

CAPPELLA CLAUSURA

performing twelve centuries of new music
AMELIA LECLAIR, DIRECTOR

Planctus Mariae:



A Medieval Opera

8:00 pm Saturday, February 10th
at Episcopal Parish of the Messiah,
Auburndale

7:00 pm Sunday, February 11th
at Center for the Arts,
Natick

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*We gratefully acknowledge the generous work of all our other supporters who have contributed their time, energy and support.
Our sincerest thanks to*

Mary Ann Abraham, Daryl Bichel, Martha Bancroft, and Martha Heddon

For anyone wishing to make a donation at this time please find the donation box at the entrance or mail your tax deductible check to:

Cappella Clausura - 12 Jenison Street Newton, MA 02460

T H E E N S E M B L E

Martins Aldins, tenor

Daryl Bichel, bass

Marsha Bolton, soprano

Hendrik Broekman, organ/psaltery

Mai-Lan Broekman, vielle, psaltery

Paula Downes, soprano

Anna Maria Dwyer, mezzo soprano

Margaret Felice, soprano

Janna Frelich, mezzo, harp, percussion

Judith Hill, soprano

Sharon Kelley, soprano

Jeanne Lucas, soprano

Allegra Martin, alto

Janet Poisson, soprano

Susan Ward, mezzo soprano, recorders, symphonia

Concept and Direction, Amelia LeClair

Set Design and Production, Martha Bancroft

Lighting Design and Production, Daryl Bichel

Musical Advisor, Laurie Monahan

Kindly turn off all cell phones and beepers.

“Women should believe that they have achieved the glory of eloquence if they honor themselves with the outstanding ornament of silence”

- Francesco Barbo, DE RE UXORIA, 15thc.

PLANCTUS MARIAE

The liturgical drama you will hear this evening is found in a 14th century Processionale belonging to the cathedral in Cividale del Friuli in Northern Italy, which is now preserved in the archeological museum of Cividale. It is one of many medieval dramas centered on the story of Mary, the mother of Jesus, at the foot of the cross, many of them with the same title. The Cividale manuscript is unique however in its preservation of the music itself. It is 14th century square notation on 4-line staves, in remarkably readable condition. Of great interest is the frequency of stage directions in this work: there are 79 directions written above almost each new voice. The directions are very exacting, suggesting gestures and body movements. We have attempted to follow them carefully.

Given the extreme brevity of any mention in the four Gospels of Mary at the Crucifixion— only John mentions her and he simply says she and John, and Mary of Magdala, and Mary the mother of James, were there - it is perhaps unremarkable that the human mind would begin to wonder what, if anything, she must have felt, and how that would have looked. In our own day we would easily fill in the picture, but in the Middle Ages it was a new and startling idea that Mary might



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THE PROGRAM

Quia ergo femina – Hildegard von Bingen

Planctus Mariae – a liturgical drama, interspersed with Florentine
Laudae, chant from the Convento di Sancta Maria, Bologna,
and chant from the Liber Usualis.

Maria Major..... Judith Hill
Maria Magdalena..... Janet Poisson
Maria Jacobi..... Marsha Bolton
John..... Martin Aldins

Laudesi (soloists)..... Allegra Martin – Piange Maria
cum dolore

Jeanne Lucas – Voi ch’amate

Martins Aldins & Sharon Kelley
Or piangiamo, che piange

Chant soloists..... Paula Downes – Stabat Mater
(Bologna)

SHORT INTERMISSION

Stabat Mater – Sulpitia Cesis

O Viridissima Virgo – Emma Lou Diemer

O Gloriosa Domina – Chiara Margarita Cozzolani

Nat’e In Questo Mondo - Lauda di Firenze
Reprise (please join us-see *last page*)

All transcriptions and interpretations by Amelia LeClair

have had an emotional reaction at all. Until this era she was not truly considered, theologically, as having a role in the death and resurrection of her son, especially not one suggesting her humanity. Theologians began to tinker with the notion of her *Compassio*, literally “with the Passion”: her very acceptance of her role in her son’s passion, together with her immensely pathetic and utterly human mother’s grief began to take hold of the medieval imagination. Out of this were born the many and varied depictions of her sorrow and cooperation in her son’s redemption of the world. It may seem odd to us that Mary’s humanity was ever a radical idea; nevertheless, it took some time to gel. The extrapolation from John’s Gospel led to some of the most beautiful poetry of Christendom. Jacopone da Todi’s *Stabat Mater*, a text often set and made popular by such composers as Pergolesi, is to my mind the culmination of all similar laments. In his brief and simple setting Jacopone manages to create a figure full of pathos and compassion, a figure that demands our attention to her sorrow, so much so that we are drawn with the poet to attempt to take it upon ourselves and relieve her of some of her grief. No wonder so many composers chose to set this particular lament.

