The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.
Program

Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)
Vespro della Beata Vergine (Vespers of 1610)

Deus in adjutorium / Domine ad adjuvandum
Dixit Dominus
Nigra sum
Laudate pueri Dominum
Pulchra es
Laetatus sum
Duo seraphim
Nisi Dominus
Audi coelum verba mea
Lauda Jerusalem
Sonata sopra Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis
Ave maris stella
Magnificat
Magnificat anima mea Dominum
Et exultavit spiritus meus
Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae
Quia fecit mihi magna
Et misericordia
Fecit potentiam in brachio suo
Deposuit potentes
Esurientes implevit bonis
Suscepit Israel puerum suum
Sicut locutus est
Gloria Patri
Sicut erat in principio

The Musicians

ARTEK

Founded by Gwendolyn Toth in 1986, the early music ensemble ARTEK has gained a reputation for exciting, dramatic performances of baroque music infused with vitality and spirit. In 2001 Toth was awarded the Newell Jenkins Prize for excellence in early music performance in recognition of her work with ARTEK.

Highlights of ARTEK’s recent seasons include I’ll Never See the Stars Again, performed at the off-off-Broadway Mazer Theater in New York City and at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival; standing-room-only concerts at the Regensburger Tage Alter Musik in Germany; and ARTEK’s debut performance at the prestigious Boston Early Music Festival.

From 1997 to 2002, ARTEK toured with the Mark Morris Dance Group, performing in more than fifty of America’s premier theaters as well as major venues in Canada, Italy, and the United Kingdom. In addition to repeat engagements at the Regensburger Tage Alter Musik, ARTEK has appeared in Beaulieu, France; Dolni Lukavice, Czech Republic; Feldkirchen, Austria; Konstanz, Germany; Kreuzlingen, Switzerland, and Utrecht, Holland. In addition to its own series of evening concerts each season at halls and churches in New York City and Princeton, New Jersey, ARTEK has appeared in concert series that include First Night New York at St. Bartholomew’s Church, Music Before 1800, and Princeton Friends of Music. ARTEK makes its Lincoln Center debut this spring on the “What Makes It Great” series with Robert Kapilow. ARTEK appears at the National Gallery of Art by arrangement with GEMS Live! (Gotham Early Music Scene, Inc.) of New York City.
Members of artek participating in this concert are:

Jessica Tranzillo, soprano
Barbara Hollinshead, mezzo-soprano
Lawrence Lipnik, countertenor, tenor viol, recorder
Philip Anderson, tenor
Michael Brown, tenor
Peter Becker, bass
Charles Weaver, baritone, theorbo, cittern, guitar
Enrico Gatti, violin
Vita Wallace, violin
Lisa Terry, viola da gamba
Rosamund Morley, viola da gamba, violone
Motomi Igarashi, lirone, viola da gamba, violone
Michael Collver, cornetto
James Miller, cornetto
Grant Herreid, theorbo, lute, recorder
Christa Patton, baroque triple harp, recorder, Renaissance flute
Daniel Swenberg, theorbo
Dongsok Shin, harpsichord, organ
Gwendolyn Toth, harpsichord, organ, and director

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART VOCAL ENSEMBLE

The National Gallery of Art Vocal Ensemble is now in its sixth season as a chamber choir under the leadership of its artistic director, Rosa Lamoreaux. The choir has presented special programs in honor of Gallery exhibitions, including part-songs and anthems by nineteenth-century English composers in honor of The Artist's Vision: Romantic Traditions in Britain (2006) and seventeenth-century Dutch music in honor of Jan Lievens: A Dutch Master Rediscovered (2008) and Pride of Place: Dutch Cityscapes of the Golden Age (2009). In January 2008 the singers were guest artists at the Festival Dr. Alfonso Ortiz Tirado in Sonora, Mexico, where they sang a program of Spanish and Hispanic choral music.

