



Presents

The Newberry Consort

David Douglass and Ellen Hargis, Artistic co-directors

March 14, 2015 (Saturday) at 5:00

Helene Zelazo Center for the Performing Arts ♦ University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee

Rosa das Rosas: Cantigas de Santa Maria

- Cantiga 42:** *A Virgen mui groriosa*
This song tells how the postulant placed a ring on the finger of the statue of Holy Mary, and the statue curved its finger around it.
- Cantiga 40:** *Deus te salve, groriosa* (instrumental)
- Cantiga 159:** *Non sofre Santa Maria*
This song tells how Holy Mary caused a chop of meat to be found which was stolen from some pilgrims.
- Cantiga 307:** *Toller pod' a Madre de Nostro Sennor* (instrumental)
- Cantiga 103:** *Quen a Virgen ben servira*
This song tells how Holy Mary caused a monk to remain for three hundred years listening to the song of a bird because he asked Her to show him what manner of bliss those in paradise enjoyed.
- Cantiga 7:** *Santa Maria amar*
This song tells how Holy Mary saved a pregnant abbess who had gone to sleep weeping before Her altar.
- Cantiga 300:** *Muito deveria*
This song is in praise of Holy Mary.

INTERMISSION

- Cantiga 422:** *Madre de Deus, ora por nos*
This song is about how Holy Mary prays for us on the Day of Judgment.
- Cantiga 423:** *Como podemos a Deus gradeçer*
This first song is about how He made the heavens and earth and the sea and the sun and the moon and the stars and all the other things which are, and how He created man in his likeness.
- Cantiga 424:** *Pois que dos Reys Nostro Sennor*
This second song is about how the Three Kings came to Bethlehem to adore Our Lord, Jesus Christ, and offered Him their gifts.
- Cantiga 425:** *Alegria, alegria*
This third song is about how Our Lord rose from the dead and appeared to the Apostles and the three Marys.
- Cantiga 426:** *Subiu ao ceo o Fillo de Deus*
This fourth song is about how Our Lord ascended into Heaven before His disciples.
- Cantiga 427:** *Todo-los bees que nos Deus*
This fifth song is about how Our Lord sent His Holy Spirit over His disciples.
- Cantiga 10:** *Rosa das Rosas*
This song is in praise of Holy Mary, how She is beautiful, good, and powerful.

Rosa das Rosas: Cantigas de Santa Maria

Alfonso X, the composer and poet of the *cantigas de Santa Maria*, was a monarch who ruled as King of Castile, León, and Galicia. He might also be one of the most fascinating historical figures of whom you know absolutely nothing. He was born in Toledo on November 23, 1221, and inherited the throne from his father, Ferdinand III, on June 1, 1252, ruling until his death April 4, 1284. He was known as *el Sabio*, the wise or learned one, due to his extensive writings on a wide range of topics.

He authored and oversaw the compilation of over 100 manuscripts on the subject of law, including one of the most important legal documents of all time, the *Siete Partidas*, or seven parts. The *Siete Partidas* was a work of Alfonso's in collaboration with court scholars and philosophers that established a uniform judicial system which included detailed rights of individuals and limitations of the power of the state. The *Siete Partidas* were in the minds of our forefathers as they drafted our Declaration of Independence and Constitution. In fact, Alfonso is one of twenty-three lawmakers depicted in the House of Representatives at the United States Capitol.

History was of great interest to Alfonso. He oversaw the compilation of the *Estoria de España*, a history of Spain, but Alfonso, perhaps inspired by the topic, interrupted that work in order to write an even larger one of his own, the *Grande y General Estoria*. Alfonso's grand and general history covers the history of the entire known world, and not only political history, but social and cultural history as well. It is considered to be the greatest historiographic undertaking of the middle ages. It was a work that established the field of historiography, but even more importantly, it was written in Castilian, the first western European scholastic work written in a language other than Latin.

