

Gotham Early Music Scene (GEMS) presents



Thursday March 7, 2024 1:15 pm
St Malachy's Church – The Actors' Chapel in New York City
Live Streamed to midtownconcerts.org and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com)

Filigree *In Praise of Mother Mary*

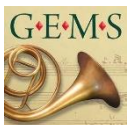
Christina Kay ~ soprano Kim Leeds ~ mezzo-soprano Christa Patton ~ harp

Gaude felix anna Virga de Jesse (20) Salve Regina	Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643–1704) Cantigas de Santa Maria (ca. 1221–1284) Isabella Leonarda (1620–1704)
Muito bon miragr' a Virgen faz (225)	Cantigas de Santa Maria
Passacaglia Maria, dolce Maria Verso II del Sesto Tuono fr. <i>Intavolatura Facilissima</i> (Venice, 1598) Chi è costei	Luigi Rossi (1597–1653) Francesca Caccini (1587–1641) Anonymous Francesca Caccini
Quen a virgen ben server (59)	Cantigas de Santa Maria
Eno nome de Maria (70) O Maria	Cantigas de Santa Maria Barbara Strozzi (1619–1677)
Consonanze Straveganti Sicut spina rosam	Giovanni Maria Trabaci (1575–1647) Marc-Antoine Charpentier

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Filigree, featuring soprano Christina Kay and mezzo-soprano Kim Leeds, delves into music about the iconic figure, Mary, mother of Jesus. Works by female Baroque composers are paired with selections from the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, exploring the complexity of Mother Mary as a human and divine figure through these epic — and sometimes even comic — miracle stories from the 13th century.

ABOUT THE ENSEMBLE AND ARTISTS

Co-founded in 2022 by Christina Kay and Kim Leeds, **Filigree** is a New-England based ensemble that enriches modern historical performance by pushing the boundaries of improvised ornamentation, rhetorical drama, and creative programming to reshape the modern concert experience. In addition to enlivening music from past eras, Filigree blurs the lines of old music and new by commissioning contemporary works that embrace the creative ethos of past eras. Like jazz, we take more liberties with the written music on the page, making every performance a unique, exciting and joyful experience.

Soprano **Christina Kay** is passionate about ornamentation and improvisation of late Renaissance and early Baroque repertoire, which has led her to step into a Co-Director role for the Baroque Opera Workshop at Queens College with harpist Christa Patton. She performs regularly with period ensembles ARTEK Early Music and the Academy of Sacred Drama and is a core member of GRAMMY® nominated vocal sextet The Western Wind, with which she enjoys teaching at adult choral workshops throughout the year. When she's not performing or teaching, Christina enjoys her part-time position at St. Ignatius Loyola on the Upper East Side, where she is the Music Associate for Advancement. www.christinakaysoprano.com

Described as a “rich, smooth mezzo soprano” (*St. Louis Post*), **Kim Leeds** has soloed with the GRAMMY® winning ensemble Apollo's Fire, GRAMMY® nominated True Concord Voices and Orchestra, Tafelmusik Baroque Chamber Orchestra and Choir, the Oregon Bach Festival, Bach Choir of Bethlehem, Cantata Collective, Bach Akademie Charlotte, Les Délices, and the Bach Society of St. Louis. Kim's recent accolades include winning the Tafelmusik Vocal Competition, attending the Carmel Bach Festival as a Virginia Best Adams Fellow, and working with Philippe Herreweghe as a Britten-Pears Young Artist. As a choral artist, Kim performs regularly with the GRAMMY® winning ensemble The Crossing, Gramophone winning ensemble Blue Heron, GRAMMY® nominated ensembles Seraphic Fire and Clarion Choir, Ensemble Altera, and the Handel and Haydn Society.

