most prolific and successful woman composer of the 17th century. At the height of her career, she was the highest paid singer, teacher, and composer at the Medici court, proficient in keyboard, harp, lute, theorbo, and guitar. As the eldest daughter of famous composer Giulio Caccini, she was immersed in the musical culture of her time. It is assumed that she sang in his female vocal group because it later became known as "*la sig.a Francesca e le sue figliuole*" (Francesca and her pupils), regularly performing chamber music for women's voices.

"*Aure volanti*," from Caccini's opera *La Liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina* ("The liberation of Ruggiero from the island of Alcina") is the first opera by a woman and the first Italian opera to be performed outside of Italy (in Warsaw). It is written in an expressive style that is full of musical diversity and originality. The entire opera is scored for high voices (without *castrati*) and one bass. It was commissioned by the grand duchess of Tuscany, Maria Maddalena of Austria, for a performance in Florence in 1625. The libretto is by Ferdinando Saracinelli, who portrays the struggle between two sorceresses – one "good," Melissa, the other "evil," Alcina – over the young knight Ruggiero, who has been bewitched by Alcina.

Aure volanti,  
Augei canori,  
Fonti stillanti,  
Grazie ed Amori,  
Quinci d'intorno  
Fate più chiar'il  
Sol, più lieto il giorno.

Wandering breezes,  
singing birds,  
trickling fountains,  
Graces and Loves,  
all here surrounding  
make the sun clearer  
and the day brighter.

Antri gelati,  
Fulgido Sole,  
Erbosi prati,  
Gigli e Viole,  
Quinci d'intorno  
Fate più chiar'il  
Sol, più lieto il giorno.

Frosted caverns,  
fiery sunshine,  
grassy meadows,  
lilies and violets,  
all here surrounding  
make the sun clearer  
and the day brighter.

### **Fammi una canzonetta capriciosa**

Orazio Vecchi, an ambitious 16th-century composer of both religious and secular music, worked his way up from cathedral choirmaster at Modena to *Maestro di corte* at the glittering Modena ducal court, famed in Italy for its musical composition and performance. There he concentrated on writing the humorous "madrigal comedies" for which he is best known.

"*Fammi una canzonetta*" was published in 1580 when Vecchi was 30. It describes a lighthearted task given to a composer to write a capricious song that is impossible to play! Vecchi achieves all that he describes in this little canzonetta.

Fammi una Canzonetta capriciosa  
Che nullo o pochi  
la sappian cantare.  
E al tuon di quella si possi ballare.

Write me a capricious little song,  
such that no one, or only few,  
are able to sing it,  
and to a danceable tune.

Non ti curar di tuono ò d'osservata,  
Che questo è meglio che tu possi fare.

Falla come ti dà la fantasia,  
e affretta il corso col bel solfeggiare.

Don't mind tuning or rules,  
for this is the best you can do.

Do it as your fancy offers it,  
and embellish it by pretty runs.

### **Kyrie eleison from *Mass for Two Voices***

Delia Bonito was Abbess of Santa Chiara in Naples during the early 18th century. On a visit to Naples in the summer of 2008, Dr. Caruso had the good fortune to view Bonito's original manuscript of her "Mass for Two Voices," and she brought back a facsimile of the first section, the "*Kyrie eleison*." Bonito composed the Mass in 1723, when she was about 30 years old and serving as *Chori Praefecta* (Choir Director) at the convent—the most esteemed position for a nun.

Bonito was a contemporary of Bach, Handel, and Scarlatti. Although she was not permitted to leave the convent according to the law of *clausura* (enclosure), she may well have heard the music of these and other Baroque masters performed at the church, or she may have been taught by a male teacher who used their music as an example. The Mass is written for two female voices and continuo and exemplifies the Baroque style.

Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy.

### **Cor mio, deh, non languire**

Alessandro Scarlatti, father of Domenico, is best known as one of the founders of the Neapolitan school of 18th-century opera. His sister, an opera singer, helped him attain some important posts in Naples through her "liaisons". Alessandro certainly would have known the *Concerto delle donne* (the virtuoso female singers of Ferrara). Their influence is seen in this madrigal, which is written for four sopranos and one alto. The rich harmonies, dissonances, and dramatic vocal expressions are characteristic of the Baroque period. It was not published during the composer's life but was found in one of Giovanni Battista Martini's publications that cites examples of wonderful contrapuntal writing. The text is by Italian poet, dramatist, and diplomat Giovanni Battista Guarini (1538–1612).

