

**Modern performance of sacred medieval music
with particular reference to women's voices**

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Part 1

Abstract

Introduction	1
1. The early music movement from 'authenticity' to 'HIP'	7
2. Singers and vocal production	42
3. Singers and original sources: the problems of recreation	68
4. Medieval texts and modern translations	89
5. Communication and collaboration between musicologists and performers	109
6. The nature of medieval singing in the present	118
<i>Notes</i>	133
<i>Bibliography</i>	160

Part 2

Appendix

ABSTRACT

Successful thinking performers do not exist in a vacuum: they have to relate to what is expected from them. There is an assumption among consumers of medieval music that the concerts and the plethora of recordings available on CD have an authority based on research.

The research for this thesis is based on personal interview material with singers and musicologists of medieval music. The experiences of twelve professional female singers (based in England, North America, France and Norway) are discussed and conclusions drawn about how they engage with performance-related issues that arise from the recontextualising of the music in the present. Topics discussed include vocal production, the use of original and secondary source material, programme planning and the provision of medieval texts and modern translations, as well as the communication and collaboration between performers and scholars.

One of the crucial matters for women who sing and perform medieval music is that we cannot in any way be historically 'authentic' (however much we might wish to be) because of the historical marginalization of women by the church. We can, however, use a personal 'authenticity' in our performances and in doing so engage with the issue of historically informed performance, thereby paving the way for a 'post early music' scenario, where we can be free to make our own decisions and use gaps in the historical record as a creative opportunity. These concepts are further explored in a commentary on a performance by Trio Mediaeval in the Chapter House of York Minster (4 February 2009).

Introduction

Curiosity was the main reason for starting this research. Ever since I first came across medieval music and began to perform it, I have been eager to explore and observe different contexts and ways in which the music was, and is currently, presented. With the vocal ensemble Trio Mediaeval which was founded in Oslo in 1997, I have had the good fortune to be able to perform and record medieval sacred repertoire (alongside contemporary music and Norwegian folk songs) to a large audience.¹ This thesis draws attention to issues concerning the modern professional performance of medieval sacred music by women and is based on personal communication and interviews with thirteen professional singers as well as a number of musicologists. The associated recital is an example of current professional practice in the first decade of the twenty-first century, and is the outcome of my own attempts to establish a viable relationship between modern performance and scholarship; it illustrates some of the issues and concepts raised in the interviews. Approaching a topic that is very close to one's own heart as a performer has been a challenge. At the same time I have had to work hard to stay objective when interviewing and subsequently in my analysis of the research material.

One of my research questions has been to ask how female singers of medieval music cope with the fact that the musicology supporting the early music revival might not always have corresponded with their own performance ideals. Related to this is the problem that most of the surviving sacred medieval polyphony that women wish to sing was composed for men. From the moment that individual performers get together and form a group, they face a number of challenges, both as individuals and as members of an ensemble: vocal quality, blending, programme planning and textual engagement, presentation, work responsibilities within the group as well as career ambitions are only a few of the topics which most professional groups have to deal with, and I have invited my interviewees to explore them.

Another question which has engaged me is how to present music of the past alongside contemporary music in a convincing manner. When we started the Trio Medieval the first songs we sang were fifteenth century English medieval carols and we simply sang the pieces in a way which sounded good to our ears and at the same time worked in a vocally comfortable way. We did not have a substantial knowledge

of medieval music, nor of the musicology which sustains it. In fact, I had never sung a piece of medieval polyphony before I met Linn Andrea Fuglseth and Torunn Østrem Ossum. My only connection with medieval music had been through listening to the joint project between The Hilliard Ensemble and the Norwegian saxophonist Jan Garbarek in the early 1990s. It was at the start of my third year of solo voice studies at the music academy 'Barratt Due Institute of Music' in Oslo, that I met Linn Andrea Fuglseth in a recording project with the Norwegian Soloists' Choir.² We were standing next to each other and found that our voices and our way of phrasing worked very well together. I was lucky to have a singing teacher, Thorbjørn Lindhjem, who fully supported my involvement in choir and ensemble singing, and likewise my choice of repertoire. Like all my fellow voice students I studied the standard (largely operatic) repertoire, and in my final year when I participated in the department's opera performance of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, singing the role of Susanna, I found myself more excited by the various ensemble pieces, rather than the arias.

As we began to meet as Trio Mediaeval, and to rehearse and perform, it became evident to me that the art of ensemble singing unfortunately had very little to do with the way in which solo voice students (during their period of study) are usually taught to relate to their own voice and future career. During my two years of postgraduate vocal studies at the Trinity College of Music of London, with Linda Hirst and Barbara Bonney as my main teachers, my career with the trio was already a full-time job, which meant I divided my time between performing medieval music on tour and practicing vocal technique in a variety of different repertoires at college.³ Linda Hirst, whom I first met in 1998, when the Trio Mediaeval attended the 'Hilliard Summer School' (organised by Cambridge Early Music Summer Schools) where she was invited to coach, and John Potter (with whom I have worked in a number of different ensembles: Red Byrd, Ciconia Ensemble and Gavin Bryars Ensemble) have both played a significant part in my development as a singer, vocal/ensemble coach and performer. I have found it hugely important to have a versatile voice, and although latterly I have focussed more exclusively on the fields of early and contemporary music, I am very glad to have a background in different repertoires.

In working to interpret and present the medieval repertoire in an exciting way, we have been coached and inspired by a number of specialists in the field such as The Hilliard Ensemble, John Potter, Richard Wistreich and Linda Hirst. For the last three

years we have worked closely with the musicologist Nicky Losseff who contributes her expertise and prepares all the editions of medieval music for the group.

Finding music for three equal voices seemed difficult at first, but it did not take long to discover that we could try out and experiment with an extensive repertoire of medieval material. The trio still approaches medieval music in the same way as when we started; the aim has always been to enjoy the repertoire and the creative activity of ensemble singing as well as to use the voice in a way which feels comfortable without having to adjust or match a certain vocal sound. We have used our different vocal timbres as a resource to make varied programmes and sound. Indeed, since many composers have written music for the trio, most of our programmes today feature a similar proportion of both medieval and contemporary music.⁴

In 2004, in an interview about Trio Mediaeval's CD *Soir, dit-elle*, an Estonian journalist made the statement that the contemporary music on the recording is sung with a medieval singing style.⁵ What made him say that? He surely cannot have been researching medieval sources and found that the sound that he thinks of as an ideal medieval sound is similar to the sound the trio makes. It may be that like many other people he associates the relatively light and clear sound of the trio with early music generally. Should he, and do we, have any justification for this sound in historical terms? There is evidence that women performed sacred polyphony in the Middle Ages, but almost all of the surviving polyphony is associated with all-male establishments. To sing it today involves reconciling questions of historical appropriateness with contemporary social values: the circumstances and atmosphere in which the music is currently presented differ dramatically from its original milieu and context. I think we would all agree that it is impossible to re-create actual history. So the aim has to be to recover from the past what has current relevance, and to use that to inform performances in the present.

If we were to decide to focus solely on medieval repertoire and sound, we could perhaps get close to what we think might be a more 'historically informed' way of singing. But, as many modern singers of medieval music practise a variety of musical styles, if we have to use what we usually refer to as a 'classically' trained voice (or *bel canto* style), we have to compromise. Medieval monophonic music with its generally small tonal range, can often be sung in the middle register of the voice (close to the speaking voice), and medieval polyphony also requires a vocal range

which usually does not exceed more than an octave for each of the singers. This is in contrast to modern music where composers often tend to explore the singer's whole vocal range (and happily try to extend it), so a steady and focused vocal technique is needed. Vocally, it can be very hard for a singer to work with many different musical styles and we have to consider how to use our voices in the best and most healthy way. Since we want to be able to produce what we think of as an *ideal* sound for every musical style we perform, we might have to concentrate on a few specific styles and not aim for the extremes and sing music such as Wagner, traditional cattle calls and Machaut on consecutive evenings.

The rationale for the choice of the control group of female performers was based on my understanding of who were the most active medieval music singers at the time I started the research. I approached fifteen singers and thirteen of them readily agreed to participate; their openness and support both in the interviews as well as in later correspondence have been absolutely crucial for this thesis. My choice of musicologists was based on the relevant literature appropriate to the topic as well as the availability and interest of the scholars I approached. In addition to the interviews the research is based on a number of personal communications (conversations and emails) that are not transcribed.⁶ Many of the meetings, (especially overseas) have been done in conjunction with Trio Mediaeval tours. The transcriptions of most of the interviews can be found in the Appendix. I have edited these to take account of occasional poor sound quality and the wishes of some of the interviewees for only a partial transcription.⁷ All interviewees have affirmed the printed text of their interview and they are aware of the quotes that have been incorporated in the thesis. The interviewees were able to decide what should be printed in the appendix and what should be omitted, in order to avoid potential ethical and confidentiality issues. For similar reasons I have also edited some of my comments so as not to compromise my own personal integrity. Sections of the interviews which are not directly relevant to the thesis have been cut. These editorial decisions can sometimes result in abrupt shifts between subjects. The interviews normally lasted for an hour and a half and were based on a set of questions which I devised in consultation with my supervisor.

The choice of topics to be included in the thesis is primarily based on my own involvement in medieval and contemporary music (both as a performer and a consumer). I was fairly sure that much of my own experience, and the questions it

generated, would be shared by fellow performers in the field. The questions were the same for all performers and for some of them (who are also scholars) I included a number of questions designed specifically for musicologists and vice versa. Additionally, each interview brought new perspectives to my understanding, which in turn initiated supplementary questions and conversations. There are inevitably questions that could have been asked which I left out, or perhaps did not think of.

The method used for analysing the interview material provided a clear overview of the different topics discussed. Since observations and extrapolations on certain issues occurred at various different points during the interviews (and were not always limited to a certain question) I had to find a way of making sure it was easy to navigate through the material. I gave each topic its own colour and printed copies were marked accordingly, rather than rely on qualitative software analysis.⁸ I then compared and reflected on the answers and decided what information to bring into the main body of the thesis.

Chapter 1, 'The early music movement from "authenticity" to "Historically Informed Performance"', deals with the historiography of medieval music and the discipline of performance practice. Relevant publications, from the twentieth - and the start of the twenty-first century, on topics such as medieval musicology, terminology, women in medieval music, the sound of medieval song as well as modern performance issues are reviewed and discussed. Chapter 2 deals with medieval music and modern vocal production. The interview material has been used as a basis on which reflections and analyses are made.⁹ Each of the interviewees' (performers) vocal background, education and current vocal ideals (such as vocal technique, tuning, vibrato and ensemble blend) are explored, and there is a selection of quotes from concert/recording reviews that present a number of evaluations on some of the singers' vocal qualities. The second part of this chapter deals with musicologists' thoughts on what the original singers of medieval music might have sounded like and whether that sound bares any relation to the modern equivalent. The third chapter focuses on the use of original sources and the problems of re-creation. Today we re-contextualize the music, and we will see that both performers and musicologists involved in this research deal with questions regarding authenticity, HIP (Historically Informed Performance) and non-HIP in several different ways. Chapter 4, 'Medieval texts and modern translations', is probably the chapter where the opinions of the performers vary the most. Some are very concerned about the literal meaning of the

medieval texts and find it important to have full text and translations in the programmes and CD booklets, while others are more interested in the musical aspect of the medieval repertoire and choose not to provide substantial textual information. Issues such as 'Is it possible to recreate the original meaning of a medieval context in the present day?', 'Educational aspects of translations and programme notes' and 'Beyond the text: the concert as a spiritual experience' are debated and answered by the control group of both performers and musicologists. The succeeding chapter 'Communication and collaboration between musicologists and performers' raises questions of how much the two disciplines integrate. The development of medieval music making, especially during the last ten years, has drawn more on personal engagement and creativity, and the different ways in which medieval music is presented today show that strict performance rules are not always a criterion for successful music making. Consumers of medieval music are now used to hearing medieval polyphony sung by female voices. The last chapter of the thesis discusses the nature of medieval music in the present and includes my own reflections on the Trio Mediaeval concert that was held in the Chapter House in York Minster on the 4th of February 2009, as a part of the PhD in Performance degree. The material which constitutes the programme *A Worcester Ladymass* was taken from the Worcester fragments and includes a selection of monophonic and polyphonic pieces from the thirteenth century. In addition to the medieval music the programme includes three contemporary pieces written especially for the trio by the British composer Gavin Bryars. This final chapter discusses issues arising from the recital concerning programme planning (outline, structure, selection of material, text and translation), collaboration between musicologist, composer and performers as well as matters concerning the performance (manner of presentation and interpretative decisions).

The modern performance of medieval music is such a fertile and fascinating ground for research, that hopefully more and more questions will be raised, explored, and even answered.

Chapter 1: The early music movement from ‘authenticity’ to ‘Historically Informed Performance’

The literature on early and medieval music is vast. Not only are there compendiums covering research and performance practice on the historical periods themselves, but there are additional volumes which reflect the fact that over the years, as the early music revival has flourished, the multiplicity of contemporary approaches to this history, both scholarly and musical, has become a research topic in its own right. Debates are born as soon as sounds, statements, theories and opinions are recorded and published, and discussions create new views and questions for further examination. It is clear that early music has been one of the most important classical musical genres to be explored during the last half century. Old music, or early music (which is the term that is mostly used) has found a new life in the musicological and performance world, and has brought new and exciting elements and goals to its own discipline. Additionally, it has influenced a number of other musical strands, and has been especially important for the music of our own time. Early music has also been a subject of disputation, with many disagreements about how it relates to the past, particularly concerning the use, misuse and confusion surrounding its terminology, such as the notion of ‘authenticity’.

During the last fifty years, the information available about medieval music (printed scores, facsimiles and treatises, academic research and audible media) has expanded enormously. Publishers continuously distribute books on the topic, and interest has grown as the music has ceased to be only the preserve of a specialist circle of people and moved into the ‘mainstream’.¹⁰ Although the vast majority of medieval manuscripts had been edited by the end of the nineteenth century, new sources are still being discovered, and new editions based on the latest research continue to become available. The performers consulted throughout this research either work closely with an editor or they have the skills and knowledge to transcribe and edit material themselves.¹¹ With resources to hand such as DIAMM (The Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music), the majority of medieval manuscripts have become available online for public consultation, and can be of great help to performers who wish to compare an edition with the original notation without travelling half way around the world to view it in a library.