Christa Patton is an early harp specialist with a particular focus on the repertoire of the early 17th century. Her particular love of early opera has led her to participate in productions of Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*, *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, and *L'Orfeo* with the New York City Opera, Opera Vivente, Wolf Trap Opera, Tafelmusik, and Opera Atelier and in Luigi Rossi's *Orfeo* with the Toronto Consort. In addition, Christa has appeared as a guest with Apollo's Fire, The King's Noyse, Blue Heron, Seattle Baroque Orchestra, La Nef, The Folger Consort and ARTEK. As a specialist in early 17th century repertoire, Christa has directed vocal style and led the continuo in productions of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* at Stony Brook University, Queens College, and Yale University's Baroque Opera Program (YBOP).

Next Week: Brian Mummert & Margaret Carpenter Haigh
Solo Bach Cantatas for Lent

TEXT TRANSLATIONS

Gaude felix anna

Rejoice, fortunate Anna, who conceived an offspring who was to beget the world's Savior.

Rejoice, fortunate Anna. The mother of a great offspring has proceeded from you, (she who is) a glowing star of the brightest sun.

Rejoice, fortunate Anna, mother of Mary who, as a virgin, gave birth to God, and you are the mother of Mary.

Rejoice, fortunate Anna, you alone merited to be the mother of the virgin mother of Jesus Christ.

Virga de Jesse

Rod of Jesse, would that I knew how to praise you as you deserve, and had the wit so as to tell how much you suffer on our behalf. For you, night and day, are always begging your Son, ah Mary! For us, so as (with [us] going about sinning here and doing wrong – [a thing] which you greatly abhor). For him to be unwilling, when he shall sit in judgment to observe our foolishness.

And even, moreover, are you always striving on our behalf, persistently, routing the devil who, cajolingly, continually tempts us with vile enticements; but you come guarding and sheltering us, since you keep him under surveillance.

Miracles both beautiful and wonderful you are continually working for us, from all I hear, and looking after us greatly, and being tolerant – for you do not desert us – and engaging in the struggle, defending us against the devil, whom you frighten off. And the haughty you are ever putting down from on high, and the humble raising up in honour, advancing [them] and providing your holy largesse, wherefore I commend myself and surrender to you, for you do not fail those who are yours.

Salve Regina

Queen, mother of mercy: our life, sweetness, and hope, hail.

To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve.

To you we sigh, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.

Turn then, our advocate, those merciful eyes toward us.

And Jesus, the blessed fruit of thy womb, after our exile, show us.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

Muito bon miragr' a Virgen faz

The Virgin performs many fine strange and handsome miracles, to reveal the truth to stubborn fools.

To show this I will tell you a great miracle, wonderous to hear, which the Blessed Virgen, of whom God was born, revealed in Ciudad Rodrigo – hear it and rejoice! It is a most wonderful tale compared with others you have heard – and I am sure that this is true of what I will now recount, which befell a priest who would always sing the mass of the mother of our heavenly King, and he sang it so well that the people were always eager to hear him sing it. But one day, fatefully, on the high feast of that worthy Lady in August, he was singing mass; and having eaten the host, he then prepared to drink the blood of our glorious savior Jesus Christ. And he saw a huge spider there in the chalice, swimming around, and he was greatly surprised, but he summoned up his courage, as a good Spaniard, and wasted no time consuming everything.

And once he had done this, it was God's will that the poisonous spider did not harm him, nor that it should die in his body; but instead that noxious insect walked alive in him, and did not bite him, but passed between his skin and his flesh. And the spider moved quickly through his body, causing him no pain or harm, by the power of the Blessed Virgin. And if he stood still in the light, the spider could be seen, and he showed it to all the people, saying: "Our merciful Lord wished me to suffer this torment for my sins; and so I entreat the Virgin, if she sees fit, to ask her son to take my life soon or relive me of this grief, for he has the power to do it."

And the spider went on crawling, over his backbone, and along his ribs, right through his spleen and thence to his chest, and neither arm was spared for its wandering; and most hairy was the spider's body. And one day, as he was outside at None, his arm began to itch and he began to scratch it, and before he knew it out came that poisonous filth from under his fingernail.

