

AMHERST COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
PRESENTS

Blue Heron

Kim Leeds and Sophie Michaux, *cantus*
Jason McStoots, James Reese, Aaron Sheehan and
Sumner Thompson, *tenor and contratenor*
Paul Guttry and David McFerrin, *bassus*
Scott Metcalfe, *fiddle and harp, artistic director*

Friday, October 14, 2022 • Buckley Recital Hall • 8 PM

MUSIC AT **AMHERST** SERIES

PROGRAM

In hydraulis Antoine Busnoys
(c. 1430-1492)

Ma damoiselle, ma maistresse Busnoys

Il ne m'en chault plus de nul ame Johannes Okeghem
(c. 1420-1497)

Ergo ne conticuit Lupus Hellinck (1493/4-1541)
or Johannes Lupi (c. 1506-1539)
Text by Erasmus (late 1460s-1536)

—*Intermission*—

Missa pro defunctis (Requiem) Okeghem

Introit Requiem eternam / Te decet hymnus

Kyrie

Gradual Si ambulem / Virga tua

Tract Sicut cervus

Offertory Domine Jesu Christe / Hostias et preces

Sanctus & Benedictus (plainchant)

Missa De plus en plus

Agnus dei

Please silence your mobile phone, pager, watch, or any other electronic noise-makers during the concert. Please refrain from using electronic devices with light-producing screens, as they are distracting to your fellow audience members.

Cameras and recording devices are strictly prohibited.

PROGRAM NOTES

Laments and elegies, deplorations and valedictions

Within a year or two of the death of Johannes Okeghem on February 6, 1497, his colleague in the French court chapel, the poet and singer Guillaume Crétin, wrote a lengthy *Deploration ... sur le trepas de feu Okergan, Tresorier de Saint Martin de Tours* (Lament ... on the death of the late Okeghem, Treasurer of Saint-Martin in Tours). Crétin describes how, oppressed by cares and reflecting on how Atropos and the Furies bring low all human beings of every estate and condition, he falls into a troubled sleep. In a dream he is transported before the funerary monument of his beloved “seigneur” Okeghem, set in a grove of cypress trees planted by Zephirus and Flora, where the nine Muses are playing dolorous music around the coffin. Lady Music calls on all in attendance to weep for her son, “who always loved me and served me ... so that he was called the pearl of music.” A choir of instruments answer her summons; a *Libera* (a responsory from the Office of the Dead, also sung at the burial service) is intoned, and then a series of biblical and mythological figures sing lyrics lamenting Okeghem, accompanying themselves on instruments: Tubal, David, Orpheus, Chiron, Sappho, Mercury, Pan. Arion is last.

Son dict finy, tous instrumentz cesserent,
Et sur ce poinct les chantres commencerent.

His poem finished, all the instruments fell silent,
and at this moment the singers began.

La du Fay le bon homme survint,
Bunoys aussi, et aultres plus de vingt,
Fede, Binchois, Barbingant et Doustable
Pasquin, Lannoy, Barizon tresnotable :
Copin, Regis, Gille Joye et Constant.
Maint homme fut aupres d'eulx escoutant,
Car bon faisoit ouyr telle armonyne,
Aussi estoit la bende bien fournyne.

There Du Fay, the worthy man, stepped forth,
Busnoys too, and others, more than twenty,
Fedé, Binchois, Barbingant, and Dunstaple,
Pasquin, Lannoy, the very famous Basiron,
Copin, Regis, Gille Joye, and Constant.
Many a man was there listening to them,
for it was good to hear such harmony,
so well staffed was the ensemble.

Lors se chanta la messe de *My my*,
Au travail suis, et *Cujus vis toni*,
La messe aussi exquisite et tres parfaicte
De *Requiem* par ledict deffunct faicte.

Then the *Missa My my* was sung,
Au travail suis, and *Cujus vis toni*,
and also the exquisite and most perfect
Requiem mass composed by the deceased.

Crétin's account of a performance of Okeghem's Requiem by a choir of superstar musicians who had preceded the composer into heaven is the only document known that mentions the piece until centuries later. And the only source of the work, aside from a fragment of one movement in a Spanish manuscript, is a single copy written in the Low Countries a few years after Okeghem's death—and this copy seems to be incomplete, for the scribe prepared six openings at the end of the Requiem that were ruled but left blank until they were later altered to accommodate differently-scored music.