Second half of the of nineteenth-century and first half of the twentieth-century

Interest in early music itself started long before the early music movement got under way in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Harry Haskell begins his account of the phenomenon with Mendelssohn's 1829 *St Matthew Passion* 'because it was the first such performance to make an immediate and widespread impact on contemporary music life'.¹² The nineteenth century, with its compositional, musicological and performance versatility, included a number of different musical art forms that existed alongside each other, and it was not only 'early music' that was 're-invented'. Contemporary classical music developed along several different pathways. First, a strong interest in folklore and rural folk music was a great inspiration to many composers. Edward Grieg, for example, based many of his works on traditional elements which not only enabled him to create a new style, but also to bring folk music to the attention of the (urban) middle class. The same phenomenon occurred in many European countries where composers such as Antonín Dvořák, Jean Sibelius, Frederic Chopin, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Enrique Granados, and Béla Bartók all incorporated components of folk music into their compositions, so that both vocal and instrumental traditional music as well as their associated dance rhythms became integral elements of art music. It was not until relatively recently that actual original folk music and modern folk musicians came to be included in what the 'art-world' has appreciated as 'art music'. Like medieval music, folk music has now become a genre within the art music field. It is now possible to study folk music at a high performance standard at most conservatoires in the Nordic countries, though this is still a rather new phenomenon.

A second pathway along which nineteenth century contemporary classical music developed was the growing movement to explore and preserve old music, and engagement with the repertoire took many exciting forms. Scholars and performers searched archives for original sources, and by the end of the century the compilation and analysis of medieval manuscripts had become a significant aspect of the growing discipline of musicology. Amongst the many active and successful scholars on the European mainland at the time was the German scholar Friedrich Ludwig (1872-1930). He was in the forefront, cataloguing and editing an extensive corpus of medieval polyphony, which led the musicologist Anna Maria Busse Berger to refer to Ludwig as the 'founding father of medieval music'. However, Berger also calls

attention to 'how the overwhelming presence of Ludwig has prevented us from addressing new questions.'¹³ During Ludwig's relatively short lifetime, he edited an extensive part of the surviving corpus of medieval manuscripts. Only a fraction of this material was published, and the reason for that might be, as Berger suggests, that 'at the beginning of his career he was convinced that there was no interest in performing the music of the period.'¹⁴ She continues with a quotation by Ludwig written in 1905: 'The main reason to work on and publish medieval music is not a practical but a scholarly one.'¹⁵ However, Ludwig's editions, which were primarily constructed for musicological rather than performance purposes, did create an interest amongst performers who started to investigate the 'new material' and its musical construction and sound world.¹⁶ By 1921 Ludwig's reputation both as a scholar and an editor/performance consultant had been established and his later work 'stressed that the primary goal of musicological research was to bring music of the past back to life.'¹⁷ A series of medieval music concerts, for which Ludwig wrote extensive programme notes and provided the performers with modern editions of organa and motets, was presented in 1922 at the Badische Kunsthalle in Karlsruhe, and Berger suggests that these concerts 'marked the beginning of medieval music performances in Germany'.¹⁸

Another impressive figure who contributed to the development of medieval music in the first half of the twentieth century was the Swiss scholar and organist Jacques Handschin (1886-1955), who by the time of his death had compiled a microfilm archive of more than 70,000 medieval manuscripts.¹⁹ However despite the activities of enthusiasts like Handschin, it took more than half a century for medieval music to be recognised as a concert music genre, and almost another half century to be classified and acknowledged as 'mainstream' music. In those 100 years the term 'early music' has broadened significantly, such that today we may consider any music written before the age of recording as 'early music'. Indeed, the historical performance movement has investigated and produced 'period performance of 20th-century music'.²⁰

In the preface to his book *Music in the Middle Ages: with an introduction on the music of ancient times*, published in 1940, the American musicologist Gustav Reese focuses on scholarly information and the importance of modern editions of the original scores. The book, published at the end of the Neo-classical period (where 'Back to Bach' had been the motto), considers medieval music to be of interest to the modern composer. It does not raise issues about how it should be performed. Reese notes that 'there is much, for example, in 13th-century polyphony that is especially in harmony with present-day taste and that may well fire the imagination of contemporary composers.'²¹ Early and contemporary music have grown closer over the decades, and Reese would probably not be surprised to see that many musicians of early music today work closely with contemporary composers.²² From the 1940s onwards Gustav Reese was an advisor to Noah Greenberg of the ensemble New York Pro Musica, which was one of the first groups to perform medieval music. In addition to his career as a writer he was teaching and working in music publishing, but he is probably best known for his two books, *Music in the Middle Ages* and *Music in the Renaissance*.²³ In Chapter 11 of the former work, entitled 'The culmination of continental organum and discant in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries', Reese includes a short paragraph on methods of performance where he starts by stating that there is very little information on the subject. Then in a brief discussion about organa he says that it was 'normally sung by soloists, but with a tenor doubled if the volume was not sufficient.'²⁴ Even though later research proved these ideas correct, there was no hard evidence at the time to support Reese's performance ideas.²⁵ He presents the polyphony of Las Huelgas MS as well as its two-part exercise in *solfeggio* as evidence that women did sing polyphonic music in the convent in the thirteenth century, and points out that the customary clefs were used and from this fact it may be deduced that neither the choice of clefs nor the apparent tessitura indicates that works in thirteenth (or fourteenth) century MSS were intended for the exclusive use of men's voices.²⁶ The clefs were chosen with a view to placing all the notes on the staff, and according to Reese it is wholly likely that polyphonic music was sometimes sung by women – whether as nuns in convents, or as trained or amateur singers in secular life.²⁷ We now know that female religious establishments in the medieval period did not have the same resources as the all-male equivalent, and that most music that has

survived in manuscript form was composed for male voices. However, everything points to the fact that women had the same liturgical agenda as men, even though the repertoire might have been more limited.

The birth of the LP in 1948 and the post-war development in broadcasting, especially BBC broadcasts and live concerts in the United Kingdom, contributed significantly to the flourishing of medieval music (and indeed early music in general). With support from the BBC, promoters dared to introduce medieval music into their concert agenda, and medieval music started to reach out to a mainstream audience.²⁸ In 1957 the American musicologist Gilbert Reaney wrote an article concerning medieval music on the gramophone that gives us a hint as to the status of medieval polyphony in the mid- 1950s:

It has few of the features which appeal to most buyers. Its harmonic language is on the surface elementary, its melodic lines are sensuous but impersonal, its rhythms too complex and unfamiliar. The modern record-buyer is not impressed by the three-part motets but by works for full orchestra and full complement of virtuoso performers and conductors. At all events this would seem to be the case, though a recent survey points out that so-called esoteric records are most in demand at the public libraries.²⁹

The suggestion that medieval music was only understood by a small number of specialists and most useful for archival and research purposes was probably true and most likely related to the way the medieval music was performed and presented. It probably did not correspond with what was at the time a fashionable and familiar sound. The presumption that a medieval scholar was needed to make the music come right possibly prevented performers from experimenting with the material. What the music did need was performers who could take the music and create something which appealed to the listener:

One thing seems certain where records of medieval music are concerned, i.e. that supervision by an authoritative and not merely competent musicologist makes all the difference.... But suitable guidance is not enough. The choice of voices and instruments as well as the quality of the performers must be considered.³⁰

Reaney refers to the need for authoritative involvement in performance in the form of a medieval scholar, and it is clear that he does not consider the performers to have the

authoritative skill and historical awareness required to create successful performances. Reaney's observations regarding authoritative supervision could hardly be said to apply to mainstream music making in the 1950s (unless one considers singing and instrumental teachers as the authoritative supervisors), and there are probably no other musical genres where the performers have been influenced by musicology to the same degree as they have with medieval music. However, it is the case that the technical level amongst medieval music performers during the early music revival has certainly been of variable standards, and medieval music has possibly accommodated a number of musicians who have lacked the virtuosic skills required in mainstream repertoire.³¹ Reaney's statement also invites a discussion of what he considers the most important elements (independent of genre) in a musical experience. If a performer was blindly to follow a musicologist's advice, there might be no space for the performer's individual creativity and freedom. In addition, if the performer's skills were not of 'high quality' the music would probably not sound very good, with or without a musicologist's views:

Finally a plea for suitable accompanying notes with records of medieval music. Handbooks like those provided with the 'History of Music in Sound' should be accurate and conform to what is found on the records. Notes on the music are useful, but full details of voices and instruments used, together with complete texts, are most necessary. The edition used should also be mentioned, preferably with date and page. It is also good to know when a piece was recorded.³²

Reaney is arguing for the presentation of medieval music as a joint 'study' where scholarship and music-making figure equally. Since the 1960s, performances and recordings have tended to be accompanied by extensive programme notes.³³ It is assumed that the performer writes the notes or that the performer is working with a scholar who is providing the necessary information.

Performance and musicology: Timothy McGee

The first book to focus entirely on the performance of medieval and renaissance music was Timothy J. McGee's *Medieval and Renaissance Music: A Performer's Guide*, published in 1985. McGee has since written another three books on medieval music and its practice.³⁴ In the mid-eighties, debates about the reconstructions of historically authentic performance started to appear.³⁵ The discussions created tension within the musicological world; in the preface to his first book McGee writes:

Although this book is devoted entirely to historically authentic interpretation, I do not insist upon that as the only approach to the early music repertory. Much early music can be performed successfully in the style of later centuries, and performing musicians should feel able to play the music of any century with or without concern for period style. Authentic performance of the music of another era is mostly a product of the twentieth century; previously the music of earlier periods was always performed on the instruments and in the style that was current.³⁶

In associating authentic performances with the twentieth century McGee clearly understands that performances of any sort inevitably reflect the current aesthetic. Several vocal ensembles founded in the seventies and eighties were barely engaged in the authenticity debate, and their aim was not recreation, musicology or history, but essentially to sing the music one to a part and to mix old and new in a way they felt made sense to them.³⁷ In the middle of the 1980s scholars such as Timothy McGee, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, Christopher Page, David Fallows and Richard Taruskin published extensively, although most performers were probably unaware of the debate and continued to work in a way that they were comfortable with.

In McGee's introduction to *The Sound of Medieval Song: Ornamentation and Vocal Style according to the Treatises* published in 1998 (more than ten years after his first publication), he points out that the book is not intended to be a performance guide but 'a scholarly study of the available information about how medieval music actually sounded.'³⁸ McGee collected information from one hundred and fifty medieval treatises and presented analyses of excerpts from forty-six of them with the aim of clarifying and explaining his suggested vocal and ornamental style of medieval song. It is an impressive and useful compilation for anyone interested in the topic, and

the book (still the only book to deal specifically with the vocal sound of the middle ages) provides notable insights into original medieval sources and treatises.

McGee's rather liberal attitude to the performer's freedom seems to have become stricter with time, and he says that 'there is no doubt that as a result of the information presented here we must adjust our idea of how medieval music should be performed.'³⁹ His reference to 'our idea' in this context is probably to the consumer of medieval music, whether it is the performer, the scholar or the listener. He adds that 'although several excellent ensembles have been ornamenting medieval music for some time, following some of the theoretical information included here, most have not.'⁴⁰ Rather than looking at the present-day 'Western vocal sound', which he argues has nothing to do with the medieval sound world, McGee draws parallels between the sound images in medieval treatises and current eastern singing traditions. He admits it is impossible to know which of the many current eastern practices (where each region and country has its own musical heritage and style) best represents the medieval singing style, but he argues that 'it is obvious from the above discussion that the basic vocal techniques and sound repertoires used in all of the Eastern traditions have much in common with the vocal sound in medieval Europe.'⁴¹ To turn McGee's speculations based on treatises from 800 years ago into sound is an impossible task, and the adjustments the performer is advised to pursue in order to achieve the 'ideal' presentation of medieval music are based on subjective interpretations of original source material:

To obtain an accurate view of the actual sound of medieval music we must imagine it as it would have been performed, sung in a vocal style in which a dazzling and colourful array of embellishments and vocal inflections were basic not only to its sound in performance, but to the medieval concept of music.⁴²

McGee suggests that although there are many vocal ensembles performing medieval music (presenting as many different interpretations as there are performers), most of them have not used the theoretical information that the original sources provide. He further proposes that 'the modern classically trained voice cannot be used as the model for vocal sound, and the practice of performing exactly what is on the page – no matter how beautifully it is done – is simply incorrect as a reconstruction of the sounds of the past.'⁴³ McGee's observation, that a modern (Western) classically

trained voice cannot come close to the sound of the medieval singer's is likely to be true, but we should not forget that the vocal tract is the same now as it was then; and that the agility and control of a trained singer who is open to experimenting with different sounds enables a range of tone and articulation possibilities that suits and matches various repertoires. It would be rash to assume that singers in the medieval era had only one type of vocal quality which they constantly applied. Today the definition of a classically trained voice embraces a wide range of vocal qualities and performance possibilities, and the aim for many singers is to be able to use the voice in many different ways and not just focus on one specific repertoire.

McGee had a radical suggestion for vocal ensembles seeking authenticity:

Modern ensembles wishing to recreate medieval music as closely as possible to the expectations of the Middle Ages must now learn a new vocal style and revise their performance practices. For performers anxious to translate the information given here into practice, I intend to publish a separate volume directed at the practical level.⁴⁴

But his suggestion has not, perhaps, received the attention he hoped for. His proposed volume has not yet appeared, and besides, with the view of history we have today we cannot forget all we know about the modern world and all that it includes. To meet the 'expectations of the Middle Ages' in a performance is impossible since no one knows what the premises for the expectations are. McGee's aspirations might trigger some performers to re-think their future performances, but the performers of today will already have based their careers around their own approach. This does not mean that performers have stagnated, but rather the opposite.

