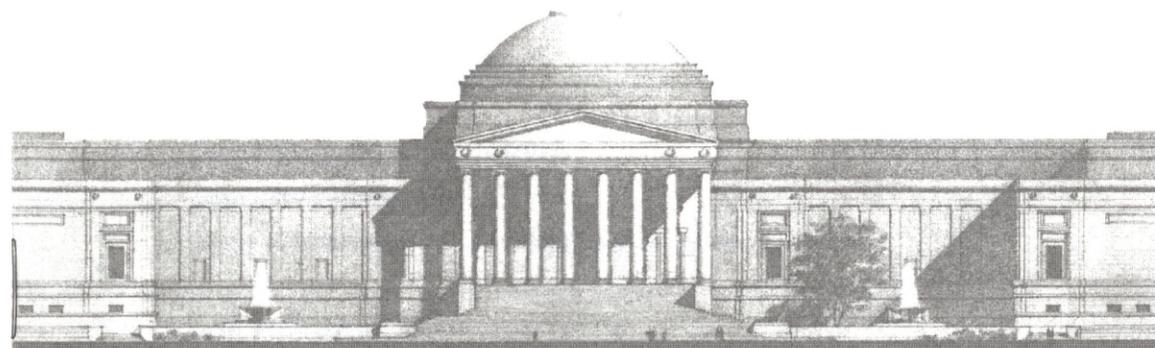


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Music Department  
National Gallery of Art  
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington, DC

[www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov)

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The Seventy-second Season of  
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin  
**Concerts**

National Gallery of Art  
3,006th Concert

**Carmina**  
**Vera Kochanowsky, artistic director**  
**Hubert Beckwith, director**

June 12, 2014  
Thursday, 12:10 pm  
West Building, West Garden Court

*Admission free*

Program

“The Cradle of Counterpoint”

Josquin Desprez (c. 1450–1521)

*Descendi in ortum meum*

*Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine* (Attributed to Josquin)

Jean Maillard (fl. 1525–1572)

*Salve Regina*

Guillaume Dufay (c. 1397–1474)

*Gloria*

Antoine Brumel (c. 1460–c. 1512)

*Sicut liliun*

Loyset Compère (c. 1445–1518)

*Chanter ne puis*

Pierre de la Rue (c. 1452–1518)

*Tous les regretz*

Josquin

*Baises moy à 4*

*Baises moy à 6*

Brumel

*Ave ancilla Trinitatis*

*Ave Maria*

Jean Mouton (c. 1459–1522)

*Ave Maria virgo serena*

Josquin

*Dèploration sur la morte d'Ockeghem*

Members of Carmina participating in today's concert are:

DeeDee Brinkema  
Ron Boucher  
Shai Bronshtein  
Joshua Cumby  
Michael Donaldson  
Rocky Ebener  
Barbara Hermanson  
Mary Hodapp  
Steven Alan Honley  
Gregory Hutton  
Lani Jacobson  
Richard Jacobson  
Thomas Kramer  
Jody Lee  
Carolee Pastorius  
Joseph Price  
Stephen Roberts  
Lucy Robertson  
John Schaettler  
Ben Wallis  
Marjorie Coombs Wellman  
Bill Woessner

## The Musicians

### **CARMINA**

Taking its name from a Latin word that can mean either poetry or song, Carmina is a chamber choir devoted to exploring the diverse musical styles of the Middle Ages through the early baroque. Praised by the *Washington Post* and the *Baltimore Sun* for its "gorgeous tonal balance," Carmina won a special grant for new and emerging artistic organizations from the Virginia Commission for the Arts in 2002. A regular participant in the Washington Early Music Festival since 2004, the ensemble was honored in 2013 with a nomination for the Greater Washington Choral Excellence Ovation Award in the specialty category of early music. Carmina's two CDs, *A Carmina Sampler* and *The Son of Getron* are available through its website, [www.carmina.org](http://www.carmina.org).