Members of the National Gallery Vocal Ensemble participating in this program are:

Rosa Lamoreaux, soprano
Barbara Hollinshead, mezzo-soprano
Roger Isaacs, countertenor
Matthew Smith, tenor
Steven Combs, baritone
Peter Becker, bass

PIFFARO

Since it was founded in 1980, the Renaissance band Piffaro has delighted audiences throughout North and South America and Europe with its recreations of the elegant sounds of the wind bands of the late Medieval and Renaissance periods. Piffaro maintains an ever-expanding collection of bagpipes, lutes, guitars, harps, krumhorns, percussion instruments, recorders, sachbuts, and shawms, each of which is a careful reconstruction of an instrument that existed several centuries ago. Under the direction of Joan Kimball and Robert Wiemken, Piffaro tours extensively in the United States and Europe, and has performed for all the major early music series and festivals, as well as many college and community concert series. The ensemble is regularly heard nationwide on National Public Radio's Performance
Today. Piffaro has recorded for Newport Classics, Deutsche Grammophon / Archiv Produktion, and Dorian Recordings. Members of Piffaro perform regularly throughout the year for elementary, middle, and high school students, and conduct master classes and workshops for college students and adult amateurs. Piffaro was awarded Early Music America’s “Early Music brings history alive” award in 2003.

Members of Piffaro participating in this concert are:

Joan Kimball, dulcian, recorder, shawm
Bob Wiemken, dulcian, contradulcian, recorder, shawm
Thomas Zajac, sachut, recorder, Renaissance flute
Greg Ingles, sachut
Erik Schmalz, sachut
Mack Ramsey, bass sachut, cornetto
Grant Herreid, theorbo, lute, recorder
Christa Patton, baroque triple harp, recorder, Renaissance flute

Program Notes

This concert is the first in a series of five National Gallery of Art concerts that will present masterworks from the years 1610, 1710, 1810, 1910, and 2010. Because Claudio Monteverdi’s Vespro della Beata Vergine is commonly identified as his “Vespers of 1610,” it makes the ideal starting point for the project, which will occupy the Sunday and Wednesday concerts at the Gallery until the end of January. On Wednesday, January 20, at 12:10 pm, organist and Gallery music department head Stephen Ackert will be joined by mezzo-soprano Anne-Marieke Evers and members of the National Gallery of Art Chamber Players to perform music that would have been heard in 1710 in the ducal chapel in Weimar, Germany. The music that the chapel organist, then twenty-four-year-old Johann Sebastian Bach, composed and performed during his tenure in Weimar (1708–1717) includes some of the most significant organ works ever written as well as numerous fine cantatas. The January 20 concert will be presented jointly by the Gallery and The United Church at 1920 G Street, NW, in Washington, DC. The concert will take place at the church, which has an organ and acoustics that are much like those that existed at the ducal chapel in 1710.

On Sunday, January 24, three of the National Gallery’s resident ensembles will take the stage to present masterworks that Beethoven produced or published in 1810. On Wednesday, January 27, at 12:10 pm in the West Building Lecture Hall, the Auryn String Quartet will play Alban Berg’s String Quartet, op. 3, one of the great chamber works written in 1910. To conclude the series, on Sunday, January 31, the new music ensemble Great Noise will join the NGA Vocal Ensemble and the NGA Orchestra to perform the world premieres of two new works, written especially for the occasion by Armando Bayolo, who will conduct the concert, and Carlos Carillo.
The delineation of the Sabbath and other holidays in the Jewish tradition is a twenty-four hour period from sundown to the following sundown. Both the monastic and cathedral traditions of the Roman Catholic Church followed this same pattern from early in their history, marking the beginning of every feast day with the evening vespers service (“first vespers”), and concluding the feast at the end of the next day with another Vesper service (“second vespers”). In the seventeenth century, when Claudio Monteverdi was composing music for the church, the vespers service surpassed even the mass as the vehicle for elaborate celebrations on major feast days.

The heart of the vespers service is the recitation of a series of five psalms. In Medieval and Renaissance church music, each psalm was “troped” with an antiphon, a brief text that was originally sung at the beginning of the psalm, after each verse, and again at the conclusion. By the early seventeenth century, it had become common to substitute instrumental pieces for these antiphons.

Monteverdi’s teachers belonged to the Florentine Camerata of the middle and late sixteenth century. This group of composers set out to duplicate the effect on the listener of ancient Greek music, which was believed to have been a powerful and direct expression of poetry, by abandoning polyphony and writing vocal solos with a simple chordal accompaniment (monody). This simple texture, along with the free use of dissonance that was developing concurrently in both secular and sacred music, constituted a complete break with the Renaissance style known as Prima prattica. Monteverdi embraced the revolutionary techniques and new harmonies of the monodists, but he was also able to write extremely well in the old style, and to combine elements of the old and the new in a synthesis all his own.