It is courageous, and some might call it dangerous, to write about how to achieve an 'accurate view' and 'actual sound' of medieval music, when any given treatise is open to any number of interpretations. When interpreting medieval treatises, there are many things to take into consideration. We have to understand that the 'normality' of the period is unknown to us. What was not written down - or in other words, what was taken for granted at the time - is really what we would want to read and know more about. Even in pedagogical writings, material which was for the writer obvious information is rarely dealt with, and the more specific information that was recorded is based on that 'obvious' ground, making the interpretation of ancient

sources mysterious and difficult. To paraphrase Daniel Leech Wilkinson, what the treatises *do* say is impossible to understand now in enough detail to turn into sound.⁴⁵

McGee's chapter 'Cantare all' improvviso; Improvising to Poetry in Late medieval Italy' in *Improvisation in the Arts of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, is essentially directed towards secular medieval music, but there are a few paragraphs that deal with the religious, non-liturgical *laude*.⁴⁶ These monophonic songs, based on Italian vernacular poetry, were probably orally transmitted and McGee points out that it is likely that improvisation played a large part in the creation of *laude*.⁴⁷ Even though the notation in the surviving manuscripts is very similar to the symbols used for plainsong, the musicologist Cyrilla Barr points out that the lack of mensural indications does not necessarily mean that every note had the same measurement but rather that the performer probably used the rhythmical flow of the poetry as well as the emphasis of the words to create the tune.⁴⁸ McGee himself does not provide performative suggestions regarding the improvisational techniques of *laude* but points out that 'it would seem highly probable that when required to improvise a melody for a *lauda*, a capable improviser would have invented one in the style usually associated with that genre.'⁴⁹ Two manuscripts, discovered in Cortona and Florence, contain both text and music, while other sources of *laude* from the same time period only contain the texts.⁵⁰ Many performers of medieval music in our time (both singers and instrumentalists) have experimented with the *lauda* repertoire, which has resulted in a variety of contrasting versions in terms of their sound picture, arrangements and distribution of voices.⁵¹ Since the repertoire is fairly limited and most of the songs have the same structure, it is instructive to compare different performances and see how performers have exercised their creativity. We find modern performances of *laude* sung by a single voice, voices in unison, vocal arrangements or voices together with instruments, and some performers clearly feel free to improvise ornaments and indeed entire parts in these songs.⁵² The evidence for improvisation at this period is very unclear, but that has not stopped groups from routinely extrapolating on the surviving sources.

'Improvisation' includes a large number of possibilities. To improvise can mean to create something completely new, with or without set frames, or simply to add a new element to an existing structure that fits in with an 'appropriate' and expected style. Furthermore, to ornament and/or change only a few notes in a written score is also a type of improvisation, and performers who consider themselves

'improvisers' may differ in their definitions, independently of genres. An improvisation only happens once as an improvisation; if repeated, it becomes composition or imitation. The suggestion that amateurs sang easy tunes/hymns that created the *laude* melodies may imply that these amateurs were, in fact, rather impressive composers.⁵³

In 1985 McGee's ideas concerning the composer's intentions versus the freedom of the performer were expressed in the following simple maxim: 'The result may not be what the composer himself had in mind, but if it is presented musically there is no need for criticism.'⁵⁴ Given that 'musicality' is very subjective, this statement can almost be interpreted as saying that unmusical performers should go for Historically Informed Performance (HIP) while musical performers can do what they like with the material. Ten years later he brings up the same issue in his introduction to *Singing Early Music; the Pronunciation of European Languages in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance*, but with quite a contrasting tone. Here he writes, 'It seemed to me that if we are to recreate the music of those early centuries as faithfully as possible to the intentions of the composers, our first concern should be to perform it with the sounds the composers expected to hear.'⁵⁵ It is surprising that a musicologist who was such a supporter of individuality in performance in the eighties became more conservative with time. McGee also notes that the 'reproduction of authentic musical instruments' was far more widespread during the past century than the exploration of vocal sound, which he discusses in terms of 'singing the texts with the correct pronunciation.'⁵⁶ He adds that:

Correct pronunciation will not by itself guarantee a historically correct vocal performance... But pronouncing the words correctly is definitely a step in the right direction, and the correct pronunciation will also influence some of the other vocal elements, especially tone colour.⁵⁷

The book, edited by McGee, provides information of considerable value on the history of pronunciation and different languages. It is written by language specialists and not musicologists, which means that there are no references to HIP or authenticity within the chapters, and this makes it more objective from a performance point of view. There is of course (as in musicology) guesswork and interpretation involved here as well, and again one can never be sure this was the way the music sounded. Detailed examples accompanied by a CD to clarify and demonstrate the described

sound, makes it relatively easy to figure out how to pronounce the different languages according to this source.

Whether we want to recreate a certain accent or not, the knowledge we receive from studying old languages (as well as other details we collect when we perform and undertake research) probably does inform the performance and influence our decision-making in one way or another. In 1992 the linguist Alison Wray wrote: 'research into old pronunciation should open doors, making more options available to the singers, without cornering them into the "trap" of authenticity at any cost.'⁵⁸ When we reflect on the 'right' pronunciation in connection with the composer's intentions we should bear in mind that medieval singers spoke a very wide range of accents and dialects. How did they approach the material in terms of pronunciation? Did the composer care that singers from other countries and regions might sing the music differently, and did he/she know where copies of the manuscript travelled? If we want to recreate a performance from the past, we could, for example, look at how the monks at the monastery of St Andrew's in Scotland sang and pronounced the Notre Dame polyphony, and base our performance on that. Pronunciation is something that all vocal performers consider in great detail, and most would probably argue that as long as they are consistent, whatever they decide on works best for them and the music they perform. Very few of the performers I have talked to during my research have showed interest in what current musicology says about vocal sound.

We can, however, learn from the past if we want to base our singing on the information that survives, provided we interpret the evidence with care. For example, we have to bear in mind the factors that caused ancient clerics to write treatises on singing in the first place. If everything was sung perfectly, and if there were no complaints, the writer would not have felt the need to write instructions for singers. The idea of the 'right' sound was obviously a matter for debate even in the medieval period, and today the treatises may not mean what they appear to mean. The vocal technique that was used is for us an unknown territory. We can only refer to small amounts of written instructions for singers, and a handful of other literary references. Of course there is a huge amount of medieval iconography, but deriving a sound from a picture can be even harder than from a text. An often-quoted source is the seventh century Isidore of Seville, who describes the 'perfect' sound in his *Etymologies*. He also discusses the qualities that should be avoided in singing. Here, women and children's voices were used as an example of weakness. Isidore says:

Sweet voices are subtle and fine, clean and keen. Brilliant voices are those that possess great carrying power, so that they entirely fill a space, just like the sound of trumpets. Delicate voices are those with little breath, like the voices of children, woman and the sick, or string instruments. Large voices are those produced with a considerable volume of breath, like those of men. A hard voice is one that produces sounds forcefully like thunder or like the sound of an anvil whenever the hammer strikes hard iron. A harsh voice is one that is hoarse and produced as faint and equal pulsations. A 'blind' voice is one that, as soon as it is produced falls silently; having been suffocated, it can by no means be sustained for long, just as the case with earthen pots. A perfect voice is thus high, sweet and clear: high, so that it might soar up to the highest pitches; clear, so that it might fill the ears; sweet, so that the spirits of the listener might be charmed. If any of these qualities is missing, the voice is not perfect.⁵⁹

Of course, this is a translation from the Latin, and in translating Isidore's remarks about 'the perfect voice' the translator has decided that 'alta' means 'high'. But 'alta' can also mean 'noble', 'grand' or 'elegant', so we cannot really be very sure of what Isidore actually meant. And whatever he meant could only refer to Seville, or other musical communities he had personally experienced, in the early seventh century. The translator's own experience may play a significant part when it comes to interpreting sources: every source has many possible interpretations.

The treatise *De Modo Bene Cantandi* (On how to sing well) by the German Conrad von Zabern was printed in 1474, some 800 years later than *Etymologies*. Conrad was a priest, theologian and musical scholar associated with Heidelberg University, first as a student and then as a teacher and university preacher. *De Modo Bene Cantandi* is the oldest surviving manual to deal comprehensively with practical singing techniques, though it is important to remember that the members of its intended audience were singers in the monastic choir, and not professional soloists. Conrad draws our attention to the following points:

- The human throat is delicate and easily injured when it is abused, as it is by loud singing in the upper register. The harm having been done, hoarseness soon ensues.
- Another error in singing results from not singing the syllables clearly and with the proper vowel sound. Very many clerics are guilty of this: they act as if they have food in their mouths.
- Another fault which is more obvious than the others is singing high notes with an unstintingly full and powerful voice... When this shouting is

done by individuals with resonant and trumpet-like voices it disturbs and confuses the singing of the entire choir, just as if the voices of cattle were heard among the singers.... whoever wishes to sing well and clearly must employ his voice in three ways: resonantly and trumpet-like for the low notes, moderately in the middle range and more delicately for the high notes – the more so the higher the chant ascends.

- Another error is singing sleepily and lifelessly and without affection, like a poor old woman on the brink of the grave.
- The last error to be mentioned at this time is singing with inappropriate deportment: not standing straight but moving back and forth, holding the head up too high or noticeably to one side, resting the head on the hand and either distorting the mouth or opening it too widely. It would be tedious to enumerate all the other kinds of inappropriate behaviour which are to be avoided for the simple reason that they provoke laughter in the beholder, who ought rather to be moved to devotion by the chant.⁶⁰

Conrad, who saw his task as creating singing more beautiful than any yet heard, encountered many different monastic choirs during his long career, and conventional musicology views Conrad's treatise as a useful source of information about how medieval singing should be done. However, if the monks *actually* sang as he insists, then he would not have needed to write the book, so the implication is (as John Potter has recently pointed out) that if we want to re-create the sound of the monks that Conrad heard, we could try to imagine the things he complains about, and base our singing on that.⁶¹

Thus, neither *De Modo Bene Cantandi* nor *Etymologies* provides a reliable picture of the actual sound of medieval singing, nor do they have anything very positive to say about women's voices. If we draw a parallel with our modern singing techniques we do find similar issues discussed, but the two treatises quoted above only tell us what their authors thought about what to do and what not to do, what is a good voice and what is not: they do not give us sufficient advice on how to achieve the actual results. There is a risk, because modern performers are pre-disposed to respect the composer's intentions, that we mistake the theorists' wishes for actual history.

The authenticity debate

When the first professional medieval music groups appeared in the 1950s and 1960s, the performers, critics, musicologists, and audience made very little reference to the surviving source material. The aim was not yet to try to re-create the past, but rather simply to perform the music and to find more of it. But clearly it had to sound different from anything people were likely to have heard before. Musica Reservata's mezzo soprano Jantina Noorman had the view that the group's director Michael Morrow's aim 'was to really let the world know that music is not all performed the same way'.⁶² This was a new era making a new kind of music, which contrasted with classical mainstream music in its vocal and instrumental sound world, small ensemble formats, as well as in its reliance on improvisational elements and guesswork rather than precise details in the score. As it developed both musicologists and performers began to explore its musical and historical possibilities. The relatively unknown, 'exotic' sound was intriguing, and the compulsion grew to create a sound world that was original and unique.

Manuscripts, editions, treatises and original source material, as well as the proliferation of live performances and recordings, created the basis for further investigation which has come to characterise the early music movement in all its different phases up to the present. At the beginning of the revival, the performers were more or less free to approach the material in any way that suited them, and they did not yet have to adapt to specific directions. Most of the old music was still yet to be performed and recorded, so neither critics nor audiences had yet come to expect a certain sound (the one we later on refer to as 'the early music sound/voice'). As the movement expanded and scholarly research evolved, however, performers were expected to follow the 'new' performance practice trends. The search for historical accuracy initiated what might be termed early music's 'authenticity phase', and for more than twenty years 'early music' and 'authentic performance' were regarded as near synonyms. The search for authenticity manifested itself in many different forms, not only in the way performers played and sang, but also in the way performers and promoters advertised and organised their performances.⁶³

In 1983 Laurence Dreyfus argued that early music performance practice of the 1960s was only an 'initial stimulus' to break with the mainstream. He suggested that,

'at least from the pronouncements of the 1960s, it certainly seemed as if these players had discovered a science of interpretation' and that the 'gimmicks of advertising' (among which he listed 'authenticity', 'original instruments', 'first version', and 'composer's intentions') were useful at the time but that as the interest in early music grew, the slogans lost their effect and became common property.⁶⁴ The flexibility that performers had at the start of the movement might correspond with the way most performers of medieval music make music today. We have now reached a point where performers have explored and experimented with medieval music in various different ways, and a vast amount of the repertoire has been recorded.

I would argue that musical creativity and freedom works best when performers have either a minimal amount, or a great deal, of information on which to base their performance. As long as performers feel confident, it is more likely that audiences and critics are happy to be convinced the performance is 'appropriate' and works. With a small amount of information, performers just play or sing in a way that feels right for them; the same thing happens if they have a lot of information: they build their performances on what they feel is relevant. In both cases, there is ample space for the exercise of the performer's own personal judgement and creativity. However, the space in between these two poles represents a more vulnerable state that is potentially easier to criticize, especially if the performance programme note (which still is an essential element for most presenters and record critics) is vague and does not give sufficient information. It might be irrelevant to compare these two poles with the 'start' and the 'end' of the early music movement, but I am inclined to draw a parallel between the previously suggested 'vulnerable space' and the space that represents the vibrant and debated thirty year period that stretches from the middle of the seventies to the beginning of the twenty-first century. Scholarly pressures in that period forced performers to take a stand in the 'authenticity' and subsequently the 'HIP' debate (whether they wanted to or not), even though the information available to them was not always sufficient or grounded in solid historical research. New rules and performance directions made by highly respected musicologists in the field came to guide the era, and it was assumed that performers would take these into account.⁶⁵ The progression of medieval music performance, a genre which is primarily built on guesswork, beliefs and 'likeability', not on hard evidence, has gone from state to state, beginning with uninformed performances via authenticity, HIP and post-modernism, but ends - where?