After the *Grande y General Estoria*, Alfonso oversaw the translation of many works into Castilian, works of Greek, Latin, and Arab scholars and poets, and even an Arabic treatise on games. It was an undertaking that made scores of important works available to a large population, but, in his wisdom, Alfonso also understood that he could promote both his own international prominence and unity within his kingdom by establishing Castilian as a respected and national language. While wise in certain ways, that same wisdom often failed him.

Early in his reign Alfonso enjoyed many military and political successes. He united Castile with much of Portugal and Galicia at first militarily, and later through intermarriage. He signed a treaty of alliance with Henry III, King of England, and in a shrewd political maneuver that same year arranged for his sister, Eleanor of Castile, to marry Henry's heir to the throne, Edward.

It was in 1256 when his political fortunes began to change. The prince-electors of Germany misled Alfonso into thinking he would be elected to the throne of Germany – a position known then as the King of the Romans – ensnaring him in complicated schemes that made the prince-electors rich, but were never meant to succeed. Rudolph I of Hapsburg was finally elected over Alfonso, establishing the Hapsburg dynasty and the Holy Roman Empire.

With depleted royal coffers, Alfonso then set into effect disastrous domestic economic policies. In his most misguided action, he devalued the currency and imposed tariffs, which angered the merchants and peasants. When the nobles began to turn against him, Alfonso sought to control them through sporadic acts of violence. As a result, the nobles rebelled, and for over a year Alfonso fought a civil war.

And yet, Alfonso X was a revered figure in his kingdom. Through language, intellect, and the arts he was able to create a sense of Spanish identity that drew his kingdom together. In that endeavor, his songs to the Virgin Mary, the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, played an important role. By being the standard bearer to such an important figure, Alfonso had a strong foundation to unite the largest part of his constituency, the Christians. Also, the songs are written in Galician-Portuguese, rather than Castilian, and for good reason. A well-respected song tradition in Galician-Portuguese already existed in Spain, and so the songs would receive wide oral dissemination. Once again, Alfonso used language to his advantage.

As legend has it, the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* were written by Alfonso as a result of his healing by the Virgin Mary. He then dedicated his life to being her troubador, writing four hundred and twenty-seven songs that come down to us today in four lavishly illustrated volumes. It's believable that Alfonso, like Thibault, the King of Navarre, would be a trained poet and musician. Music was an important part of court life, and, in fact, troubadors and trouvères often came to Castile. It was common for visiting nobles and hosts to share poetry and songs as entertainment.

It is a testament to the quality of the both the music and the texts that Alfonso X's songs of praise to Holy Mary remain popular so many centuries after their composition. The tales are by turns charming, whimsical, touching, and magical. We can enjoy them simply by listening with modern ears, but more engaging is to let our imaginations travel back to 14th-century Spain. The communal nature of the repertory may whisk you out of the auditorium and into the gorgeous storybook images from the manuscripts.

The music of the *cantigas* can be hypnotic. The modal melodies are beautiful, often haunting, with quirky, offbeat rhythms. The effect of these sensual, irregular rhythms is engaging, allowing the text to be set in a natural speech-like way. As a result, the melodies are tied intimately to the narrative and allow the singer to be an effective storyteller. We'll accompany the songs with instruments that are modeled on the ones you'll see in the illustrations: vielle, rebec, harp, flute, bagpipe, hammer dulcimer, and citole, all a part of the rich organology at Alfonso's court.

In addition to entertainment for the ear we'll give you a feast for the eyes. The four hundred and twenty-seven *cantigas* in the four extant manuscripts are accompanied by more than twelve hundred full-color illustrations. Most of the illustrations are single panels, depicting musicians playing a variety of instruments, and that alone is a treasure trove of evidence of performance practice for scholars and musicians. Even more intriguing are the elaborate, six-panel illustrations that accompany many of the *cantigas*, depicting the stories episode by episode. These give us a glimpse of people from all walks of life; pilgrims, monks, abbesses, musicians, royalty, peasants, and servants. Gazing on these wonderful images help to draw us into that distant world.