### **VERA KOCHANOWSKY**

Founder and artistic director of Carmina since its inception in 1997, Vera Kochanowsky is a graduate of the Oberlin and New England conservatories of music and holds the doctor of musical arts degree from Stanford University. Active as a harpsichord soloist, chamber musician, and private teacher as well as a conductor, she has performed with the Bach Sinfonia, the National Gallery of Art Chamber Players, La Ménéstrandise, and the Washington Kantorei. In 2009 she brought Carmina to the National Gallery to perform a concert of seventeenth-century music in honor of the exhibition *Judith Leyster, 1609–1660*. She also founded and conducts Carmina's sister organization, the women's early vocal ensemble Illuminare.

## HUBERT BECKWITH

A member of Carmina since 1998, Hubert Beckwith became its assistant director in 2007 and its director in 2012. After receiving his PhD in musicology from the University of Maryland, he served as the first executive secretary of the American Handel Society. Since 1994 he has been music director at Living Faith Lutheran Church in Rockville, Maryland. A composer, arranger, and writer on music, Beckwith teaches music history and literature at George Mason University and often prepares performing editions for Carmina and Illuminare.

## Program Notes

From the mid-fifteenth to the mid-sixteenth centuries, composers from the Low Countries and northern France dominated the European musical scene. Their new style was complex and relied heavily on the interweaving of independent voices in an imitative fashion. One of those Netherlandish composers, Adrian Willaert, was a student of Jean Mouton who spent most of his career in Italy and won the highly coveted position of *maestro di cappella* at Saint Mark's Cathedral in Venice. In the space of twenty-five years in that position, Willaert revitalized music in Italy and profoundly influenced an entire generation of Italian and other composers.

The spread of contrapuntal style beyond its northern European cradle was accelerated by the international careers of composers like Willaert, but even more so by the invention of the printing press. In Venice, where chant melodies were included in several *incunabula* (books "in the cradle," as items printed before 1500 were called), Ottaviano Petrucci refined typesetting to handle what was then modern notation. In 1501 he issued *Harmonice musices odhecaton A* (One Hundred Harmonized Chansons, vol. A) with great success, and followed it less than a year later with *Canti B numero cinquante* (Fifty Chansons, vol. B). These collections put the repertoire of the Northern contrapuntal masters within reach of a wider circle of musicians.

Like Willaert, the Frenchman Josquin Desprez (often referred to simply as Josquin) held important Italian posts, most notably in Milan, Rome, and Ferrara. Dubbed "the incomparable" by his contemporary Pierre Moulu (c. 1484–c. 1550), Josquin brought the contrapuntal style to its height. Surprisingly, in his motet *Descendi in ortum meum* (I Descended into My Garden), Josquin sets the opening word *Descendi* with an ascending melodic figure, perhaps suggesting the uplifting sentiment, or the blooming of the flowers in the garden as described in the text.

Some scholars maintain that *Nunc dimittis servum tuum* (Now Let Thy Servant Depart [in Peace]) is not by Josquin. Nonetheless, the motet well represents many aspects of Josquin's style: the elegantly flowing vocal lines, the use of paired imitation (passages for two voices which are later repeated by two different voices), and the creation of a new point of imitation for each line of text. Unusual for Josquin is the return of the original theme and text at the conclusion of the work.

Very little is known about the life of French composer Jean Maillard, whose more than 150 compositions feature smooth, well-crafted counterpoint. The fact that a number of his works, including the *Salve Regina* (Hail, Queen [of Heaven]) heard today, are found in a Spanish manuscript has led some scholars to believe that Maillard may have had a close connection with Spain. The work relies heavily on pre-existing chant, alternating strictly between chant and polyphonic counterpoint.

An independent work, not associated with any of Guillaume Dufay's complete mass cycles or paired mass movements, *Gloria* (Glory [to God in the Highest]) probably dates from his tenure at the Papal Chapel in Rome (1428–1433). Each section corresponds to a phrase of the text and begins with a brief figure of polyphonic imitation, which then breaks down almost immediately into independent lines. An interesting feature of this piece is the use of fermatas (long notes held at the conductor's discretion) in several homophonic passages, most notably in the final Amen section. The work is also highly distinctive because of its overall low tessitura (distance between the lowest and highest sung notes), and the extremely wide range of the bass part.