Until some time after the middle of fifteenth century, the Mass of the Dead (known as the Requiem from the first word of the Introit) was celebrated with solemn austerity. A 1432 endowment for masses sung for the Order of the Golden Fleece at the Sainte-Chapelle in Dijon made by Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, specifies that they should be sung "out loud, in plainchant and in polyphony, except when the service is a Requiem." But by 1501 a setting of the Requiem and the Office of the Dead by Guillaume Du Fay (1397-1474)—"mournful, sad, and very exquisite," according to a Mantuan ambassador reporting back to his employer in Italy—was being sung at the Order's weekly commemoration of its deceased members. The Mantuan observer also mentions that Du Fay, "a canon of Cambrai ... the most renowned musician to be found in that area ... having composed this Office of the Dead and a Mass for three voices ... left in his testament that they should be sung after his death for his soul," thus confirming that these were among the works sung at Du Fay's obsequies in 1474. About Du Fay's Requiem, we also know that it was copied at Cambrai in 1470-71, when it was described as "de novo compilata" (compiled? assembled? revised?). Ironically, with all this information we know considerably more about the early history of Du Fay's Requiem than we do about Okeghem's—yet Okeghem's survives, if only partially, while Du Fay's is utterly lost, earning the Requiem we sing on this concert the distinction of being the earliest extant polyphonic setting of the Mass for the Dead.

The Requiem Mass, like all Masses, contains texts both Ordinary (sung at every Mass; in the Mass for the Dead these include the Kyrie, Sanctus, and Agnus dei) and Proper (varying with the occasion, including the Introit, Gradual, Tract, Offertory, and Communion). Okeghem was one of the composers who established the usual five-movement form of a polyphonic setting of the Mass Ordinary (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus dei); the choice of movements for a polyphonic Requiem was less obvious and, indeed, was never standardized (compare the familiar works by Mozart and Fauré, for example). The few Requiems composed in the generation or two after Okeghem, however, all include the Introit and Communion from the Proper, as well as the Kyrie, Sanctus, and Agnus dei from the Ordinary. (Most also set one or more of the Gradual, Tract, and Offertory.) Given that these composers must have been looking over their shoulder at the work of Okeghem (and Du Fay), it seems very likely, then, that Okeghem's Requiem originally had three more movements, a Sanctus, an Agnus dei, and a Communion.

Du Fay's Requiem in three voices probably preceded Okeghem's, whose scoring varies from two to four voices. Okeghem must have known the work of the elder composer, and Alejandro Enrique Planchart and Margaret Bent have suggested that the strikingly simple style of the Introit and Kyrie, featuring abundant parallel fifths, especially in the Introit, is a direct imitation of Du Fay's. Bent even hypothesizes that the Kyrie may in fact be the work of Du Fay, borrowed by Okeghem (just as the Spanish composer Juan Garcia de Basurto would borrow part of Okeghem's Tract for his own setting of the Requiem). But it is also possible that Okeghem's Introit and Kyrie evoke a tradition, which may have been considered particularly appropriate to the Requiem, of improvising simple counterpoint—note against note, *punctus contra punctum*—to the plainchant melody, which is quoted essentially unchanged in the upper voice. The final stanza of Crétin's *Deploration* points to just such a practice.

Enfans de cuer, ne faictes plus leçons
De fleuretiz, mais note contre note
Sur Requiem en doulcettes façons
Puis accordez voz chantz et piteux sons,
Sans ce que aulcun riens y adjouste ne oste,
Et priez Dieu qu'il reçoive a son hoste
Le Tresorier dict Okeghan, affin
Qu'en Paradis chante a jamais sans fin.

Children of the choir, leave off your lessons
in florid counterpoint, but note against note
on the Requiem, in sweetest fashion
then tune your voices and pious song,
without anyone adding or removing anything,
and pray God that he receive into his host
the Treasurer called Okeghem, that
in Paradise he shall sing forever, without end.

Nearly every movement of the Requiem presents the plainchant melody in the uppermost voice, the only exceptions being the “Sed signifer sanctus Michael” and “Quam olim Abraham” sections of the Offertory, where the chant is heard in the tenor. But the most salient impression one gets of the Requiem is not of surface unity, but of extraordinary variety, in style, scoring, and harmonic orientation. As the Mass proceeds, the music becomes more and more complicated, culminating in the ornate, metrically complex, and mostly four-voice Offertory, the last movement that survives; in the first section of the Offertory, the four voices are notated in three different, simultaneous mensurations or time signatures. From this point onwards, Okeghem may have crafted a gradual return to simplicity, for the scribe ruled the last pages of the manuscript for music in three voices: his Communion perhaps recalled the style of the Introit, but we shall never know. For our performance today, we sing the Sanctus in plainchant, and conclude with the Agnus dei from Okeghem’s *Missa De plus en plus*. Though not precisely an ideal choice, since it is not based on plainchant like all five surviving movements of the Requiem, this Agnus dei is without a doubt one of Okeghem’s most exquisite creations. Its profoundly elegaic character may be due at least in part to its being a tribute to Gilles Binchois (c. 1400-1460), with whom Okeghem seems to have had a particularly close relationship and for whom he composed the lament *Mort, tu as navré de ton dart*. It provides a fitting conclusion to this most elegant, enigmatic, virtuosic, heartfelt, and deeply moving Requiem.