Dreyfus' 1983 article pointed out that 'within the cultural phenomenon called "Early Music", there has been little, if any, philosophical reflection on its own activity.'⁶⁶ He discusses the phenomenon of 'social envy' in the music business, and compares the musical mainstream (where envy is unavoidable as a result of high competition) with early music, arguing that the latter avoids and neglects jealousy but that the 'repression of envy leaves in its wake an enforced routine and a uniform mediocrity.'⁶⁷ Dreyfus presents what he calls a 'Brechtian table' where the main differences between early and mainstream music are compared. He observes the competition climate in the mainstream orchestral hierarchy, where the conductor 'is the symbol of authority, stature and social difference' and high technical standard and virtuosity define the professional performers and subsequently their ranking in the orchestra. In contrast he draws attention to the early music consort where virtuosity is discouraged and the technical skills are mediocre. The conductor is banished in order to give all the musicians in the ensemble (who usually play a number of different instruments) a sense of equality in what he calls a 'harmonious family'. He points out that the early music audience often are amateur musicians who can easily identify themselves with the early music performers, since they 'may play the same repertory at home'. While by contrast the mainstream audience, perhaps fewer of whom will be amateur musicians themselves, 'idealizes the performers' and 'marvels at the technical demands of the repertory'. Dreyfus further suggests that the programmes in mainstream music are different from early music ones in that they are contrasting and contain a climax, while early music programmes are 'packed with homogeneous works and are often dull'.⁶⁸

Twenty-five years later, these points no longer represent differences between early music and mainstream, but rather give us an insight into how early music has slowly merged into mainstream. Due to the increasing interest among performers and consumers of early music, competition inside the genre has become unavoidable, and Dreyfus' assertion at the end of the article that 'the colorless and suffocating atmosphere encountered so often in Early-Music performances is therefore not merely the result of inferior technique but the price paid for avoiding the reality of envy' no longer defines what we associate with current early music performances.⁶⁹

Taruskin

The discussion Dreyfus requested was not far away. In 1984 *Early Music* published three separate articles under the title 'The limits of authenticity: A discussion', where musicologists Richard Taruskin, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson and Nicholas Temperley presented their observations on the authenticity movement.⁷⁰ At a time when performers, scholars and audiences were finally getting used to the terminology, Taruskin not only questioned the use of the term, but also its very essence, asking whether it was right to call the early music movement an authenticity movement. He wrote: 'the word [authenticity] needs either to be rescued from its current purveyors or to be dropped by those who would aspire to the values it properly signifies'.⁷¹ Similarly, Leech-Wilkinson questioned the movement's strive for authenticity and pleaded for a 'greater freedom of approach' which would allow performers to experiment with the material.⁷²

It was another ten years until Taruskin's controversial book *Text and Act* was published. However, Dorottya Fabian's article 'The meaning of Authenticity and the Early Music Movement' suggests that the question of authenticity was actually aired a long time before the term 'authenticity' started to appear as a slogan for the movement, and a very long time before British-American musicology engaged with the subject.⁷³ Musicologists and performers in Europe (especially Germany) had been discussing the subject since the 1950s, and Fabian argues that the English and American musicologists, regarded as being at the forefront of the authenticity debate, were only catching up on what had been discussed at length on the European mainland for years. One of Fabian's strongest points is directed towards the large role Taruskin came to have in the authenticity debate, pointing out that revolutionary articles regarding 'authenticity' and 'Werktreue' had already been published thirty years before Taruskin.⁷⁴ Ironically however, it was the American musicologist Putnam Aldrich who in 1957 wrote about the 'authentic' performance issues of early music and claimed that 'the whole quest for authenticity in musical revivals [was] a strictly twentieth-century phenomenon'.⁷⁵ Aldrich further points out that 'strict adherence to the composers' texts by no means assures authentic performances'.⁷⁶ The same arguments were raised in the 1980s and 1990s by different musicologists and philosophers, but Taruskin, Kivy, Butt and Leech-Wilkinson do not refer to them in their later writings on the subject.⁷⁷ For the last twenty-five years Taruskin has been

one of the most respected and controversial scholars within the early music debate. As one of the speakers at the first CAL Performances' conference 'The Early Music Debate: Ancients, Moderns, Postmoderns Symposium' (1990) he defended the 'modernist' position (which he has been identified with) by saying:

I just want to clear up a few things about what the modernist position is. It's not really a position, not really an advocacy of something. It's a diagnosis. What I've been saying is that what we are doing under the umbrella of Early Music is not historical, never has been historical, and never will be historical because it *can't* be historical. And it *shouldn't* be historical.⁷⁸

No doubt a statement like this generated discussion. Taruskin's voice is critical, and when he argues that performers attempting to create historical performances 'do not follow the evidence which is available to them' and further points out that he is in no case 'criticizing the performances by saying they are not historical, because I don't believe they ought to be', he is not only critiquing the historical performance activity but also the performers' ability to interpret the data generated by research.⁷⁹ 'Negativism' is a word that appears in many writings and conversations regarding the early music movement.⁸⁰ It is a loaded word, which naturally relates to the lack of optimism and enthusiasm, but depending on the context it can also suggest a rather positive outcome. As Taruskin put it:

I myself have very often been criticized for my negativism, for my negative attitudes toward historical performance... But I think I am very positive about this question, because I think it's much more important to be us than to achieve historical verisimilitude. Historical verisimilitude is just correctness, and correctness is a very paltry virtue. Correctness is the kind of virtue you demand of students, not of artists.⁸¹

Kivy, Butt and Leech-Wilkinson

The term 'historically informed performance' has been discussed *ad infinitum* since musicologists and critics began to realise that 'authentic' performances did not really exist in the way the early music movement talked about authenticity. It is in some ways unfortunate that we can no longer use the words 'authentic' and 'authenticity' without being criticized and/or misunderstood. The understanding of

what constitutes the 'authentic way' has changed over the years, depending on which musicologists or performers were engaged with the question. The word happened to represent (almost as a slogan) a movement, or a path inside the early music revival, that we now have abandoned. We have not ceased making music in different ways, but we now understand that what we aimed for during the 'authenticity' era did not correspond with the meaning of the word in the way that the movement had chosen to use it. We decided to interpret the word and use it in a way that incorporated only a few of the many descriptions of its actual meaning, even though, from a performer's point of view, there might be many varieties of what defines an 'authentic performance'.

The philosopher Peter Kivy discussed key definitions of authenticity in his book *Authenticities: Philosophical Reflections on Musical Performance*, in which he bases his argument on the OED's five definitions of 'authenticity' while pointing out that only the first three of the five (listed below) were being used by the early music 'authenticity' movement:

1. Of authority, authoritative. (Possessing original or inherent authority.)
2. Original, firsthand, prototypical. (Opposed to copied.)
3. Really proceeding from its reputed source or author: of undisputed origin, genuine. (Opposed to counterfeit, forged.)
4. Belonging to himself, own, proper.
5. Acting of itself, self-originated, automatic. (The spontaneous or authentic motions of a clockwork.)⁸²

Kivy's philosophical approach is not necessarily based on actual use of the concept by the people he is talking about, but is rather orientated towards linguistic considerations. It is very unlikely that performers would consult the OED as part of their performance preparation, however, Kivy's method of definition certainly provides insight into the debate from a different perspective. The three first OED definitions are directly connected to the authenticity movement's centre of activity: authenticity as the composer's intention, as it originally sounded and in its original practice.⁸³ The same framework continued to be the main guidance for performance even after the movement changed its 'slogan' to HIP. One of Kivy's primary concerns regarding these points is whether it is 'desirable to hear music the way it was heard by its contemporaries'.⁸⁴

For his part, John Butt draws attention to another aspect of the re-creation dilemma, which is that neither the musician nor the musicologist can control the listenership. He writes:

First, there is the obvious issue of whether we can ever be sure that we have actually reconstructed all the original details. Secondly, and more crucially, some authorities seem to assume a consistency of listenership, that the ideal human subject will somehow respond identically to the same sensual stimuli regardless of age, period or social background.⁸⁵

Whether we design a performance guided by historical evidence or not, we sometimes overlook the importance of the audience's role. Performers continuously deliver what they believe in and what is for them the 'right' way, and the audience, probably more or less unconscious of the different decisions the performer has made before reaching the performance stage, experience and consume the event. The audience is not a monolithic body but rather a collection of individuals, each with his or her own way of appreciating and evaluating the performance, which makes the mission of a universally successful 're-creation' seem close to impossible. There may be times when people in the audience have experienced a sense of history even though the performers had made no attempt to re-create a past. The listener's idea of authenticity is likely to be connected with what they appreciate. Daniel Leech-Wilkinson states the importance of the listener's contribution to medieval music making;

...we have reached a point where performances of striking beauty are appreciated by millions of radio listeners, tens of thousands of record buyers. And they are enjoyed because the music and the manner of its performance make sense to us. The quantity of known medieval data in those performances is tiny; most of our pleasure comes from ideas that people – scholars to an extent, crucially the performers, inevitably, perhaps mostly, the listeners – have brought to the music. Those performances are medieval music in the fullest possible sense. They are the discipline's finest achievement by far.⁸⁶

To return to Kivy and his five OED definitions of authenticity, he demarcates between the five in this way, writing:

I have, so far, canvassed the first three of our dictionary definitions of 'authentic,' which, as we have seen, all have fairly obvious application to the three versions of historical authenticity in musical performance that dominate the historical performance literature. What of the other two? Interestingly enough, they both have application to exactly the kind of performance that the orthodox of the historical performance movement have turned their backs on.⁸⁷

He goes on to describe the final two in the OED list as definitions of 'personal authenticity', and to connect personal authenticity with liberty: 'freedom makes creativity; creativity makes art.'⁸⁸

Kivy's observations suggest that 'personal authenticity' and 'historical authenticity' do not exist together, but is it really possible to draw such strict lines of demarcation? His proposal seems to correspond in part with my previous speculations regarding the early music performer's liberty at the beginning and the 'end' of the early music revival.⁸⁹ At the beginning of the movement, the performers certainly used their creativity, and we should keep in mind that without ingenuity and individual expression, which we might identify as 'personal authenticity', the revival of 'early music' would not have started and developed in the way it did. I would argue that the two 'authenticity' definitions directed towards 'personal authenticity' faded as the early music movement expanded and paved the way for HIP, in a renewed attempt to combine the past with the present at the start of the twenty first century.⁹⁰

Butt sees parallels between Kivy's personal authenticity, Taruskin's 'preferred manner of personally committed performance', and Lawrence Dreyfus' 'imaginative "advanced guard" in HIP':⁹¹

By pretending that the four authenticities are of equal conceptual status, Kivy creates false dichotomies between them: namely, that you cannot have authenticity of intention, sound or practice, together with 'The Other Authenticity' [by which Butt means 'the personal authenticity of the performer] that they are mutually exclusive.⁹²

The difference between an authenticity where only re-creation and imitation of the past constitute the performance and an authenticity where only personal instant intuition guide the presentation is significant. These two extremes are probably never set against each other in real life, since most performers prefer to choose a grey area somewhere in the middle. Performers want to be unique in their field, and it might be that the use of imitation can prevent this from happening if not done with great care.

To imitate someone living today would not correspond to what we appreciate as authenticity of any kind, but rather to a caricature, which raises the question of why musicians would wish to apply it to the past.

Critics of Peter Kivy's book have complained that his title is no longer 'fashionable' and does not describe what is now considered as HIP. It may well be, as John Butt suggests, 'that Kivy retains the word as a way of profiling his fourth and clearly preferred form of authenticity'. In a review written by the philosopher Gunter Zoller of Kivy's *Authenticities*, we learn that 'the repertory of music performed with a claim to historical accuracy nowadays stretches from medieval secular and liturgical works to the late Romanticism of Brahms and Wagner.'⁹³ It is interesting to note that Zoller refers to HIP as 'historical accuracy', interpreting the concept as applying to the previous 'authenticity-era' rather than the 'informed' era of the present. HIP, like authenticity, is in the end a vague description available for many possible interpretations.

The terms 'authentic' and 'authenticity', as discussed earlier, nevertheless continue to exist, and even if they are not currently fashionable, it should still be possible to use them, especially since we claim that the actual meaning of the term does not reflect what was actually done in reality. The term authenticity has become associated with a very strict way of doing things, which can appear negative and reductive to some performers. This is unfortunate, since the word authentic could have quite liberating connotations, if interpreted more creatively. It could have been recognized as a word that supported individuality rather than standardisation, as was indeed the case with charismatic performers such as David Munrow. However, as an academic discipline, early music generated a musicology of the text rather than a musicology of the person, often containing the new and exotic within a prescriptive framework.

John Butt's choice of title for his book, *Playing with History*, which looks at the HIP debate, can be interpreted in different ways: *Playing with History*, as in playing music with a historical understanding, or *Playing with History*, as in gambling with history. He, however, seems more interested in trying to get a firm grip on the issues than in gambling with them. In the first chapter, 'Joining the historical performance debate', he lists the most influential published works in the Authenticity/HIP debate from the 1950s up until 2002. His short but substantial

introduction describes the development of the main topics inside the early music movement as follows:

..it is impossible to predict how any particular ideology of HIP will influence the quality of the resulting performance; we should refrain from condemning performers before actually hearing the results of their encounter with history.... It is clear that the best performers are excellent because of their insight and talents as performers, not necessarily because they are good historians in the professional sense. To this extent, Taruskin's distinction of Text and Act seems to make sense. Yet it is equally clear that these performers would not have achieved what they had without some form of encounter with history, and above all, an *intense belief* [my italics] in what they could learn from history.⁹⁴

Butt's arguments may well be true in many cases, but it is doubtful if performers' belief in history is *intense* when their preoccupation is largely with the present. They do create the sound he refers to as 'historically informed', which is the style we have learned to appreciate as the 'right' early music sound, but perhaps purely because they like the sound of it and know it works for the modern audience. It might be going too far to suggest they create it on a kind of 'autopilot', but since the present taste has created a performance climate where we know exactly what kind of sound we expect to hear, we might also assume that performers do the same. Butt's 'best performers', whether they are practicing HIP or plainly just playing/singing in a way that *sounds* like HIP, are the ones that have developed and created what the modern day taste is.

Leech-Wilkinson's *The Modern Invention of Medieval Music* was published later in 2002. In another statement about the impossibility of historical accuracy, he argues:

Without living in the Middle Ages and experiencing that culture we are never going to be able to make sense of those fragments of evidence that was made of them when they were set down. Even the things we recognise – that people set texts, sang and played instruments – can have no reality in sound except in so far as we can imagine them in relation to the way people sing and play around the world today. Ways of singing and ways of playing change too fast for us to be able to guess backwards.⁹⁵

The Modern Invention of Medieval Music has probably engaged performers more than any of the earlier publications on medieval music. Leech-Wilkinson, who has been in the forefront of the early music movement since the mid-seventies as a medievalist,

musicologist, scholar, reviewer and lecturer, not only questions and criticises the work that has been done (by himself and other medievalists), but turns upside down previous beliefs and assumptions in the discipline. He provides detailed and innovative insight into the historiography of medieval musicology, and the most crucial point of his work is his admission that the performance of medieval music works without musicology.

I shall be suggesting that historical work on medieval music is not as historical as it pretends, but that it is actually more interesting than it could be if it were constrained by the evidence that survives. That is not to say that I shall be trying to invalidate a historical approach to studying music of the past. Historical musicology may not always be quite what it seems but it is immensely productive, not as productive as it could be with a little opening up of its borders, but creative and inspiring nevertheless. And we have the performances to prove it.⁹⁶

As the following chapters of this thesis will show, the modern performers of medieval music use the lack of historical evidence as a resource in their creative work rather than basing their performances on vague historical information.