The Vespers of 1610 is Monteverdi’s first major publication of sacred music. It is dedicated both to the Virgin Mary—whom his patrons, the Gonzaga dukes of Mantua, claimed as the special protectress of their city—and to Pope Paul v. The initial publication includes a six-voice polyphonic mass in conservative style, but the music for the vespers draws from the most diverse and modern examples available to the composer. Virtuoso instrumental and vocal solos appear side-by-side with psalms featuring falsibordoni (unmeasured chordal recitation of the Gregorian psalm chant), complicated imitative counterpoint, highly ornamented virtuoso duets, ground basses, dance-like triple meters, double-choir antiphony, and instrumental ritornellos. The closing Magnificat is a showcase of virtuoso vocal and instrumental writing. It is likely that Monteverdi used some of this music as part of his successful audition for the position of maestro di capella at the ducal church of Saint Mark in Venice, from the standpoint of its music program the most important church in all of northern Italy. There he remained for the rest of his life, well-paid, highly respected, and in great demand as a composer.

Every vesper service begins with an opening brief solo verse and choral response requesting the aid of God. In the opening response of the Vespers of 1610 (Domine ad adjuvandum), the chant consists of a single note, the reciting tone. Monteverdi buries it in a block D-major chord, and superimposes the music he used for the opening toccata of his great masterpiece of 1607, the opera Orfeo. This in itself is a brilliant statement—the composer marries the new expressive techniques of Baroque theater with the received glory of chant and Renaissance polyphony. Closing the main part of all vespers services is the canticle of Mary, the Magnificat, taken from the Gospel according to Luke. This ancient chant is presented formally, in long notes, with each verse surrounded by a different combination of voices and instruments.

In this concert performance of the Vespers of 1610, the music is presented without the intervention of plainchant antiphons, the biblical chapter, or other verses and responses found in a liturgical vespers service.

*Program notes by Robert Eisenstein and Jeffrey G. Kurtzman; used by permission*
Upcoming Concerts

Stephen Ackert, organist
Anne-Marieke Evers, mezzo-soprano
Risa Browder, violinist
John Moran, viola da gambist

Music by J. S. Bach from 1710

A joint presentation of the
National Gallery of Art music department
and The United Church, Washington, DC

January 20, 2010
Wednesday, 12:10 pm
1920 G Street, NW
Washington, DC

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National Gallery of Art Piano Trio,
String Quartet, and Wind Quintet

Music by Beethoven from 1810

January 24, 2010
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

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Auryn String Quartet

Music by Berg from 1910

January 27, 2010
Wednesday, 12:10 pm
West Building Lecture Hall

National Gallery of Art Vocal Ensemble
With Great Noise Ensemble and members of the
National Gallery of Art Orchestra
Armando Bayolo, guest conductor

World premiers of new works by Bayolo and Carillo

January 31, 2010
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court
Magnificat

My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit has rejoiced in God my savior. For he has regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden, for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty has magnified me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations. He has showed strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their seat and has exalted the humble and the meek. He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich he has sent away empty. He remembering his mercy has helped his servant Israel As he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed forever. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit As it was in the beginning, is now and forever, world without end. Amen.

Performance notes by Gwendolyn Toth

Any performance reflects innumerable considerations related to forces, venue, context, style, and (last but not least) funding.

1610 is a period just on the cusp of the new baroque period. Today, we tend to associate “baroque” with a Vivaldi concerto or a Bach cantata. However, the instrumental and vocal forces of these 18th-century baroque works have little or nothing to do with the early baroque “orchestra” or “choir”. The instruments available in Monteverdi’s time for sacred music included instruments of the string family (violins, viole da brizzo, viole da gamba, violone and contrabasso da gamba), wind family (cornetti, sacbuts, recorders, shawms, dulcians); and what we now term “continuo” instruments (organ, harpsichord, spinettino, lute, theorbo, cittern, harp, lirone, guitar). Typical of the late Renaissance was the use of complete families of instruments; thus, viole da gamba in alto, tenor, bass and contrabass sizes; alto, tenor and bass sacbuts; recorders of various sizes, and dulcians all the way down to 16' contrabass dulcian. Typically, Renaissance instrumentalists performed not only music written specifically for instrumental use but also vocal music. And, very often (unlike modern practice, where a cappella vocal ensembles hold sway) frequently instruments doubled voices. The practice was undoubtedly more “ad lib” than notated; if a piece was performed at a court where there was a generous complement of instruments, they were likely to participate in the music we might nowadays think of as “vocal” music.