For the first half of this program, I chose *cantigas* with these full-story illustrations. The images you'll see are from the rare books collection at Arizona State University. ASU is a member of the Newberry Library's Center for Renaissance Studies, and through that connection I was able to gain access to color scans from one of the very few high-definition color facsimile copies of the original manuscripts still in existence. Our hats are off to Scott Cossel in the photo duplication department at ASU for his superb work.

There are questions as to the precise authorship of the *cantigas*. They are thought to be by Alfonso X (*El Sabio*, or The Wise), but it strains credibility to believe that the monarch would have had the time to author at least hundreds of songs in addition to the other hundred-plus weighty tomes that are attributed to him. A passage from Alfonso's *General Estoria* (I:XVI-xiv) suggests some answers:

. . . *el Rey faze un libro, non por que el escriba con sus manos, mas por que compone las razones del, e las emienda, et yegua, e enderesca, e muestra la manera de como se deben fazer, desi escribelas qui el manda, pero dezimos por esta raz6n que el Rey faze un libro . . .*

. . . the king creates a book, not in that he writes it out with his own hands, but rather in that he assembles the arguments of it, and corrects and balances them and sets them right, and shows the way they ought to be presented; thereafter they are written by whoever he designates, but we say for this reason that the king creates a book . . .

This could be how the *cantigas* were assembled, but writing poetry and composing music are different from writing a general history, in that they are artistic, expressive, and far more personal. Certainly the prologue to the *cantigas*, a lesson in proper songwriting, is by Alfonso. Alfonso prided himself on his abilities as a troubador, and wanted to make sure that these works were perfect; after all, the subject of these courtly love poems was that most unattainable and admirable of women, the Virgin Mary. There were most certainly other very capable troubadors at court, and Alfonso's *Prologo* could be interpreted as instructions to those who would join him in writing the songs. Whoever they were, they were very imaginative!

One of the consistent messages of the *cantigas* is the close connection between Mary and the common man, whether she is working miracles to solve problems or interceding on his behalf on judgment day. The story in *No. 42*, a statue's finger magically enclosing a ring, had been around for nearly a century by Alfonso's time. What makes Alfonso's version special is the everyday touches he includes by referencing playing sports and marital infidelity.

No. 7 has an almost "made-for-TV" feel about it. It's the salacious story of a pregnant abbess whose dilemma is resolved by the miraculous removal of her child from her womb, then taken by angels to be reared at a convent in France (for all intents and purposes, the ends of the earth). In this story, the pious world of the church intersects with the gritty world of secular life. Mary does an end-run around the male hierarchy of the church to protect a woman who has clearly violated her vows from the punishment of the establishment.

In the manuscripts, every tenth song is a *Cantiga de Loor*, or a song of praise, a moment of reflection and adoration, or a kind of pause between the main courses of a communal meal. In fact, placing them in such an orderly fashion in the manuscript could imply that the order their performance should be similarly ordered. But wherever they come they are exotic, ecstatic ear candy, quite different from the miracle stories.

The instrumental selections on the program are *cantigas* I chose for their beautiful melodies and clever rhythms. Most dance repertoires had their origin in vocal forms; hence the word *ballet* from the vocal *ballade*. The verse and refrain form of the *cantigas* is similar to that of the instrumental *estampie* and other improvised dance forms. The instrumentalists perform a dance of their own, holding hands, as it were, by playing the refrains together, and then take solo turns on the verses, improvising their variations on the melodies and creating countermelodies. It was at the time of Alfonso's *cantigas* that composers began to assemble melodies into polyphony. One theory is that composed polyphony was creatively inspired by the tradition of improvising countermelodies.