Publications intended for performers

Writings by performers are relatively rare for obvious reasons. Among the earliest were Andrea Von Ramm's articles for *Early Music* published in 1976 and 1980.⁹⁷ Von Ramm was a pioneer of early music singing in the Netherlands and her thoughts are based largely on her own experience. While she mentions *Etymologies* and *De modo bene cantandi* her main concern is to establish a discipline for the study of early music that has much of the rigour of modern pedagogy. Many of her statements are rather dogmatic and unsupported by evidence ('so-called natural vibrato does not exist'⁹⁸) but there are some creative suggestions such as listening to oriental or Mediterranean folk singers.⁹⁹

A Performer's Guide to Medieval Music edited by Ross Duffin (2000) was the first book to focus solely on the performance of medieval music (although Timothy McGee had earlier written on the performance of medieval and renaissance music).¹⁰⁰ Performers and scholars within the medieval music business (mainly from the USA)

contributed to the compendium to give the reader an insight into different ways of approaching the topic. In the paragraphs on 'Performance Considerations' at the end of the chapter regarding the 'Polyphonic Mass Ordinary', one such contributor, Alejandro Planchart, touches upon suggestions for performance possibilities for female singers:

Thus, for a modern performance, a small ensemble of between three or four and sixteen to twenty singers would be appropriate for most of the Mass music of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. A performance by adult males, with the upper voices sung by falsettists would accord with what we know was the practice at the time. Choirboys had their own special repertory and most often sang as a separate ensemble supported by one or two adult singers. The use of women in place of the high falsettists, and a combination of men and women on high contratenor parts is a workable alternative and one used extensively by both professional and amateur ensembles on both sides of the Atlantic. My own sense in reading most of the arguments usually presented for the exclusion of women's voices from these repertories is that they have more to do with a long tradition of misogyny than with artistic or aesthetic matters.¹⁰¹

By the time Duffin's book was published there was a substantial number of professional all female *a cappella* groups performing all over the world, singing both Mass ordinaries and other types of medieval sacred polyphony and prompting the question of why advisors of performance options (normally musicologists or academics) so often appear to ignore what contemporary performers actually do: performance advice tends to be built on historical references rather than acknowledging the pragmatics of modern performance.¹⁰²

The chapter on voice, 'Poetics as Technique' in the same book, is in interview form, where the late Barbara Thornton discusses the relationship and understanding between text and music.¹⁰³ Interestingly, the interview does not touch upon questions of vocal sound qualities in modern performance of medieval music, which is surprising since the chapter was written by one of the most successful medieval music singers of the time. This does not mean that the information is not of great value, but as guidance for performers it is open to question. Barbara Thornton's insight into poetry and its necessity to make medieval music work might seem rather idiosyncratic:

So, it is important to know exactly what tone is implied in a piece through thorough acquaintance with it. One should also have a clear image of which public (even an imaginary one) the author had in mind, and play to that public. Let's say, hypothetically, that a piece was created for performance at a high-ranking cleric's sumptuous residence after an important feast, ca, 1200. Is this hard to imagine? What would the modern equivalent be – performing, as we once did as students, for a private banquet attended by the executives of the pharmaceuticals industry? All these aids to the intellect, imaginations and senses are more reliable than starting with a preconceived idea of what the music is going to sound like.¹⁰⁴

According to Thornton, the value of the performer's engagement with poetry and total understanding of text, context and circumstances in which the music was being performed is thus an essential criterion for a successful performance. The chapter sheds light on an era that some of today's performers of medieval music would recognise as the basis for their approach, but the performance guide and insight we get from this chapter is insufficient for people who need help to get going with medieval music-making. Thornton does not explain how performers new to medieval music are supposed to find the relevant information about the original performance context. She also notes that her aim is to be a performer and not an 'authority' and argues that these two identities are separate in the modern medieval music world:

The authority (*auctoritas*) writes from the highest viewpoint with the aim of establishing steadfast truths and principles. Though I have mentioned often that we look at practical treatises for practical guidelines, the musical treatises of the period provide the underlying philosophical ground for everything we do, and we move entirely within that context, acknowledging it freely.¹⁰⁵

Thornton also emphasises the importance of memorisation of a medieval piece in order to become one with it, and refers to the mainstream repertoire and says 'wouldn't one memorize a Schubert song? A Rossini aria?'¹⁰⁶ Thornton ends the dialogue by saying that she wishes to connect her modern presentation of medieval music with its original intention (by 'finding and acknowledging the "innate medieval-ness"') even though she is aware that it is a time-consuming process. She disagrees with performers who present and interpret the medieval music purely from a modern perspective without being historically aware, especially if the music is presented without performative explanations and the audience is left with a sense of

having experienced something medieval.¹⁰⁷ Thornton's position seems to combine a search for some original essence of medieval music in a quasi-psychological way, linked to a modern sense of musical value. Her reference to Lieder is to the modern phenomenon which essentially dates from Fischer-Dieskau and post-war Germany.¹⁰⁸

Women's voices in medieval religious establishments

Modern commentaries that deal directly with women singing medieval *sacred* music are few. In the chapter 'Women in Music to ca. 1450' in *Women & Music: A History* Michele Edwards gives us a short description of the various musical activities women were involved in during the Middle Ages.¹⁰⁹ While greater emphasis is laid on secular performance traditions, Edwards includes subdivisions on 'Women in Judaism', 'Women in early Christianity', 'Women's faith communities', Hildegard of Bingen' and 'Polyphony'. The chapter is essentially a compilation of available information on the topic rather than first-hand information. Edwards, who does not primarily see herself as an early or medieval music scholar, was originally asked to write the chapter on 'North America since 1920' for the same book, and it was more or less by coincidence that she contributed the chapter on medieval music. When she first discussed the book with the editor Karin Pendle, a specific author for the chapter on medieval music had not yet been decided upon, and since Edwards had for a long time been teaching the early music course as well as being the Director of the Women's/Gender Programme at Macalester College she agreed to take it on, and started 'gathering up materials like crazy'.¹¹⁰ The chapter provides the reader with an informative general history on women in music in the medieval times but there are no deeper debates concerning either previous research or original source material.

On the European mainland there is definite evidence of women's participation in polyphony. Anne Bagnall Yardley's chapter 'Ful weel she soong the service dyvyne' in *Women making Music* provides a list of sixteen convents in Europe that held manuscripts of polyphony in the Middle Ages. One of the most extensive sources of medieval polyphony was owned by the wealthy Monasterio Las Huelgas in Northern Spain which was, despite its name, an all-female establishment. The manuscript comprises two and three part polyphonic pieces as well as two-part vocal exercises which indicate that the nuns were instructed to practice the art of polyphonic

singing.¹¹¹ These sources are crucial for performers and musicologists who strive for original performances that are based on manuscript evidence.¹¹² More importantly there is evidence that music from the Notre Dame *Magnus Liber* was sung at Las Huelgas.¹¹³

Anna Maria Busse Berger's *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory* reminds us that memorization was the norm in the Middle Ages and investigates the 'effect mnemotechnics had on medieval performers, composers, and the music they produced'.¹¹⁴ Berger suggests that chant and polyphony were orally transmitted, memorised and performed by heart and composed in the mind, and she describes how this was done, and what techniques were used to make it possible. In the twelfth century (and possibly earlier) students did not just learn elementary music theory and how to perform chant and polyphony, but also how to compose.¹¹⁵ Very few performers and scholars have drawn on this aspect in their search for authentic or HIP performances, and rarely do performers give concerts of medieval sacred music performed by heart.¹¹⁶ Berger notes:

...it is now increasingly clear that written texts may be used to aid the memory instead of replacing it. The fact that something was written down does not have to mean that it was not transmitted orally as well. Written texts and oral transmission may well co-exist.¹¹⁷

Interestingly, Berger did not see her research as a contribution to the HIP movement, but it may well be that this research presents one of the more quantifiable aspects of the original medieval performance practice we have available.¹¹⁸ Berger presents her ideas combined with a critical investigation of the early twentieth century scholarship which has influenced and in some ways sustained medieval musicology through to the present.¹¹⁹

Considering how modern performers of traditional repertoire approach the memorising of their material today, it is not at all impossible to imagine that the music was all orally transmitted and learnt by memory. If the brain is accustomed to musical flexibility and memorisation, it does not take long to learn a piece and to add parts by improvising. All sorts of performers today, regardless of genre (classical, pop, folk, rock, jazz) learn music by heart, but for whatever reason it is not a general practice in modern sacred medieval music performances.

Berger discusses the function of the Notre Dame manuscripts, the nature of which has been debated extensively: the prime concern - to establish whether it is right or not to attribute the great Notre Dame pieces to Leonin and Perotin – is unlikely to be resolved, given the lack of sufficient evidence. Berger is critical of Ludwig, not only of his approach and evaluations of the medieval sources but also his lack of interest ‘in music theory and the culture of the period’; and she argues that his work is ‘full of blind spots, and that he failed to ask some fundamental questions’.¹²⁰ According to Berger, Ludwig’s analysis of the Notre Dame repertoire was based on a musicology that was relevant to much later repertoire, and he and his students’ rather ‘romantic’ notion that Leonin and Perotin were ‘individual artists and their products were no different in kind from a Beethoven and his works’ shows how eager they were to catalogue and determine that these two men were the first known composers in European music history.¹²¹ To establish what these medieval composers intended is very hard since the surviving Notre Dame manuscripts, for example, date from the 1230s at the earliest, and according to the sources both Leonin and Perotin were active in the late twelfth-century and a short period of the thirteenth. This leaves us wondering how these pieces could live for so many years without being written down. The most informative source derives from a manuscript written by the theorist known to scholars as Anonymous IV, who attributed the *Magnus Liber* to Leoninus (for creating it) and Perotinus (for editing it).¹²² Even now in the twenty-first century, almost one hundred years post-Ludwig, we still attribute the *Magnus Liber* to Leonin and Perotin, even though recent research tells us it is much more complicated than that. Ludwig’s statements from the start of the century were not questioned until Edward Roesner published the article ‘The Problem of Chronology in the Transmission of *Organum Duplum*’ in 1981 where he argues that the attribution of the *Magnus Liber* to either Leonin or Perotin is impossible purely on chronological grounds.¹²³

The New Grove 1980 and the *Grove Music Online* 2007 entries on *Magnus Liber* are different editions written by different scholars. The first, written by Rudolf Flotzinger, a disciple of the ‘old fashioned’ German viewpoint, does not raise questions about how these pieces were composed and compiled or how they were maintained without being written down during Leonin’s and Perotin’s lifetime. Further, there are no references at all to the possibility of memorisation or oral transmission either in performance or composition. Flotzinger claims that the original

Magnus Liber has to be attributed to Leonin but that the pieces developed over years and were reworked many times. The advancement of the rhythmical structures as well as the development of the discant vocal style shows, according to Flotzinger, that Perotin improved on the 'Leonin' material.¹²⁴ He gives almost no information on performance practice and his bibliography consists almost entirely of literature by German-speaking scholars (the exceptions all have their roots in Ludwig's work).¹²⁵

Roesner's approach is rather more objective, and there are clear references to the most recent research. Roesner wrote the entries on Leonin and Perotin and there are no statements (nor any personal views) in either of these articles that suggest that Leonin and Perotin should be credited with the major part of the Notre Dame repertoire.¹²⁶ Roesner demonstrates that research has changed our way of looking at the Notre Dame repertoire, and it will be interesting to follow future musicology and performance (which might result in a freer approach in terms of memorisation and improvising) of this extraordinary music. Roesner also discusses the impact that Magnus Liber had on European music life and how copies of the manuscript were circulating and held in religious establishments in the British Isles, Italy, Spain, present-day Germany and Poland. There is clear evidence that copies of the Magnus Liber were held at the royal Cistercian nunnery of Las Huelgas, one of the few nunneries where polyphonic music was composed and practised at the time.¹²⁷

We could of course ask why any of this matters: the pieces which are now labelled as Leonin's and Perotin's compositions may always be referred to as their works, even though most of the recent research does not support this thesis. In the end there are no other possible names that would compete with these two, since there was no tradition of associating composers with their works. Many performers, in any case, are concerned with authorship purely for the purposes of programme presentation. Today we are used to associating a certain piece with a composer's or performer's name, probably because we want to identify and label what we hear. Conventions concerning composers', editors' and arrangers' rights may also contribute to that recognition, and there are organisations that keep track of all pieces played in media and in live performances, so that the appropriate people can be acknowledged and suitably rewarded.

There is currently only one book that focuses specifically on performance of medieval sacred music by women, although there has been extensive musicological research on secular song tradition (music, dance, drama, entertainment, language, text

and contexts of medieval female singers/musicians) by musicologists and performers. Anne Bagnall Yardley's *Performing Piety: Musical Culture in Medieval English Nunneries* published in 2006, is an extension of her PhD work 'Musical Practices in Medieval English Nunneries' from 1975.¹²⁸ The book focuses on music history in female religious establishments and provides the reader with a thorough overview of the everyday musical practices including activities such as services, rituals, the learning processes, the musical leadership and its hierarchical structures, the performance of liturgy and psalms as well as general structures regarding the strict convent life.¹²⁹ Yardley's work is primarily built on historical sources and she has 'tried to focus almost exclusively on what can be known about the nuns' music through a study of the resources from nunneries themselves, without reference to normative male practices.'¹³⁰ From a performer's point of view the most interesting passage is probably where Yardley discusses the two (and only) manuscripts from English nunneries that contain vocal exercises as well as a theoretical treatise on music. Both originated in Wherwell Abbey in Hampshire, and include a description of the Guidonian hand (used in teaching and the use of hexachords and as a mnemonic aid for the same) and also a page that presents several drawn circles explaining each note in the hexachord system, followed by a short treatise on the solmization system and the relationship between different hexachords.¹³¹ Yardley points out that these two music pedagogical manuscripts 'certainly indicate that music is taught in a systematic fashion at Wherwell either by the cantrix, the novice mistress, or both. They are an exciting sign that vocal expertise is valued in nunneries.'¹³² The exercises, which are similar to the exercises we practice today (and include interval leaps and runs of scales and thirds) span more than two and a half octaves, and even for singers today that is a rather large vocal range. Yardley does not draw any parallels with present-day nunneries, and references to modern performances are rare, but she does make a comparison with modern choral singing when she talks about the role of the cantrix, whose task was to guide and teach the other nuns in singing and making music in an appropriate manner.¹³³ Yardley points out that many present-day choral groups need a confident singer on each side of the choir to lead it, and that the less confident singers follow slightly behind:

It remains true today that in many choral groups most singers wait a slight fraction of a second to follow the "lead" singer. Even if that person

has no official status, her function is most evident when she is absent and the section falls apart.¹³⁴

The assumption that ensembles need a 'leader' might apply to amateur groups or larger chamber groups, but my research suggests that professional ensembles generally strive for an equal contribution with no specific 'leader', and I would argue that that is what ensemble singing is mainly about. Yardley discusses the possibility of improvisation and polyphony, but there is no further debate about how it might have been perceived:

The nuns at Wherwell appear to learn basic principles of reading musical notes and to practice vocal exercises, exercises that may themselves be seen as patterns of polyphonic ornamentation and the basis for simple and rudimentary forms of polyphony (e.g., discant) that could be improvised by nuns without much further training.¹³⁵

There is no further debate on the oral tradition, and no references to memorisation of chant or liturgy. It would have been exciting to reflect on the original material from Berger's perspective and see if different aspects of the sources could be brought to life. The musicologist's own background and primary research interest surely influence the analysis of the material being examined and interpreted.