A group of secular chansons in today's program reveals the variety of styles included in their source, *Canti B numero cinquante*. Compère's *Chanter ne puis* (No Longer to Sing) embodies a florid style, which he helped pioneer in the 1470s, in which the voices, coordinated by imitation, wind through melismas so long and decorative they can overwhelm the poetry. Notable in the present setting is the energetic opening, in which a wave of falling scale motifs cascades through five tonal levels, and the equally surging acceleration up toward the final cadence.

*Tous les regretz* (All the Regrets), written no earlier than 1493, displays Pierre de la Rue's skill at building melodies from repeated but ever-shifting motifs. Here he embellishes a slow-moving tune that migrates from voice to voice. The text comes from a lengthy poem lamenting the departure from France of Marguerite of Austria, who was jilted at age eleven by the composer's patron, Charles VIII, after nine years' betrothal.

Josquin's *Baises moy* (Kiss Me) reflects the new style of chanson—light, text-centered, repetitive, and appealing to popular taste. Its playful air and extremely frivolous text belie learned underpinnings: two of the lines generate the other two through strict canon, each derived voice a fourth higher than its original. The mourners mentioned in the poem include Josquin himself and a number of his contemporaries, including Brumel, Compère, and Pierre de la Rue ("Pirchon"). Petrucci includes in *Canti B* a second version of the work for six voices, attributed to Josquin in other sources, which adds yet another pair of canonic voices, making three simultaneous canons in all—an impressive compositional feat.

Like many of his Franco-Netherlandish contemporaries, Antoine Brumel worked in Italy, first at the court of Ferrara, and later in service to Charles VIII of France during his occupation of that country. *Sicut lilium* (Like the Lily), which appears in the *Medici Codex*, neatly illustrates how the Italian focus on text and melody transformed Brumel's style, which in his early works was robust Northern polyphony. After a brief round of imitation, the motet is governed not by the interplay of lines, but by a suave treble melody closely wedded to the accents and phrasing of its text, a verse from the *Song of Solomon* long used in devotion to the Virgin Mary. The same composer's *Ave Maria* was composed during his short tenure (1498–1500) at Notre Dame in Paris, where he served as master of the choirboys. It continued to be performed after his departure, and came to inspire composers who succeeded him, including Claudin de Sermisy (c. 1490–1552) and Mouton. Brumel's *Ave ancilla Trinitatis*, a more florid work, features at its conclusion a canonic tour de force in which the middle voice is imitated one beat later by the top voice in an exact canon at the fifth.

In his five-voice motet *Ave Maria, virgo serena* (Hail Mary, Serene Virgin), French composer Jean Mouton opens with Gabriel's words of salutation spoken to Mary at the Annunciation. Mouton draws rich sonorities from the lower three voices, creating a musical serenity mirroring that of the Virgin. Mouton's contemporaries greatly admired his work, writing about his smoothly flowing melodies, consistent rhythmic and tonal framework, and dissonances that are always properly prepared and resolved. The overall effect is that of refined balance, an aesthetic ideal of the period.

*Déploration sur la morte d'Ockeghem* (Lament on the Death of Ockeghem) is a poignant farewell from Josquin to his deceased elder colleague, Johannes Ockeghem (d. 1497). Revered among composers of his day, Ockeghem was also known as a fine teacher and generous mentor. Josquin interweaves a French poem written by Jean Molinet (1433–1507) with the Latin lines from the introit from the Mass for the Dead. The mourners mentioned in the poem include Josquin himself and a number of his contemporaries, including Brumel and Compère. Only one voice, the second tenor, carries the chant line associated with the introit. Josquin assigns extremely slow note values to this chant melody, which runs like a thread through the entire work, sustaining its mood and underpinning its somber harmonies.

*Program notes by Vera Kochanowsky and Hubert Beckwith*