Crétin's *Deploration* exhorts living poets to offer tributes and memorials to Okeghem: "Sus Molinet," he cries to his friend, the court poet and chronicler Jean Molinet, "dormez vous, ou resvez?" (Awake, Molinet! do you sleep, or dream?)

Vos sens sont-ils si pressez ou grevez,
Que ne pavez prendre papier et plume?
A quoi tient-il que aujourd'huy n'estrivez
Contre la mort, et soubdain n'escripez
De Okergan quelque petit volume?

Are your wits so oppressed or burdened
that you cannot take up paper and plume?
What can be the reason that today you do not
strive against Death, and at once write
some small volume about Okeghem?

And he encourages a list of famous composers and rather less well-known singers—all of whom seem to have crossed paths with Okeghem during his long tenure as first chaplain of the French royal chapel, according to a recent dissertation by Jeannette Jones—to compose music in his honor.

Agricolla, Verbonnet, Prioris,
Josquin Desprez, Gaspar, Brunel, Compere,
Ne parlez plus de joyeux chantz ne ris,
Mais composez ung *Ne recorderis*,
Pour lamenter nostre maistre et bon pere.
Prevost, Ver Just, tant que Piscis Prospere
Prenez Fresveau pour vos chantz accorder :
La perte est grande et digne a recorder.

Agricola, Verbonnet, Prioris,
Josquin Desprez, Gaspar, Brumel, Compere,
speak no more of joyous songs or laughter,
but compose a *Ne recorderis**
to lament our master and good father.
Prevost, Verjust, likewise benevolent Piscis,
follow Fresneau to harmonise your songs:
the loss is great and worthy of remembrance.

* A responsory at Matins in the Office of the Dead

Molinet and Josquin, at least, heeded Crétin's call, the former penning the text and the latter the music of *Nymphes des bois*, which Blue Heron will sing next March in the final program of Okeghem@600, our project to perform all of the composer's surviving music. Others not addressed by Crétin also eulogized our Okeghem, including Erasmus of Rotterdam. A musical setting of his elegy *Ergo ne conticuit* appears in a collection of motets published in 1547 by Tielman Susato in Antwerp, where it is attributed to Johannes Lupi; Bonnie Blackburn has argued that style and chronology suggest that the composer is more likely Lupus Hellinck. (Both Lupi and Lupus died several years before Susato's anthology was printed.)

Antoine Busnoys got there first, however, composing the spectacular motet *In hydraulis* years before, when Okeghem was still hale and hearty. Busnoys spent a number of years in the 1450s and 1460s in Tours, including a brief stint at the collegiate church of Saint Martin, where Okeghem served as treasurer. In 1465 Busnoys left Tours for Poitiers and by early 1467 had joined the court of Charles, count of Charolais and heir to Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy. Busnoys must have written *In hydraulis*—presumably the text as well as the music, as he was widely regarded as “exceptionally qualified in music and poetry”—shortly after arriving at the Burgundian court: in it he calls himself “unworthy musician of the illustrious count of Charolais” and the count became duke of Burgundy on June 15 of that year. The text flaunts its author’s knowledge of Greek as well as Latin, an accomplishment not many musicians could boast of, and throws around a handful of technical terms for the proportions that produce the basic intervals of European harmony, the octave (2:1), fifth (3:2), fourth (4:3), and whole tone (9:8). The tenor, surrounded by the elaborate melodies and rhythms of the three other voices, repeats a simple ostinato that intones just those intervals. Its three-note melody, sounding two pitches a whole tone apart, is sung on the final, then a fifth higher, then a fourth above that on the octave above the final; then again on the octave, down to the fifth, and once more on the final. It runs through this cycle four times in the course of the motet, twice in each half, with each repeat increasing in speed according to the proportions 6:4:3:2.

Between *In hydraulis* and *Ergo ne conticuit* we sing two exquisite songs by Busnoys and Okeghem. In both you may hear the sort of ever-varying, flexible, and unsystematic use of imitation that is deployed so masterfully in numerous pieces by Okeghem (including the Requiem) and, following him, Busnoys—a beautifully supple, subtle, and elegant manner of fashioning counterpoint that eventually lost out to the pervasively imitative style of the sixteenth century, exemplified here (however expressively) by *Ergo ne conticuit*.

Note by Scott Metcalfe

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Blue Heron has been acclaimed by *The Boston Globe* as “one of the Boston music community’s indispensables” and hailed by Alex Ross in *The New Yorker* for its “expressive intensity.” The ensemble ranges over a wide repertoire from plainchant to new music, with particular specialities in 15th-century Franco-Flemish polyphony and early 16th-century English sacred music, and is committed to vivid live performance informed by the study of original source materials and historical performance practices.