Only a fraction of the English medieval manuscripts is preserved, and the lack of original sources makes it hard to determine to what extent women did sing polyphonic music. We know for sure that monks held a higher status than the nuns, who were generally given a poor education. According to Yardley this is the 'primary factor arguing against the performance of polyphony by nuns.... We have no descriptions that offer convincing proof that nuns [were] given the advanced musical training necessary to write and perform complex polyphony.'¹³⁶ The equivalent male establishments were better endowed, which enabled monks to pursue a more extensive education, as well as providing a generally higher standard of living. Even though most of the nunneries were poor, their economic and educational resources varied, and Yardley presents four manuscripts containing polyphonic pieces that most likely belonged to English nunneries.¹³⁷ One of the folios, again associated with the Wherwell nunnery and holding two three-voiced Marian antiphons, indicates that nuns did perform polyphonic music.¹³⁸

The most recent investigation of the wider aspects of early music is Bruce Haynes' *The End of Early Music: A Period Performer's History of Music for the Twenty-First Century*, published in 2007. As an oboe player and scholar in the field of Baroque music, Haynes reflects on the HIP movement to which he has dedicated his career:

Authenticity seems to be a statement of intent. Totally accurate historical performance is probably impossible to achieve. To know it has been achieved is certainly impossible. But that isn't the goal. What produces interesting results is the *attempt* to be historically accurate, that is, authentic.¹³⁹

There are a number of ways to produce interesting results, and I would argue that the 'attempt' in itself ultimately has no adequate meaning. When audiences hear a performance they like, the majority of them do not focus on how the results were achieved, and they would probably not pay attention to issues such as how much work the performer has done in the library, how the edition came about, how the players or singers communicated during the process, or how important it was for the performer to get as close as possible to what might have been the original way. One important factor that we, as performers, should not forget is that the experience we are left with after our own performance might not correspond with that of the audience.

The lack of references to medieval music in Haynes' book is telling. There are seventy-two music examples (available on OUP's website) that illustrate different interpretations and performance styles, but Haynes has chosen not to include music earlier than the Flemish renaissance composer Clemens non Papa, which excludes several hundred years of early music.¹⁴⁰ But whether or not medieval music is represented in this book is not of great importance, since the same questions, regarding the essence of authenticity and HIP, apply to all the epochs represented by the term early music.

Haynes calls attention to the fact that some scholars and performers have questioned HIP, and says he 'can't see why noticing and acknowledging historical changes of style and instrument needs defending.'¹⁴¹ As discussed above there has been a huge debate concerning the different performance aspects (authenticity, HIP, non-HIP) of early music, which has resulted in a variety of different performing ideals. Haynes' observations, regarding the advocates of non-HIP, suggest that 'what

does need defending, and what is logically and aesthetically questionable, is the old traditional attitude ... that insists on using a single performing style for the music of all periods and blithely ignores differences of style and instruments.'¹⁴² He makes a reference to his colleague Harnoncourt, who 'in a moment of levity' referred to terms and acronyms for different ways of expressing a non-HIP performance:

Historically Clueless Performance? Wild Guesswork Performance? What ever Feels Right Performance? Whatever My Personal Hero Did Must Be Right Performance? Didn't Do My Homework So I'll Wing It Performance? Anything Goes Performance? History Is Irrelevant Performance?¹⁴³

Harnoncourt was clearly not being entirely serious, but he points out that such performances are to be found even if we do not have names for them. It is clear that 'non-HIP' performances are not favoured either by Haynes or Harnoncourt, and Haynes remarks that 'even if tongue-in-cheek, this list is a pretty good summary of the rationales for not playing HIP.'¹⁴⁴ There are few performers who would identify their music-making with any of Harnoncourt's descriptions, and performers who do not follow the guidelines of HIP by attempting to be as historically accurate as possible as Haynes suggests, would find other words for describing their 'modern performances'. By creating limiting guidelines for how early music should be performed, the whole aspect of 'learning by doing' may be entirely bypassed. Haynes' contribution to his debate will not be the last. The concepts and the associated literature continue to evolve, as does the extent to which performers are prepared to engage with research. Many audiences and critics (and even some University Music Departments) continue to refer to 'authenticity' even though the current debate among musicologists and performers is conducted in terms of 'historically informed performance'. The connection between the literature and actual performance has often been a tenuous one and it continues to be so, as the interview material in the following chapter will demonstrate.

Chapter 2: Singers and vocal production

As performers today, we can choose from an enormous amount of music written over a thousand years, as well as a correspondingly large array of different vocal techniques whose use is dependent on the sort of music we perform. When we (as performers) create *ideal* sounds and styles within a music genre, we choose a sound we think fits with the music. However, another element vital for an 'ideal sound' is that any performer should feel comfortable when creating it. If a performer is struggling to produce the sound, then the performance will not be convincing. Sounds based on an interpretation from a medieval source might not fit with our own personal taste, and most performers establish their specific individual sound (which is a combination of their own 'primal sound' and vocal training) early in their professional career.¹⁴⁵ We can also read the sources and construct for ourselves an appropriate style but historical appropriateness is conditioned by a present reality: professional performers have to earn a living. All of these factors have implications for vocal production. This chapter analyses interviews with a selected number of successful performers in an attempt to establish how singers cope with questions of both modern and historical vocal styles and techniques.

Conversations with performers

Although probably most well known in medieval music circles for her work with Gothic Voices, the English mezzo soprano Catherine King performs music that spans from the medieval times to the present. Her repertoire includes music by composers as diverse as Hildegard of Bingen, Machaut, Vivaldi, Verdi and Elgar. The genres do not only vary in vocal styles but also in performance context, and may require both a vocal flexibility and the ability to adapt to different circumstances, varying from the most intimate solo voice performance to large scale orchestral works.¹⁴⁶ However, the vocal production and tone quality King produces for each of these genres fit in exactly with what we today appreciate as a 'suitable vocal style'. When King was a music student at Trinity College, Cambridge her involvement in practical music making had to happen outside the course framework. Her three years at university were directed towards academic music (involving analysis, history,

harmony and some composition) and 'practical music didn't count for much.'¹⁴⁷ She joined the Trinity College Chapel choir (directed by Richard Marlowe), and practiced and performed various musical styles, including a considerable amount of English Tudor music, as a part of her daily routine. In a review of King's recent CD *Galuppi: Forgotten Arias of a Venetian Master*, Göran Forsling writes:

Catherine King is anything but the anaemic thin-voiced creature one sometimes associates with the baroque. Here is a large vibrant voice with superb technique, wide range and an almost animal intensity in the more forceful music. She can also achieve a beautifully soft effect when in lyrical mood.¹⁴⁸

King says she always uses her full technique in whatever style she sings, and she emphasizes the importance of using the text and words as a tool in her vocal projection. She suggests that later repertoire which requires a 'bigger and richer sound with more vibrato and more weight of expression' needs greater 'strength of the body behind the voice', but that the main concern, independent of genre, is to keep 'a core of sound coming right through the vocal cords.'¹⁴⁹ She regularly has classical singing lessons with Josephine Veasey, focusing on technique, and over the years she has learnt that she needs to sing the 'light' early music repertoire in a lower key, to avoid getting vocally tired and hoarse. King points out the importance of being physically fit as a significant factor in keeping the voice flexible for different kinds of music. She always immerses herself in the music she performs and does not find that any one variety of music is more difficult to sing than another. But she does feel as she says, that 'in many ways the medieval and the early stuff is harder because it requires such a degree of careful control... It's much more of a mental switch than a vocal one for me. I thrive on the mixture really.'¹⁵⁰ She remarks that:

...a lot of early music singers take it right off the voice and it all goes into a head voice and you can hear the vocal cords and they're not being used to the core of their sound. It is like the voice is kind of superficial.¹⁵¹

In a similar vein, Belinda Sykes, the singer and director of the ensemble *Joglaresa*, describes what she calls the 'English style' early music soprano as follows:

I often feel it is all about subtraction rather than addition. It is like a voice that is singing without vibrato, a voice that is singing without

expression, instead of a voice that is singing with something, it all feels as if it is a pile of negatives to me.¹⁵²

Emma Kirkby suggests that at the beginning of the early music revival some people were 'relieved to get away from the complexity of the sound' which had been the norm since the war.¹⁵³ Negative attributes became positive in that they started to praise what the voice *wasn't*. Kirkby explains:

I was very aware, when I started, that some people reacted favourably to what I was doing, because of what it wasn't. "At last, a voice that does not wobble, a voice that is not mostly out of tune, a voice that doesn't obscure the words." They were all negatives to start with.¹⁵⁴

When Kirkby started her singing and recording career in the early 1970s 'most college-trained sopranos were not seeking a sound appropriate for early instruments.'¹⁵⁵ Kirkby never studied music at an institution, but during her years studying classics at Somerville College, Oxford, she sang in the Schola Cantorum choir as well as smaller ensembles. After graduation she took a teaching job at a comprehensive school and, during the same period, started to work professionally as a singer with Andrew Parrot (Tavener Choir) and Anthony Rooley (Consort of Musicke) who encouraged her to have singing lessons. At the time considering herself to be an amateur, Kirkby says she was very lucky to find Jessica Cash, who remained Kirkby's singing teacher.¹⁵⁶ Kirkby's distinctive and individual sound has become a paradigm which has shaped the concept of the ideal early music sound for many singers, audiences, musicologists, critics and promoters. She has without doubt influenced the whole course of the early music revival over the last twenty-five years, and been one of the artists who have defined 'early music' as we would like to think of it.

Textual engagement is one of the most important factors in vocal production for Kirkby as well as King, and she is surprised to still find that 'text comes a poor second in most people's attitude to singing.'¹⁵⁷ In modern classical singing the aim is to achieve a voice that is equal in sound from the top to the bottom. Kirkby argues that the key to a textual clarity is the articulation of consonants. Instead of singing vowel exercises where consonants are omitted because they 'get in the way' of the vocal line, she uses the consonants actively and adds that if you 'observe the most efficient ways of speaking them and then singing in the same way, it just saves enormous

amounts of energy and gives you a much cleaner sound.'¹⁵⁸ The start of each phrase creates a platform for the rest of the line, and Kirkby specifies that:

the crucial thing is just to get the onset right and to get straight into the note so that it's a clean vowel, and that comes from the consonant almost always, or, if there's no consonant, the vowel has also a very definite start, and then, as you lean into the note, then maybe some of the vibrato will come, as a sort of ornamenting of the note.¹⁵⁹

By contrast Belinda Sykes who has been singing since childhood, sings medieval music in her chest voice and rarely uses her head voice at all, because she does not feel it is 'her' voice. She believes her chest voice became stronger after learning Bulgarian folk singing, which was the first style of vocal production she ever studied.¹⁶⁰ She struggles with shifting between chest and head voice, and worries about the break (which she calls a 'yodel') between the two, but since she always chooses to sing the lowest part in a female ensemble and has the ability to use the chest voice in many different ways - hard, brutal, edgy, or very soft - she can match and adapt to other voices and instruments. Sykes did take a few classical singing lessons but stopped because she came so close to what she calls a 'non-acceptable early music voice.'¹⁶¹ Sykes regularly makes solo appearances with medieval instrumental ensembles outside the UK and says she is surprised by their choice of line up, which generally consist of six instrumentalists.¹⁶² She observes that she has neither seen medieval pictures nor read any medieval descriptions which suggests a line-up of only one singer accompanied by several instruments. Since modern singers require a certain vocal training to project the voice over a number of loud instruments she draws the conclusion that such a line-up was probably not used in the Middle Ages given that there is no evidence of singing teaching as we understand the term today.

Sykes studied oboe, baroque oboe and recorder at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, along with a course in music / theatre.¹⁶³ However she was brought up with folk music. Her parents were active in folk music circles during the folk music revival in the 1970s, and she used to sing in her father's band where the repertoire was a fusion of English, Scottish, blues and bluegrass. She also started to listen to different kinds of folk music traditions from all over the world (the music that

subsequently came to be called 'world music') and says her musical upbringing has definitely guided and shaped her way of making music today.

When planning her record 'Magdalena', she was very concerned to try and meet the market, and fit in to the present 'fashion' of medieval music making.¹⁶⁴ She chose to use her voice in a softer style than her more instinctive Bulgarian vocal style would suggest and unlike other records and live concerts only two out of the four singers on 'Magdalena' use their chest voice. Sykes says it is the most conservative recording of vocal sound she has ever done:

...ten or fifteen years ago I used a much harder sound in my voice, whereas actually people just don't like it, so not only have I softened my sound, but I tend to use as many singers who are even gentler and sweeter than me, as well as singers who are like me, so I just blend in a bit. Purely for commercial reasons. I think my Magdalena CD is an example of that; there is no way people want to hear four singers that sound like me.¹⁶⁵

Curiously, the sound of the 'softer Sykes' seems just the opposite to one reviewer. He writes, 'after a long period when music of this period was recorded rather plainly, it is pleasing to hear Joglearesa performing in a manner reminiscent of Music Reservata.'¹⁶⁶ The singers and instrumentalists she engages to perform with Joglearesa do not necessarily have a background in medieval music, but are thoughtfully chosen because of their interest and ability to improvise and ornament the music. She wants her singers to sound 'natural', but adds: 'who knows what that means either...? I just want them to sound like it is the voice they have always sung with, from when they were children, and to use little artifice...'¹⁶⁷ Anna Picard writes: 'Antithetical in style to the not-till-we're-married-mister, pre-Raphaelite polish of Anonymous 4 and Trio Medieval, Joglearesa sing and play straight from the breast-bone; hot, grubby, rough-palmed and heavy on the patchouli oil.'¹⁶⁸ Picard's comments support the idea that Joglearesa uses material of the past creatively, appealing to something visceral in the present rather than trying to recreate a medieval pseudo-reality. The reviewer's comparison between Joglearesa, Anonymous 4 and Trio Mediaeval is a compelling one, describing two very different ways of using the voice in contemporary medieval music making.