Much research has been done into vocal ensembles, and the maximum size for a typical vocal ensemble seems to have been between 8 and 16 singers at St. Mark’s Cathedral in Venice. Our vocal ensemble of 12 singers (including our very historical instrumentalists who also double on voices) represents a fair average of this size. However, Monteverdi’s music for the psalms in the Vespers are written for the type of virtuoso singers he knew in Mantua, and only a one-to-a-part performance enables a stylistic performance of the florid passage-work. How then to appropriately fill a grand space on a festive occasion in early seventeenth-century style? This performance context is best realized with an extensive use of instrumental doubling in the late 16th century/early 17th century style, with the various families of instruments joining the singers in all the non-virtuoso parts. The use of multiple continuo instruments (chordal instrumental instruments that improvise an accompaniment through a figured bass line) is documented in many sacred collections of the period: lutes, theorbo, harps, harpsichords, citterns. With our addition of the lirone, a bowed bass chordal instrument, our continuo section represents an extravagant accompaniment that was nevertheless completely common to early 17th-century Italy. The continuo instruments support the rhetorical structure of the musical phrases, adding to the tension and release of the marvelous dissonances employed by Monteverdi throughout. A single organ, or even a single organ and theorbo, would have been thought a rather miserly accompaniment in Monteverdi’s time for a grand performance before an audience of a thousand people.

Much has been written on the subject of the transposing clefs (“chiavette”) in the Vespers. A study of the historical sources is unequivocal in supporting the conclusion that certain sets of clefs necessarily imply a downward transposition. There can be no doubt about it. Sometimes, these downwards transpositions are difficult to accept, because one might be used to hearing such a piece in the (wrong) untransposed, or high, pitch. I am convinced that clef transposition was used by composers specifically to notate a piece with a generally quite low tessitura. Ironically, then, these low tessitura pieces became known in modern performance as high tessitura pieces. It’s a bit like preferring a Renaissance painting with a darkening smudge of sooty varnish, because that’s the way we’ve always known it. Peel it away, and find the wonderful colors underneath! Lauda Jerusalem and the complete Magnificat cycle will be performed transposed down a fourth.

Pronunciation is another area in which modern singers and audiences are slowly becoming more enlightened. For our performance, we have chosen to do a northern Italian, and where possible specifically Venetian,
pronunciation of the Latin. Although not tremendously different, nevertheless the flavor of the vowels is slightly different (more closed) and the "x" is replaced by "z" (as in zoo) sound, rather than "ks" of modern Italianate church Latin. Other consonants also differ, and the "t" sound is almost disappearing. I am indebted to Professor Jeffrey Gall of Montclair State University for his guidance and assistance in the pronunciation.

Lastly, in the same spirit of remaining faithful to the performance style of Monteverdi’s own time, we are using high pitch at A=465 and a quarter-comma meantone temperament. The pitch is close to, though still perhaps a bit lower than, the pitch of many northern Italian churches in Monteverdi’s time, but is far closer than the modern pitch of A=440, a half step lower. Quarter-comma meantone is without a doubt one of the most beautiful performing pitch systems ever invented. The thirds are absolutely pure and serene, with a beauty that is unknown to those poor deprived souls who know only the compromised modern equal temperament of the piano. (Yes: I am biased; after 25 years of playing in quarter-comma meantone, I can scarcely bear to hear equal temperament because it sounds so hideously out of tune.) I invite everyone to particularly enjoy the final chords of each movement, with their sense of complete timeless eternity from such a wonderful sonority. 

Gwendolyn Toth

Gwendolyn Toth is the founder and director of ARTEK, and conductor of today’s performance.
Psalm 112

Laude pueri Domini:
laudate nomen Domini.
Sit nomen Domini benedictum,
ex hoc nunc, et usque in seculum.
A solis ortu usque ad occasum,
Praise the Lord, ye children,
praese name of the Lord.
Blessed be the name of the Lord,
from this time forth for evermore.
From sunrise to sunset,
the Lord's name is worthy of praise.
The Lord is high above all nations
and His glory above the heavens.
Who is like the Lord our God,
who dwells on high and looks down
on the humble things in heaven and earth,
raising the helpless from the earth,
and lifting the poor man from the dungheap
to place him alongside princes,
with the princes of his people?
He makes a home for the barren woman,
a joyful mother of children.
Glory be to the Father . . .