Our program ends, appropriately, with the last six *cantigas* extant in the collections. They are somewhat different from the rest, but they are still about the greatest miracle associated with Mary, that of her son, Jesus. The set begins with *No. 422*, a *cantiga* in the standard form of verse and refrain, but unusually, has only one short phrase of music for both sections. The text is a litany of requests for salvation, sung in alternation like an antiphon. The remaining five *cantigas*, 423 through 427, contain a greatly abridged version of the old and new Testaments, beginning with Genesis and ending with Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. One might think that, after being entertained and inspired in the first 420 *cantigas*, the last seven were meant to educate and indoctrinate.

As musicians we approach all the music as though it were a time capsule of human experience, and the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* are particularly precious artifacts of Alfonso's life and times. From the stories of ball players, and pilgrims we feel his affection for his subjects. From the tales of sinful abbesses and unforgiving bishops, we feel his intolerance for duplicity in the religion. From the biblical stories we understand his passion for documentation and education. And from the *cantigas* of praise, we hear the voice of Alfonso the mystic, the poet, and the musician. Our program ends with *Cantiga 10: Rosa das Rosas*. It is exquisitely ethereal, and evokes the indescribable essence of this great man.

– Program Notes by David Douglass & Ellen Hargis

About the Artists

The Newberry Consort

David Douglass (co-director), medieval strings
Ellen Hargis (co-director), soprano
Shira Kammen, medieval string and harp
Dan Meyers, percussion and medieval winds
Mark Rimple, gittern and psaltery
Matthew Dean, tenor and narrator

The Newberry Consort Chorus

Francy Acosta, soprano
Lucía Mier y Terán Romero, soprano
Tom Crawford, alto
Corey Shotwell, tenor

Graphics designed and performed by Shawn Keener

Beguiling and intelligent, provocative and classic, ravishingly beautiful and deliciously edgy - **The Newberry Consort** has been delighting audiences for nearly three decades. Directed by David Douglass, Newberry Musician-in-Residence, and early music diva Ellen Hargis, the ensemble plumbs the Newberry Library's vast music collection and assembles a star-studded roster of local and international artists to bring world-class performances of music from the 13th to the 18th centuries to its audiences in Chicago and on tour around the world. Affiliated with the Newberry Library Center for Renaissance Studies, the Consort also serves as an ensemble-in-residence at both the University of Chicago and Northwestern University.

David Douglass, a founding member of The Newberry Consort in 1988, was appointed the ensemble's Director and Musician-in-Residence at the Newberry Library in 2007. A regular with the Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra, David has also performed with the Parley of Instruments (London), Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra (Toronto), Concerto Palatino (Bologna, Italy), The Folger Consort (Washington D.C.), and the Waverly Consort (New York City), among others. He has toured extensively, performing in festivals in Holland, Spain, England, Italy, and Germany as well as in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

First trained as a modern violinist, then as a baroque violinist, David soon became interested in early bowed strings such as rebec and vielle, as well viola da gamba and violone. During his 30-year career performing chamber and orchestral music from the medieval period through the high Baroque on these instruments, he found a special focus in his groundbreaking work in the field of early violin performance. He was the first to develop a historical technique producing "a distinctively 'Renaissance' sound and style for the violin" (Fanfare) He founded and directs The King's Noyse, a Renaissance violin band, to explore and reconstruct the repertoire of early string bands.

Mr. Douglass has recorded extensively for harmonia mundi usa, Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, Virgin, Erato, BMG, Berlin Classics, and Auvidis/Astrée labels. Since 1991, he has also served as a producer for harmonia mundi usa, overseeing recordings for Marion Verbruggen, Paul Hillier and The Theater of Voices, and Paul O'Dette, among others. Several of these have won awards both here and abroad, and four received Grammy nominations between 2005 and 2009. David is much in demand as a writer and lecturer on early violin history, technique and repertoire. He contributed the chapters on violin to the Renaissance and Seventeenth-Century volumes in Schirmer's Performer's Guide series, and his essays on the early violin can be found in Strings Magazine. He teaches at the University of Chicago and Northwestern University, and is on the faculty of many summer courses in early music. When he isn't playing an instrument, he studies photography, and is assembling a vast collection of images of musicians and instruments from paintings and architecture in addition to portraits and landscapes.