There are obvious vocal similarities between Belinda Sykes and the Dutch mezzo-soprano Jantina Noorman who sang with Musica Reservata. One common

characteristic of their singing is an element of vocal style known in musical theatre as 'belting', which enables the singer to use the chest voice high in the register.¹⁶⁹ Noorman has a very distinctive voice which became synonymous with the 'Musica Reservata sound', and her fellow singers had to work hard to match and blend with her specific sound. She says some of her colleagues 'just found it very difficult because they'd been so ingrained in a certain way of singing'.¹⁷⁰ This was a time (the 1960s and '70s) when medieval music was being explored in many different ways, and before what we think of as the 'early music voice' had evolved. Musica Reservata's director, Michael Morrow, did not want to have 'a mish-mash of University Choral Society sounds or indeed of Anglican church music or anything like that.'¹⁷¹ In Noorman he certainly found a singer with a distinctive and original voice, though there was a great deal of debate about how well that suited the music. In a review in the November/December 1980 issue of the magazine *Fanfare*, a critic commented that 'some of the more exuberant pieces provide an excellent setting for taking the dog on a short walk. Why do performers insist on hammering out a piece like 'L'Homme Armé' with nasal timbres in clubfoot polyphony?'¹⁷²

Michael Morrow had a deep interest in Bulgarian and Balkan folk music and he introduced Noorman to Bulgarian singing. She only heard Bulgarian singing live once (in a concert in London), but after much individual experimentation, practice and help from Morrow she found the specific Bulgarian sound in her voice. For the sacred repertoire Noorman applied her classically trained voice, producing a sound which was so totally different from her chest voice that most people would probably not guess it was the same person singing. Morrow specifically pointed out Noorman's 'incredible sense of intonation' as one of the reasons for asking her to join the group. He says; 'one can ask her to sing an exact interval and she'll say, "Do you want it this way, or this way, or this way?" If you say "the second way", for ever afterwards she'll sing it like that.'¹⁷³ She calls her belting/Bulgarian technique the 'Reservata style' and says it strengthened her voice rather than harming it.¹⁷⁴ 'You can imagine why, because you use your vocal cords in a much more 'speaking' type of way. It is like gymnastic type of exercise I suppose, which you perform, which really enhances it if anything, so I was never afraid of harming my voice.'¹⁷⁵ Aside from vocal style, Noorman always aimed for a good technique. As a young singer she was inspired by Margaret Richie's voice and at the end of the 1950s she went to England to study classical singing with her.¹⁷⁶ Noorman says:

[Margaret Richie] taught me how to sing back in the throat and how to keep my tongue in a cup formation with the front of the tongue always touching the lower gums and the tongue shaping the vowels rather than your jaw. The jaw is always open as far as you could get it and always thinking a note one pitch higher than you were actually supposed to sing it, so that you had this thought process going on all the time.¹⁷⁷

Noorman recalls that Richie once said: "be sure it doesn't harm your voice to sing that [Reservata style] way", but I assured her it didn't."¹⁷⁸

Unlike Sykes, Noorman did not find it difficult to shift between her 'Bulgarian' chest voice and her 'head voice', and says, 'we did it in concerts all the time because we had the most varied repertoire, you see. Mind you, you always had a rest in between, not that that bothered me.'¹⁷⁹ She has always enjoyed mimicking and argues the vocal shift is done mentally:

...the changing of the voice is thinking, really. It's a matter of thought, whether you sing very forward like that [sings] or whether you sing normal, like this [sings].... It is all done by placing it in different parts of the mouth really.¹⁸⁰

By contrast, the Croatian singer and musicologist Katarina Livljanić says that she changes her voice not deliberately, but unconsciously. Livljanić currently lives in Paris where she directs the female vocal ensemble Dialogos founded in 1997. She also performs regularly with the ensemble Sequentia, directed by Benjamin Bagby.¹⁸¹ As a teenager she sang in a female choir, and her interest in medieval music was mainly developed while attending concerts during the Croatian early music festival in Zadar that ran every year in the '60s and '70s.¹⁸² Conservatoires in Croatia could not offer an education specialising in early music and she thought if she studied voice in Zagreb in Croatia, her vocal training would have been more directed to nineteenth century Italian opera (which was something she was not ready to do as a young singer), so she decided to study musicology in Paris.¹⁸³ It was not until her mid-twenties that she studied voice, privately, and then it was directed towards mainstream classical music. For Livljanić, the most important thing, independently of genre, is vocal health, arguing that 'you can specialise, that's great, but if you are a healthy voice you should be able to sing other repertoires, even if you one day say "I don't

like it, it is not a type of repertoire I want to sing in a concert”.¹⁸⁴ She goes on to explain that she changes her voice unconsciously depending on what setting she is in:

I think of the music itself, and how it is written and then the accompaniment and the situation. Are you singing alone or with others? Is it *a cappella*, or is it with instruments? It can give you a lot of information about the kind of voice to use and I think you just go in to it without really thinking.¹⁸⁵

Livljanić argues that in *a cappella* ensembles, when singing with other people one has to be careful not to use much vibrato, since it both disturbs the tuning and the understanding of a text.¹⁸⁶ She further points out that some singers can influence your way of singing and making music in a positive way, while there might be others who have an opposite effect. Livljanić’s skilful ability to combine research with vocal versatility and personal performance charisma has engaged audiences and critics all over the world. In a recent review of a performance of *Judith* a reviewer writes:

Katarina Livljanić ... employs a wide spectrum of vocal nuances: in recitation and in singing she brings a wealth of emotions to our experience; in her clear, very agile and technically secure voice one hears not the tiniest insecurity. The concentration she brings to this tour de force is impressive.¹⁸⁷

Livljanić points out that the standard of vocal quality within modern medieval music-making has been variable, and for a long time singers with a poor vocal technique were ‘allowed’ in both medieval music concert life and recordings. She suggests the audience assumed that the medieval music was supposed to be sung with untrained voices, something which she argues is far from true. She further draws attention to the large quantity of services the original medieval singers in the religious establishments had to sing every day. The most vocally demanding and musically complex service was the Matutinum in the early morning hours, and she proposes that the repertoire requires a certain vocal agility and would be difficult to sing without any sort of vocal training. Livljanić suggests that they probably had trained and flexible voices, but points out that we do not know what or how they practiced.

Another Paris-based singer and musicologist, Brigitte Lesne, runs the Centre de Musique Médiévale de Paris.¹⁸⁸ In addition to her work at the Centre, she directs the female vocal ensemble Discantus and performs with the medieval music group

Alla Francesca. Lesne was brought up with non-classical music and her fascination with medieval music started through listening in the 1970s to one of her favourite musicians, John Renbourn, who incorporated medieval elements in his music.¹⁸⁹ She was also inspired by René Clemencic (Clemencic Consort) and David Munrow (Early Music Consort of London) and regards them both as the ‘founders of the modern interpretation of medieval music.’¹⁹⁰ Like Livljanić she studied medieval musicology with Marie Noël Colette, and she found a vocal teacher outside the Conservatory (where she was studying piano as her main instrument) since it was hard to find teachers who were open to all kinds of music: none of the vocal teachers at the Conservatory had an interest in medieval repertoire.¹⁹¹ Vocally, Lesne always tries to keep the concentration and ‘finesse’ in the sound, and even though she primarily performs medieval music she also sings classical repertoire, particularly Mozart, since she finds it vocally dangerous to focus solely on medieval music.¹⁹² Lesne affirms that ‘with too much vibrato it’s not possible to do polyphony with a clear fifth and octave’, and like Kirkby she points out that you cannot hear the tension of the suspension if the vibrato is too big.¹⁹³ She also insists that in Gregorian chant voices should be straight, and refers to medieval treatises where vibrato was used as an ornament, and not as a constant tone quality. Some of the singers in Discantus also perform mainstream classical music, and to accommodate the straighter sound which Lesne prefers for all of the medieval music, they might have to adjust their vocal production slightly. When she chooses repertoire for Discantus she tries to vary the sound picture by avoiding sonic monotony, by not using the same line up for every piece and instead bringing forward the individual singers’ voices and personalities, and combining the different timbres.¹⁹⁴

Inspired by Lesne’s Centre de Musique Médiévale de Paris, the Norwegian singer Gro Siri Johansen founded Modus: Senter for Middelaldermusikk in Oslo in 1998. Johansen studied voice at the conservatory in Stavanger (Norway), but in addition to her vocal diploma degree she took an independent course in Gregorian chant. This enabled her to study with the Monks at Solesmes for two weeks, which, in its turn, led to a long period of medieval music studies at the Sainte Chapelle and the Centre de Musique Médiévale de Paris, where she also sang with Livljanić’s Dialogos for several years. Johansen, like all other performers I interviewed, draws attention to the fact that most ‘classically focused’ institutions do not have teachers who engage with medieval music. ‘There was no one there [at the conservatory in Stavanger] who

had the skills to work in that manner, because ... they didn't have a clue' about medieval music.¹⁹⁵ One of the many things that attracted Johansen to medieval music was the freedom of singing music where vocal identity (such as the 'Fach' categorizations of lyrical, coloratura, dramatic, or soubrette soprano/mezzo/alto) is not a major concern.¹⁹⁶ The requirement of specific vocal types and qualities within mainstream classical music and opera does not apply to the medieval repertoire, where performers (re)create and transpose the music to suit the voice/voices.¹⁹⁷ As mentioned earlier there are, of course, categorizations within the medieval genre, but the only definitions we can refer to in the medieval manuscripts are those (tenor, triplum and motetus, for example) which indicate a line of music rather than a particular vocal timbre or type. When starting with medieval music Johansen felt she was free from the vocal 'boundaries' of classical music:

I think it is because when you sing opera, you sing *to* the people. You sing really to impress the people.... "Here I am with my voice".... And you have to prove something.... But in the medieval music, for me I didn't do it for them, I did it for myself... because it was good for me, it was good for my voice.¹⁹⁸

Johansen appreciated the work with Dialogos, where Livljanić mixed voices of different expressive potential and colour, and gave the individual singers freedom to use both their chest and head voice, and sing different parts inside the ensemble.

Susan Hellauer of the American female quartet Anonymous 4 sees the issues of vocal production from yet another perspective. She says that Anonymous 4's blending and vocal production is created inside their heads and is a psychological concept rather than conscious vocal tract manipulation. No one in the ensemble consciously changes their voice when they sing together, and the habit of straightening the voice is just something that seems to happen instinctively.¹⁹⁹ The only aspect of the sound that they sometimes discuss is the shaping of vowels. The aim is to blend, and not to create a sound based on historical sources: they have so far found no original evidence that would suggest a sound or technique that they would be happy to follow and believe in, yet their blend has been a major factor in their success, and in the way their audiences construct an idea of the medieval sound world.²⁰⁰ This also refers to the fact that in their performance of medieval repertoire they have always been careful not to use their voices soloistically, but to aim for a

homogenous ensemble sound. I met separately with all four founding members, Susan Hellauer, Johanna Maria Rose, Marsha Genensky and Ruth Cunningham, who all came to medieval music from different backgrounds. When Hellauer was an undergraduate at Queens College, New York, she started out as a trumpet player. She has always considered herself as an instrumentalist and not a singer, even though she says: 'I know that I am one, and that's because on my tax return it says so, but in my heart I feel more comfortable with an instrument in my hands or in my mouth'. She also adds that 'not thinking of myself as primarily a singer is very helpful, because I don't have to feel that competitive urge. It's a hard world out there for singers.'²⁰¹ She started to sing by accident. At Queens College everyone was required to be in an ensemble, and Hellauer was brought in to sing in a college ensemble which focused on medieval and renaissance music, directed by Paul Maynard.²⁰² She had a good sense of pitch but had not used her voice for singing before, so decided to have singing lessons. She became fascinated by medieval music, and in 1978 she went to Columbia University, NYC, to start a PhD in medieval music. Apart from her PhD work and singing in different groups she worked part-time as a computer programmer in the telecoms industry, something she very much enjoyed and kept doing for twelve years until she gave it up to work full-time with Anonymous 4.²⁰³

The second of the four singers in Anonymous 4, Johanna Maria Rose, took her degree in voice at Manhattan school of Music, New York, studying standard classical repertoire.²⁰⁴ The course was directed towards operatic voices, and Rose, who had a light voice, felt discouraged by the fact that the voice teachers mainly focused on large voices. At the same time she played the recorder, which led to further studies at Sarah Lawrence College, New York.²⁰⁵ Rose explains that 'everybody was really into medieval and renaissance music there, and recorder and wind instruments was actually my Major, but then they found out that I could sing and suddenly everyone wanted me to sing.... So, I loved it!'²⁰⁶ She points out that at the start of her career with Anonymous 4 she had no problems with 'floating really light and high' and she always felt she sang in a 'natural' way and was never aware of changing her vocal production or making conscious adjustments in order to accommodate different repertoires.²⁰⁷ Rose says that even though the Anonymous 4 singers had very different vocal timbres, they did not talk much about blending issues in the beginning, but instead they spent hours and hours just singing together and listening to each other, getting used to their ensemble sound. As mentioned earlier, when they did discuss the

group's blend, it was to do with the shaping of vowels, and Rose also draws attention to the potential difficulty of melding when two people sing the same line (in this case mostly the upper two voices) in a three part polyphonic piece. The two singers would both have to listen specifically to each other's colours and then adjust to make a unified sound. Sometimes there could also be a difference in vowel sound in the high and low voices, and they had to modulate their vowels slightly for their voices to intermingle. She further points out that Anonymous 4 did not sing totally without vibrato, as some people suggest, but used it far less than the other groups she had performed with. When she started having singing lessons again a few years ago she focused on *bel canto* repertoire, and discovered and experimented with new colours and qualities in her voice. Rose says: 'I have always felt kind of a dichotomy between my voice when I vocalise and warm up and my voice when I am singing with Anonymous 4'.²⁰⁸ She refers to an occasion where an audience member came up to her after the concert and said 'you must be really having to hold your voice back'.²⁰⁹ She replied she did not feel she did and that she was not aware of it, but now having found that her voice is suited to many kinds of repertoires, she thinks the woman was probably right. She continues:

Thinking about all of the history of my singing I don't think I really ever tapped into what my voice really is. It is kind of strange because I have had this very long career of singing a certain type of music a certain way and I actually don't really know what my voice is really suited for.²¹⁰

Whatever her reservations about its 'suitability' for her voice, Rose's performance of medieval music as part of Anonymous 4 has made her one of the most successful living singers of her time.