And as soon as it came out, the priest seized it and ground it to a powder which he kept in his purse and the next time he said her mass, he ate and consumed it, and said that it was a very tasty morsel. All the people who were present, when they saw all this, gave praise to the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ and from that day on the priest was strengthened in his faith, and was cured of lust.

Maria, dolce Maria

Maria, sweet Maria, whose name is so lovely, that to utter it takes your heart to Paradise. Sacred and holy name, you inflame my heart with celestial love. "Mary", I ever sing, neither can my tongue deliver from my breast any happier word than when I say, "Mary". Name which tempers and consoles every sorrow, calm voice which assuages every disquiet, which composes every heart, which gladdens every soul.

Chi è costei

Who is this woman that like the rising dawn moves as if chosen to be equal to the sun beautiful as the moon, and terrible as a host of armed heroes, a sounding trumpet?

Quen a Virgen ben servir

Whoever serves the Virgin will never come to ill.

On this theme, if you will hear me, I will tell you of a great deed, a fine splendid miracle which the mother of the high King performed, as I found in writing. The tale is of a maiden who was a nun, a fair and beautiful one, in the convent of Fontevault. She loved the Virgin dearly, as God as my help, but she decided to leave her order to go off with a handsome, fair and valiant knight. And she did not think of her dishonor, but like a common woman wanted to go at this time. But the Blessed Virgin Mary would not let her go.

The nun would greet the Virgin lovingly whenever she went to pray, and every day, in truth she would kiss the feet of the crucifix which hangs there, which as I heard tell was an object of great devotion. And then she would arise and open the doors of the church, as she was the sacristan of the convent, as it is told, and she would ring the bell for the convent to awake and come to say their hours.

Performing her duties in this way, she passed many years, until the Devil made her fall in love with that knight, and she did all she could to do his will. And so one night she arose at midnight, as was her wont, and went into the church and ran to the statue of the Virgin to say her farewell. And she knelt before it and said "Forgive me, my Lady", but the mother of our Savior wept so sorrowfully that the sinful woman was near repentance.

Then the wretched nun arose to make her escape before dawn, but the crucified Christ freed its hand from the cross, and like a man waving his arm dealt her a mighty blow and struck her so fiercely by the ear that she bore a welt in the shape of a nail for the rest of her life, as a sign for her to sin no more and not put herself to shame.

With the blow the nun fell senseless to the ground and lay there as if dead, until the nuns broke open the door, and they were amazed when she told them who had struck her to stop her committing the great sin she had wished to do, for this was not God's will, nor that of his mother who fiercely protects her own, as Luke, Matthew and the others wrote in their gospels. And so the whole convent, one thousand one hundred nuns in all, assembled in their ranks, one opposite another, and with singing gave thanks to God for this miracle.

Eno nome de Maria

Just five letters are in the name of Maria

M is for Mother, and the greatest, mildest and best of everything our Lord created or ever could create.

A declares her Advocate, fair and adored, dear and beloved of the company of saints.

R is Root and branch, the queen and empress, rose of the world- happy is he who would see her.

I give us Jesus Christ, the Just Judge, he was clothed in human flesh by her, as Isaiah said.

A says that we will Achieve and Attain all that we ask of God, as she is our guide.

O Maria

O Mary, how beautiful you are, how sweet, how comely. She enfolds earth as a cloud, a light risen that never fails, a flame, a fire, the Ark of the Covenant, a lily grown among the thorns, the throne of Zion placed on high in a pillar of cloud. O Maria...Before the creation of the ages she circled the borders of heaven, and penetrated the depths of the abyss. And she walked on the waves of the sea, virtuously tread on the hearts of all, and abided in the inheritance of the Lord. She enfolds earth as a cloud... O Maria... Alleluia.

Sicut spina rosam

Just as a thornbush has brought forth a rose, so Judaea has brought forth Mary.

Sing, faithful choirs, and with alternating strains mingle sweetly-sounding songs.

For it is for our pleasure and the honor of a Lord who enriches. Just as a thornbush.