Cor mio, deh, non languire,  
Che fai teco languir  
l'anima mia  
Odi caldi sospiri a te gl'invia  
la pietate e'l desire.

Mira in questi d'amor languidi lumi  
Come il duol mi consumi.  
S'io ti potessi dar morendo aita  
Morrei per dar ti vita.

Ma vivi, oimè,  
ch'ingiustamente  
Chi vivo tien nel  
l'altrui petto il core.

My heart, oh, do not languish,  
you make my soul  
languish with you.  
Listen to the hot sighs  
which pity and desire send you.

Look into these languid eyes of love  
And see how grief consumes me.  
If, by dying, I could help you,  
I would die to give you life.

But you live, alas,  
more and he dies unjustly  
Who has you, alive,  
in another's breast.

### **Hic vir despiciens mundum**

Eighteenth-century Roman composer Maria Rosa Coccia was a child prodigy and an exceptional musician. She wrote her first oratorio when she was 12 years old. Her parents hired a teacher who trained her to compose fugues, a skill not taught to women in that day. She was the only woman to take and pass the extemporaneous exam in Rome to become the first *Maestra di Cappella*. The same fugue also earned her admission into the prestigious *Accademia Filarmonica di Bologna*.

Today, 249 years later, we sing Coccia's extemporaneous exam fugue, composed in 1774 in front of a jury of four professors in 1 1/2 hours. Coccia composed a double fugue on the given antiphon, "*Hic vir despiciens*

*mundum.*” All fugues have a subject (main melody) and an answer, but she also included a counter-melody, thus creating a more sophisticated composition. Taking it a step further, Coccia musically inverted both melodies when they repeat toward the middle of this contrapuntal gem.

Hic vir despiciens mundum et terrena triumphans divitias caelo condidit ore et manu.	This man, despising the world and triumphing over earthly things, gained riches in heaven through words and deeds.
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### Magi videntes stellam

Most renowned as a theorist of the early Baroque, Agostino Agazzari spent most of his professional life working at the Siena Cathedral in Tuscany, where he served as organist and chapel master. He composed in both the *stile antico* (“old style”) of the late Renaissance and the *stile moderno* of the early Baroque. His works include a pastoral opera, *Eumelio* (1606), five books of madrigals, numerous motets, and various forms of sacred music.

The Epiphany motet, “*Magi videntes stellam,*” originally scored for three tenors, is a great example of Agazzari’s compositional skill. The rhythmic energy, imitative vocal parts, and expressive word-painting drive the piece forward.

Magi videntes stellam, dixerunt ad invicem: hoc signum magni regis est. Eamus et requiramus et offeramus ei, aurum, thus et myrrham. Alleluia.	The magi, seeing the star, said, each in turn: "This is the sign of a great king! Let us go and look for him and offer him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh." Alleluia.
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### Angelus ad pastores ait

Composer and lutenist Sulpitia Lodovica Cesis was born in 1577, likely in Modena, Italy. She was the daughter of Count Annibale Cesis, who gave her 300 gold pieces as a dowry as she entered the convent of *San Geminiano* in Modena at the age of 16. The nuns were much renowned for their music in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, and they took part in parades, festivals, and civic celebrations in the city.

Cesis’s only known works were published in 1619 in *Motetti Spirituali*, a volume of 23 sacred motets. For the text of “*Angelus ad pastores ait*” she combines verses from both the New and Old Testaments of the Bible: Luke’s account of the angel telling the shepherds about the birth of Jesus; and Isaiah’s prophecy about the coming Messiah. Cesis sets the text to a joyful melody sung first by the sopranos and then echoed by each voice. She uses a conversational musical style where voice answers voice, creating a double-choir effect.

Angelus ad pastores ait: Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum,  quia natus est vobis hodie Salvator mundi.  Et vocabitur admirabilis Deus fortis princeps pacis, pater future saeculi. Cuius regni non erit finis.	The angel said to the shepherds: I bring you tidings of great joy,  for born to you today is the Savior of the world.  He will be admired, Almighty God, the Prince of Peace, the Everlasting Father. His kingdom will have no end.
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