“And it is precisely these lyrical accents, this pathos, the concrete detail and the palpating images, at once human and humanizing.... which dominates the dramas of the Passion, the art, and the literature of the late Middle Ages. ... The theme of the compassion of the Virgin (is) one of the fundamental motifs in medieval liturgy, art, and literature.... Born in the bosom of the Eastern spiritual tradition and developed, through vital redefinitions, in the orbit of the intense emotionalism and Marian sensibility of the Latin spirituality of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the theme of the *Compassio* is illumined, from the beginning of the twelfth century, by the wondrous fruitfulness of the literary tradition of the *Planctus Mariae*.” - Sandro Sticca, *The Planctus Mariae in the Dramatic Tradition of the Middle Ages*, 1988.

The Florence *Laudario* is a collection of monophonic hymns dating from the 14th century, and is only one of two extant hymnals that include the written music, the other being the Cortona *Laudario* from the 13th century. The Florence *Laudario* belonged to the Company of Santo Spirito, an ensemble of “laudesi” (much like a group of cantors, or even a schola), which sung the compline service every evening for the Church of Santo Spirito. A church of any renown had its company of laudesi whose chief job it was to help the congregation sing the hymns, the way we still use cantors today. Hymns were composed with a *ritornello* (“refrain”) that was easy enough for the congregation to learn. All text, notably, was in the vernacular, not in Latin, again providing the congregation with access to the language. This is probably why these hymns are still around in some version or another. Unlike the Cortonese who kept their *laude* simple, the laudesi of Florence, being Florentine, refined and ornamented their *laude* such that only trained singers could successfully sing the complex bits. However, the

ritornello was always there to return to, and the congregations could, and would, join in.

The hymns are written in chant notation. We know from research that these pieces would have been rhythmic, and for the most part in duple time for ease of learning. As with many of our popular songs, the congregation would have learned the notes and rhythm from oral tradition. As we have had no access to the original manuscript - which lies on a shelf in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, in Florence - we instead have relied on an edition with stem-less notes from A-R Editions, Inc, edited by Blake Wilson. We have transcribed and interpreted our selections in a way we think these hymns may have been sung and played.

We begin our journey with a chant by our standard bearer, Hildegard von Bingen, whose poetry here calls Mary the bright virgin who changed to good all the evil attributed to Eve. “Seek the supreme one in the form of a woman...” indeed! We have added a couple of chants from the Liber Usualis (the textbook of chant), some chants from a convent in Bologna, and, a staple in Cappella Clausura’s literature, the Stabat Mater of Sulpitia Cesis from a century later. Jumping still further into the future, we sing Chiara Cozzolani’s wonderful O Gloriosa Domina in general praise of Mary. The early baroque never sounded so new! And finally we end with a wonderful piece based on chant, O Viridissima Virgo, by Emma Lou Diemer, a friend and excellent composer. From the 14th to the 21st century!

As always I am deeply indebted to all the people –musicians and musicologists – who make our music available: William Smolden, who wrote an interesting version of the Cividale Planctus Maria, Blake Wilson, who edited the Florence Laudario, Candace Smith, who gave us copies of chants she’d found in a convent in Bologna, and Emma Lou Diemer, who has graciously allowed us to make copies from an out-of-print edition.

Most of all I am deeply indebted to my very good friend and advisor on all things in early music, Laurie Monahan, for guiding us along this road where we have not been before.

(please join us)

TRANSCRIBED AND INTERPRETED BY AMELIA LECLAIR

LAUDA DI FIRENZE FOL 37V-39R

NAT'È IN QUESTO MONDO

TUTTI- RITORNELLO

9

NA - TE IN QUESTO MON - DO L'AL - TI - SSI - MA RE -
- GI - NA PER DAR A NOI DOC - TRI - NA DI NO - STRO SAL - VA - MEN - TO.

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "NAT'È IN QUESTO MONDO". It is in 2/4 time and consists of two staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The music is written in a style that combines traditional chant notation with modern rhythmic notation. The lyrics are written below the notes. A small number "9" is written below the first staff. The piece is labeled "TUTTI- RITORNELLO".

CAPPELLA CLAUSURA

Performing Twelve Centuries of New Music - AMELIA LeCLAIR, DIRECTOR

Continuing...

Planctus Mariae: A Medieval Opera



Sun. March 18th 3pm

St. Mary's Chapel, Boston College

Wed. June 13th 12pm

Old South Church, Boston (BEMF Fringe Concert)

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*Premiere performance of
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for chorus and orchestra*

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Episcopal Parish of the Messiah, Auburndale

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