Soprano and Consort co-director **Ellen Hargis** is one of America's premier early music singers, specializing in repertoire ranging from ballads to opera and oratorio. She has performed with many of the foremost period

music conductors of the world including Andrew Parrott, Gustav Leonhardt, Jane Glover, Simon Preston, Paul Hillier, Harry Bickett, and Jeffrey Thomas. She has been a guest artist with the American Bach Soloists, the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Washington Choral Arts Society, Freiburg Baroque Orchestra, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Tragicomedia, The New York Collegium, The Mozartean Players, Fretwork, Emmanuel Music and the Mark Morris Dance Group, and has appeared at many of the world's leading festivals including the Adelaide Festival (Australia), Utrecht Festival (Holland), Resonanzen Festival (Vienna), Festival Vancouver, The Monadnock Festival, Tanglewood, the Berkeley Festival and New Music America Festival. With duo partner lutenist Paul O'Dette, she has toured extensively in North America and made tours to Spain, Japan and Russia. As a stage director, Ms. Hargis combines her interests in music, rhetoric, baroque gesture, and drama to create period productions with historical style and vivid human drama. Recent highlights include Monteverdi's Orfeo, the centerpiece production for Edmonton's Festival of Ideas, and a production of Purcell's Dido and Aeneas, featuring a new prologue devised by Ms. Hargis. She was recently named Stage Director in Residence with Haymarket Opera in Chicago, a new company specializing in period productions of early opera. A prolific recording artist, her discography of more than 50 recordings embraces repertoire from medieval to contemporary music and boasts the Grand Prix du Disque, the Choc du Monde, and two Grammy nominations for best opera recording. Ms. Hargis is a highly respected teacher, with private studios in Chicago and New York City. She is an artist teacher offering residencies and Master Classes at conservatories and universities throughout North America, and this year she is honored to be in residence at the Eastman School of Music. She is the Kulas Visiting Professor of Voice at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, and is Artist-in-Residence with the Newberry Consort at the University of Chicago and Northwestern University. Ms. Hargis teaches the annual Vancouver Baroque Vocal Programme The Compleat Singer each August.

Multi-instrumentalist **Shira Kammen** has spent well over half her life exploring the worlds of early and traditional music. A long-time member of the early music Ensembles Alcatraz, Project Ars Nova, and Medieval Strings, she has also worked with Sequentia, Hesperion XX, the Boston Camerata, the Balkan group Kitka, The King's Noyse, The Newberry and Folger Consorts, the Oregon, California and San Francisco Shakespeare Festivals, and is the founder of Class V Music, an ensemble dedicated to performance on river rafting trips. She has performed and taught in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Europe, Israel, Morocco, Latvia, Russia and Japan, and on the Colorado, Rogue and Klamath Rivers. Shira collaborated with singer/storyteller John Fleagle for fifteen years, and performs now with several groups: a medieval ensemble, Fortune's Wheel: a new music group, Ephemeris; an eclectic ethnic band, Panacea; as well as frequent collaborations with performers such as storyteller/harpist Patrick Ball, medieval music expert Margriet Tindemans, and in many theatrical and dance productions. She has played on several television and movie soundtracks, including 'O', a modern high school-setting of Othello and The Nativity Story. Some of her original music can be heard in an independent film about fans of the work of JRR Tolkien. The strangest place Shira has played is in the elephant pit of the Jerusalem Zoo. She hopes to spend more time playing music of all kinds in the wilderness, and has recently taken courses in Taiko drumming and voiceover acting.