Founded in 1999, Blue Heron presents a concert series in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and has appeared at the Boston Early Music Festival; in New York City at Music Before 1800, The Cloisters (Metropolitan Museum of Art), and the 92nd Street Y; at the Library of Congress, the National Gallery of Art, and Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C.; at the Berkeley Early Music Festival; at Yale University and the University of California, Davis; in Chicago, Cleveland, Kansas City, Milwaukee, Montreal, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Providence, St. Louis, San Luis Obispo, Seattle, and Vancouver; and in England, Germany, and Belgium. Blue Heron has been in residence at the Center for Early Music Studies at Boston University and at Boston College, and has enjoyed collaborations with A Far Cry, Dark Horse Consort, Les Délices, Parthenia, Piffaro, and Ensemble Plus Ultra.

Blue Heron’s first CD, featuring music by Guillaume Du Fay, was released in 2007. Between 2010 and 2017 the ensemble issued a 5-CD series of *Music from the Peterhouse Partbooks* (now available as a set entitled *The Lost Music of Canterbury*), including many world premiere recordings of works copied around 1540 for Canterbury Cathedral and restored by Nick Sandon; the fifth CD was awarded the 2018 Gramophone Classical Music Award for Early Music. Jessie Ann Owens and Blue Heron won the 2015

Noah Greenberg Award from the American Musicological Society to support the world premiere recording of Cipriano de Rore's *I madrigali a cinque voci*, which was released in 2019. In 2015 Blue Heron inaugurated *Ockeghem@600*, a multi-season project to commemorate the circa-600th birthday of Johannes Ockeghem (c. 1420-1497) by performing his complete works, finishing up in 2023. A parallel project to record all of Ockeghem's songs bore its first fruits in 2019 with the release of *Johannes Ockeghem: Complete Songs, Volume I*, which was named to the *Bestenliste* of the *Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik*; Volume 2 will follow in 2023. Blue Heron's recordings also include a CD accompanying Thomas Forrest Kelly's book *Capturing Music: The Story of Notation*, the live recording *Christmas in Medieval England*, a compilation of medieval songs entitled *A 14th-Century Salmagundi*, and (in collaboration with Les Délices) a live recording of a concert production of Guillaume de Machaut's *Remede de Fortune*.

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Amherst College Music Department Upcoming Events

- 10/20 Jazz@Friedmann Room** Keefe Campus Center 9 PM
- 10/22 M@A Imani Winds with Corey Smythe, piano**
“Revolutionary aka The Civil Rights Project” Tickets required. \$
Buckley Recital Hall. 8 PM
- 10/27 Jazz@Friedmann Room** Keefe Campus Center 9 PM
- 10/28 ACJE Homecoming Concert** Keefe Campus Center
Buckley Recital Hall. 8:30 PM
- 10/29 Choral Society: Homecoming Concert** with the
Williams College Concert Choir. Buckley Recital Hall. 12 PM
- ASO Homecoming Concert:** John Williams Tribute
Buckley Recital Hall. 8 PM
- 11/5 Family Weekend All-Play Concert: Celebrating Voting Rights**
With the AC Jazz Ensemble, Choral Society and the ASO.
Buckley Recital Hall. 8 PM
Registration required. Please see: amherst.edu/music
- 12/2 ACJE Winter Concert** Keefe Campus Center 8 PM
- 12/3 ASO Winter Concert: Dvořák Cello Concerto.**
Buckley Recital Hall. 8 PM

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 **ILLUMINATI**
vocal arts ensemble
Arianne Abela, Interim Director

In Illo Tempore

At That Time

7:30 PM October 15, 2022, Our Lady of the Valley Easthampton

J.S. Bach, 'Komm, Jesu, komm,' BWV 229 • 'Jesu, meine Freude,' BWV 227
Monteverdi, *Missa 'In illo tempore'* (selections) • Victoria, *Missa 'O quam gloriosum'*



Mercy

7:30 PM February 11, 2023
Abbey Chapel, Mount Holyoke

Lang, 'the little match girl passion'
Schütz, 'Musikalische Exequien'



THE SCYTHE AND THE FOUNTAIN

Herbert Howells Requiem *and music by*
Gjello. Holst. Thompson. Whittacre *and Tavener*

7:30 PM Saturday, May 20, 2023
Buckley Recital Hall, Amherst College

tickets, season tickets with preferred seating, and details: illuminatiensemble.org

All events are FREE and held in Buckley Recital Hall unless otherwise noted
Alisa Pearson, Manager of Concert Programing, Production and Publicity
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