Psalm 121

Latetatus sum in domum Domini ibimus.
Stantes crant pedes nostri in atris tuis Jerusalem;
Jerusalem, quae aedificatur ut civitas cuius participatio eius in idipsum.
Illuc enim ascenderunt tribus, tribus Domini, testimonium Israel ad conficiendum nomini Domini.
Quia illic sederunt sedes in iudicium, sedes super domum David.
Rogate quae ad pacem sunt Jerusalem et abundantia diligentibus te.
Fiat pax in virtute tua et abundantia in turribus tuis.
Propter fratre meos et proximos meos
loquebam pacem de te.
Propter domum Domini Dei nostri quaevidi bona tibi.
Gloria Patri . . .

Excerpt from Psalm 112

**Laudate pueri**

Praise the Lord, ye children,
priase the name of the Lord.
Blessed be the name of the Lord,
from this time forth for evermore.
From sunrise to sunset,
the Lord's name is worthy of praise.
The Lord is high above all nations
and His glory above the heavens.
Who is like the Lord our God,
who dwells on high and looks down
on the humble things in heaven and earth,
raising the helpless from the earth,
and lifting the poor man from the dungheap
to place him alongside princes,
with the princes of his people?
He makes a home for the barren woman,
a joyful mother of children.
Glory be to the Father . . .

Excerpt from Psalm 121

I was glad when they said unto me:
we shall go into the house of the Lord.
Our feet were standing within thy gates,
O Jerusalem;
Jerusalem, which is built as a city
that is compact together.
For thither ascend the tribes,
the tribes of the Lord, to testify unto Israel,
to give thanks
to the name of the Lord.
For there are the seats of judgment,
the seats over the house of David.
O pray for the peace of Jerusalem
and may prosperity attend those who
love thee.
Peace be within thy strength,
and prosperity within thy towers.
For my brothers and my neighbors' sake,
I will ask for peace for thee;
for the sake of the house of the Lord
our God.
I have sought blessings for thee.
Glory be to the Father . . .

**Duos Seraphim**

Two Seraphim were calling one to the other:
Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Hosts:
the whole earth is full of His glory.
There are three who give testimony in heaven:
the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit:
and these three are one.
Holy . . .

**Nisi Dominus**

Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum,
in vanum laboraverunt qui aedificant eam.
Nisi Dominus custodierit civitatem,
frustra vigilat qui custodit eam.
Vnum est vosbit ante lucem surgere:
surgite postquam sederitis,
Vanum est vobis ante lucem surgere:
frustra vigilat qui custodit earn.

**Audi coelum**

Hear, O heaven, my words,
full of desire
and suffused with joy.
I hear.
Tell me, I pray: who is she
who, rising like the dawn,
shines, that I may bless her?
Tell, for she is beautiful as the moon,
exquisite as the sun which fills with joy
the earth, the heavens and the seas.
Mary.
Mary, that sweet Virgin
foretold by the prophet Ezekiel,
gate of the rising sun,
Such is she!
That holy and happy gate
through which death was driven out, but
life brought in,
Even so!
Who is always a sure mediator
between man and God,
a remedy for our sins.
A mediator.
So let us all follow her
by whose grace we gain
Eternal life. Let us seek after her.
Let us follow.
May God the Father grant us this,
and the Son and the Mother,
on whose name we call,
sweet solace for the unhappy.
Amen.
Blessed art thou, Virgin Mary,
world without end

Holy Mary, pray for us.

Hail, star of the sea,
life-giving mother of God
and perpetual virgin,
happy gate of heaven.
Receiving that "ave"
from the mouth of Gabriel,
keep us in peace,
reversing the name "Eva."
Loosen the chains from the guilty,
bring forth light to the blind,
drive out our ills,
ask for blessings for all.
Show yourself to be His mother:
may He receive through you our
prayers who, born for us,
deigned to be yours.
Peerless virgin,
gentle above all others,
when we are pardoned for our sins,
make us gentle and pure.
Grant us a pure life,
preserve a safe journey,
so that seeing Jesus
we may rejoice forever.
Praise be to God the Father,
glory to Christ most high,
and to the Holy Spirit,
triple honor in one. Amen.

Benedicta es, Virgo Maria, in seculorum secula.

Lauda Jerusalem Psalm 147
Lauda, Jerusalem, Dominum:
lauda Deum tuam, Sion.
Quoniam comfortavit seras portarum tuarum:
benedixit filiis tuos in te.
Qui dat nivem sicut lanam:
emittit eloquium suum terrae:
emittet verbum suum, et liquefaciet ea:
Emittet verbum suum, et liquefaciet ea:
Emittet verbum suum, et liquefaciet ea:
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