Mark Rimple is an accomplished performer-composer whose original works incorporate the rhythmic and tonal aspects of early music and often include early instruments and techniques. He appears regularly as countertenor and lutenist with his ensemble Trefoil, and has been a frequent guest of The Newberry Consort, The Folger Consort, and Piffaro, the Renaissance Band. He has also performed with many other groups including Ex Umbris, Melomanie, The New York Collegium, and New York's Ensemble for Early Music. He can be heard on critically acclaimed recordings of the complex ars subtilior repertoire of the fourteenth century with Trefoil (Christo e Nato and Monsters, Mazes and Masters, MSR Recordings) and the Newberry Consort (Puzzles and Perfect Beauty, Noyse Productions), as well as on recordings of new music. Mark has championed new music, having performed and recorded new works with Network for New Music and Cygnus, with whom he recorded Jonathan Dawe's Siren for Countertenor, Guitar and Viola (Furious Artisans Records), a demanding work based on the music and poetry of Thomas Morley. Last year he collaborated with West Chester Colleague and composer Van Stiefel on an improvisational work for countertenor and lute, and he will continue this collaboration in 2011, incorporating other performers. Mark holds a DMA in composition from Temple University, and is Professor of Music Theory and Composition at West Chester University, where he directs the Collegium Musicum. He is currently writing a perceptually driven music theory textbook that incorporates a wide cross-section of musical styles with theorist and West Chester University colleague Alexander Rozin. For more information, see his website, www.markrimple.com.

Daniel Meyers holds a Master of Music degree in Early Music Performance from the Longy School of Music, and BA degrees in Music and English literature from Whitman College. A versatile multi-instrumentalist, he has developed a reputation as a flexible and engaging performer of both classical and folk music; his credits range from premieres of avant-garde chamber music, to headlining a concert series in honor of Pete Seeger at the Newport Folk Festival, to playing Renaissance instruments on Broadway as part of the “band” for the Globe Shakespeare Company. He is a founding member of the popular Boston ensemble Seven Times Salt; he also performs regularly with the 7 Hills Renaissance Wind Band and the Medieval ensemble Meravelha, and has been a guest artist with the Boston Shawm and Sackbut Ensemble, Early Music New York, La Follia Baroque (Austin, TX), the Harvard Baroque Chamber Orchestra, the viol consort Long and Away, Ensemble Trinitas, El Fuego, and the Cambridge Revels. He enjoys an active career as a teacher of both early music and traditional Irish music, and has taught for the Early Music Week at Pinewoods, at Tufts University, and for the Five Colleges Early Music Program. He also performs southern Italian folk music with the award-winning band Newpoli, and traditional Irish music with the trio Ulster Landing.

Matthew Charles Dean is a cantor, chorister, and leader in service and secular ensembles throughout Chicagoland. A founding member of Golosa Russian Choir, Dean has toured Siberia, performed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and at the Ravinia Festival, and organized the choir's participation in the citywide Soviet Arts Experience festival (2010-11). As Rockefeller Chapel Vocal Artist in Residence since 2005, he has ranged from the bass role of Jesus in the Bach St. John Passion to tenor soloist for Handel's Messiah and the world premiere of Sven-David Sandström's cantata, *Wachet Auf* (2009). Dean sang the title role of Carissimi's Jephthe at the Chicago Humanities Festival in partnership with the Oriana Singers (2008), and directs early polyphony with the Ensemble Hypapante. He is a board member of Harran Productions Foundation (www.harranfoundation.org), and manages the Schola Antiqua of Chicago Foundation (www.chicagochant.org). Matt is honored to sing with The Newberry Consort for this program, having studied and lived in Spain, focusing on the medieval period.

Shawn Keener is a music historian and freelance editor based in Chicago. She holds a PhD in Music History and Theory from the University of Chicago where her work on music and culture in Renaissance Venice was supported by a William Rainey Harper dissertation-year fellowship and a Fulbright grant for research in Italy. Once active as a jazz trumpeter and an avid student of Balinese gamelan, Keener also toured with the Colorado College Bowed Piano Ensemble and can be heard on their 1996 New Albion recording, *Vikings of the Sunrise*. Naturally, as an early music scholar, she has also performed with numerous early music ensembles, from Colorado and Chicago to Venice. Keener has long been associated with The Newberry Consort, having written program notes, worked box office, and edited and designed program books and other materials.