The third member of Anonymous 4, Marsha Genensky, began her singing career with folk music (traditional Anglo-American folk songs). She studied Folklore at the University of Pennsylvania where she joined the Collegium Musicum directed by Mary Anne Ballard (of the Baltimore Consort). Ballard encouraged her to take singing lessons which led her to Julianne Baird and Marcy Lindheimer in New York. Genensky met Rose at the Amherst Early Music Workshop and later they re-joined in Pomerium Musices (New York) where she also met Susan Hellauer and Ruth Cunningham.²¹¹ With Pomerium Musices they primarily performed renaissance polyphony and a small amount of chant. In 1986 the four of them got together to sing

and try out some medieval repertoire because they ‘wanted to hear what it sounded like in higher voices.’²¹² At that time there were very few female ensembles specialising in medieval music, and probably none with the line up of four more or less equal voices. Genensky says: ‘We all loved the sound of it, and we wanted to continue together, so we decided upon several goals for ourselves. First thing: we wanted to do more chant.’²¹³ The group, which has now existed for over twenty years, has performed Gregorian chant, medieval polyphony and monophony, contemporary works (written especially for the group) as well as sacred American music in folk tradition. Genensky believes that the basic vocal production is the same whatever repertoire they perform, and the aim is to keep the voices clear and open, and always to listen:

The more we listen, the more we blend. And amongst the four of us, you will hear four extremely different timbres, four somewhat different ways of singing, but all of the listening, I think, is what has brought our different sounds together into that blend.²¹⁴

Anonymous 4 is one of the few vocal ensembles to have kept a consistent line-up of members. They have only had one change in twenty years (when Ruth Cunningham left in 1998 and was replaced by Jacqueline Horner) which means they have spent an enormous amount of time together: rehearsing, concertising and travelling, which has brought them together both as performers and people. Marsha talks about ‘group responsibility’ as well as ‘group reward’ and points out that ‘we didn’t give ourselves much individual opportunity at all in the early recordings. That was purposeful. We were focused on the ensemble, and that’s where we wanted our listeners to focus as well.’²¹⁵ The group focuses very much on the shape of the programme and aims to make:

a programme or the song the star, and not having any one of us be the star. To do that, you actually have to put your vocal ego aside and just go with the song. You have to sing your best of course, but you have to put aside your desire to have your listeners hear your individual voice.²¹⁶

Later on in their career they slowly started to put in solo songs in their programmes and recordings, especially in their latest recordings of American music.²¹⁷

The fourth member of Anonymous 4, Ruth Cunningham, sang and played recorder from a young age, and as a teenager she started to attend early music workshops and do local concerts. She studied baroque flute at the New England Conservatory and received a BMus in Performance of Early Music.²¹⁸ When she moved to New York she started studying voice seriously with Jane Bryden (Waverly consort) and then with Marcy Lindheimer and Beverly Meyers. Cunningham began singing with Anonymous 4 in 1988 and sang and toured with them for 10 years. She left for nine years and then rejoined the group in 2007 replacing Johanna Maria Rose. In addition to singing she also works as a sound healing practitioner: teaching people to use the voice and music as tools for healing and transformation.²¹⁹ She points out that even though she sings different kinds of music and uses her voice in a variety of ways, especially when she improvises, her aim is and has always been to keep the voice free:

I don't have one of those giant voices that needs to be cut down. I have a light voice suited for earlier repertoires and contemporary music. In whatever style I am doing I simply try to sing freely and on the breath.²²⁰

Like Anonymous 4's intentions of making the programme or a song the 'star of the show', the American born singer and ethnomusicologist Rebecca Stewart talks about how we as singers very often get in the way of the music and argues that performances are successful 'as long as the people who listen to you are not going away going, "wow, that's a great singer;" that's not a compliment, because then you've come between your music and the people'.²²¹ She suggests that as performers we are a channel for the music, and Stewart emphasises that 'the only reason you're singing is not because you're a good singer or you're this or that, it's because you love that music and you want those people to be affected. You just want to be a channel, you don't want them to get stuck by you.'²²²

Another American singer, mezzo soprano Carolann Buff of the vocal groups Liber unUsualis and Tapestry sang and played the double bass from an early age. But initially her academic studies were as a history major at the University of California, Santa Barbara. When she enquired of the Music Department as to whether she could study music history and take singing lessons, the only option given her was to do so as a music major. So she changed departments. For a few years she studied what she describes as 'art song' [classical vocal music] even though she quickly realised that

she did not wish to concentrate on operatic repertoire, something which all other voice students were there to do.²²³ Buff's interest was mainly in choral music and her history professor encouraged her to orientate her career towards early music. After attending an early music summer school at Amherst College she went to Longy School of Music in Cambridge, Massachusetts. There, she studied with the medievalist and performer Laurie Monahan (Ensemble Project Ars Nova (PAN) and Tapestry) and graduated with an MA in Early Music. The early music department was small, and together with the other two vocal students (Melanie Germond, soprano and William Hudson, tenor) she founded Liber unUsualis in 1996, and has since developed an increasingly busy tour schedule with both Liber unUsualis and Tapestry. Both groups have had excellent reviews for their sound and modern interpretation of medieval polyphonic music as this review of a concert in 2004 demonstrates:

The trio was absolutely on top of their game, executing even the most floridly ornamented passages in tight sync with a pure sound and centered pitch.... They sang with pure, controlled sounds and performed in a communicative, thoughtful style, handling the music not as a precious antique but as something vital and fascinating....²²⁴

The reviewer has identified the essential vocal issues (blend, clarity and pitch) that characterise polyphonic medieval music performance. Buff, like most of the other singers presented here, admits that she has never 'been very conscious of the issue of singing with straight tone' and she observes that the most important aspect of healthy singing is to be committed to the individuality in the voice and not trying to sound like anyone else or imitate a tone quality which does not correspond with the natural sound.²²⁵

Musicologists' views on a sound for medieval music

When I asked a number of musicologists what kind of sound they heard inside their heads when thinking of medieval music, most of them pointed out that they were coloured by records of polyphonic music sung by straight voices and all in tune. Anne Stone refers to the sound of British male vocal ensembles, sung in a fairly strict way, pure with no vibrato, but adds she draws no parallels between that sound and that of

the original medieval singers.²²⁶ Susan Boynton suggests it is a sound which is very pure and in tune, and refers to specific groups such as the Hilliard Ensemble, Gothic Voices and Anonymous 4. She also imagines the sound of boys' voices, and argues that the sound she hears in her head does connect, to a certain extent, with the medieval sound, and adds that she misses the sound of boy sopranos in modern recordings (something which would make a closer connection to the original sound, since boys' voices were apparent in 'pretty much every context, except the female convent').²²⁷

The American musicologist and singer Elizabeth Aubrey has two ways of looking at the issue of singers and vocal production: from the original and from the modern performer's perspective. She starts by saying it is impossible to know what it sounded like in the Middle Ages, but from the results of her own research she refers to the sound of untrained voices who were doing their job, worshiping and honouring God. She suggests that the original singers were probably not thinking much about singing together or singing in tune with the person standing next to them. She imagines that their main concern was more likely to be getting the text right and that they probably paid little attention to either the melody, ensemble blend, synchronised vowels or their individual vocal sound, all elements which are now counted among the most important criteria for modern performers of medieval sacred polyphony. Another American musicologist Anne Bagnall Yardley refers to two specific moments, one of which was a few summers ago, when she was on holiday in Europe visiting medieval villages and monasteries. She arrived in a tiny village outside Leon in Spain just in time to sit in for the Vespers at a Benedictine nunnery with its twelfth century church, and felt she was in heaven. The choir was placed on both sides in the front and an older nun played a little organ, Yardley recalls that the nun 'and one side of the choir in particular, didn't agree'. She said there were some beautiful and transcendent moments but also moments where she felt '[laughter] ... what's going on here? What is somebody trying to do?' Thirty years earlier, as part of her PhD research, she visited an English monastery and found the singing 'was atrocious ... it sounded bad ... I had this wonderful ... [sound] in my ear, but when they started to sing I said ... 'oh... I guess it wasn't always pretty!'²²⁸ The influence of the present context in which medieval music is presented (in the form of live performances and recordings) dominates our perception of what medieval music sounds like in our heads, and once we have heard a sound which we engage with, the impression will

most likely stay with us, representing the style in question. Most musicologists and performers seem to have accepted that, were they able to hear it, they might not even like whatever the original sound might have been.

Many factors combine to make up a performer's personal sound world. Not letting the voice get in between the audience and the music, as the American born singer and ethnomusicologist Rebecca Stewart points out, might be important for some people, while others want to be moved by vocal timbre and expression.²²⁹ When we perform we constantly make artistic choices (both prepared and instinctive ones) and small vocal changes can make an enormous difference to the outcome. As much as it seems that we, as performers, choose specific kinds of repertoire because of our vocal qualities, it clearly also depends on the people we meet and in what context we feel mentally comfortable.²³⁰ What each performer finally produces is guided by a number of different aspects. The myths surrounding success might be more relevant than we sometimes think, such as 'meeting the right people' and 'being at the right place at the right time'. Many performers might look back on their career and think 'how and why did I get into this particular genre?' The answer to this question is very much determined by the performers' backgrounds, their education and the models that they hear around them; these factors in turn have informed their attitude to medieval sources, sound and 'technique'.

Performers' backgrounds

All the singers I interviewed for this research turned out to have graduated either from a conservatory or university. The English performers King and Kirkby both graduated from universities (music at Cambridge, classics at Oxford respectively), but since their courses did not involve practical music-making, both found ways of developing their musicality and voices outside their academic courses. Both were indebted to the English choral tradition, singing in Oxbridge choirs where straight and pure voices were appreciated as the only possible vocal sound for the renaissance and medieval repertoires. When they later started having singing lessons, they studied privately (as opposed to institutional post-graduate study). Livljanić and Lesne were involved in choirs from a young age; both started their medieval music career by approaching it from a musicological angle, and like King and Kirkby they

found their singing teachers outside the conservatory system. This enabled them to develop their technical vocal skills and their preferred repertoires, rather than being encouraged by their teachers to focus solely on one particular vocal identity (such as lyric, dramatic or coloratura), something which most students at academies and conservatories are routinely required to do. Teachers' involvement in students' choice of repertoire, and their views on what that repertoire should be can be problematic for students who wish to focus on a specific area such as medieval music. One should not ignore the influence that most teachers have on their student, especially in an institution where the vocal teachers have an authoritative position. It is not unusual for voice students to find themselves working with repertoires they personally do not enjoy, but they dare not defy their teacher's judgements and recommendations.

Johansen, Rose and Buff, the performers who graduated with a degree in solo voice studies from a music academy, expressed their disappointment at the way in which the teachers dealt with students who were not equipped with a large operatic voice. Johansen mentions the relief she feels at no longer being a part of the conventional singing tradition, which she argues is based on 'showing the voice off' and choosing a vocal 'Fach' (vocal identity), something which she had enough of as student.

Many of the medieval music performers have a background as instrumentalists from a young age.²³¹ Hellauer, who started her musical education as a trumpet player, speaks in a similar vein to Johansen in saying that she does not necessarily want to call herself a singer, because of the competitive urge which many singers have to deal with, but rather an instrumentalist, even though she knows that singing is her profession. She says she 'started to sing by accident' since all students at Queens College were required to join an ensemble and because of her good sense of pitch she was asked to join the vocal ensemble. Hellauer's Anonymous 4 colleague, Cunningham, also started her early music career as an instrumentalist, graduating from University with baroque flute as her main instrument. Sykes, who graduated from Guildhall School of Music and Drama with oboe as her instrument, was brought up with folk and world music and developed her vocal technique with help from various teachers in Bulgaria, Morocco and India.²³² The few classical singing lessons she had made her cautious since she could sense a voice character which reminded her of 'Brunnhilde' and since that fitted in badly with what she thought of as an

acceptable early music sound, she stopped her voice lessons as quickly as she had started them.²³³

All the performers have had a background in choir and/or ensemble singing of some sort before having voice lessons, while seeking out a vocal teacher who supported their choice of repertoire (without necessarily working on it in their singing lessons). And all recognise the same aim as they develop as singers, which has been to establish a solid and flexible vocal technique which enables them to sing medieval music as well as other kinds of repertoires. None of them fitted the institutional solo voice course model: some of them chose not to study solo singing at academies because of the obvious priority of standard/operatic repertoire, while Rose, who graduated from a vocal course, admits that she was discouraged because the teachers were mainly interested in the big operatic voices. Johansen looks at the issue from yet another perspective. She argues she was very lucky to have a teacher who was not too concerned about what would become of her professionally, and benefited from the fact that one of the teachers was a lute player with whom she could sing early repertoires. The years at the conservatory enabled her to practice her technique and sing both standard and early repertoires, which meant that after graduation she had a solid technique in place and could focus on medieval music.

Education/institutionalisation

At the beginning of the 1980s, one of the most successful medieval music singers of the last century, the late Barbara Thornton, observed that:

Most specialist early music singers I know have had to hide the fact that they were interested in early music from their singing teachers at some point, since they knew there would be no support or guidance from that direction. Instead they struggled to synthesize a serviceable technique, from what seem to be the 'healthy' aspects of modern technique and their ideas and impressions of what is required of them in the various historical repertoires.²³⁴

Today it is possible for singers who want to sing a 'non-operatic' repertoire to get a degree as a singer. The major conservatories and academies started their 'Early Music' courses relatively recently and medieval music (as well as folk music) has

slowly found a place in institutionalised pedagogy. The notion that singers concentrate on medieval music (or non-classical music) just because they are not skilled enough to become 'proper singers' has started to disappear, and medieval music has become a part of contemporary music making.

The institutions offering qualifications in early music present their courses in different ways, and it is instructive to compare examples of the major English academies with the most established institutions on the European mainland. The Royal Academy in London runs a course in 'Historical Performance' which includes 'intensive training in all aspects of historically-informed interpretation'.²³⁵ They have chosen the word 'interpretation' and not 'performance', which suggests that they have made a conscious decision not to use Historically Informed Performance (HIP) in their course description. An intensive training in Historically Informed Interpretation, (HII) can be interpreted in a number of different ways; for example, using historical sources as a basis for modern performance, or even as in interpreting the historically informed performance movement. The word 'interpretation' might also suggest a more free approach to history than the frequently-used 'performance' does.²³⁶ The Royal Academy announces that the 'specialist training is combined with an involvement in mainstream Academy life, expanding performance possibilities for "traditional" and "modern" instrumentalists and singers alike.'²³⁷ I would argue that an involvement in 'mainstream Academic life' is more to do with social connections than it is to do with musical involvement. But the sentence also indicates that the two categories, 'traditional' and 'modern', are of very different character, and instead of making historical performance a part of the mainstream culture, we find a clear division between the two.²³⁸ It is also the case that most of the mainstream music which is being taught at academies today is 'old' enough to be a part of a historically informed performance/interpretation course, but conservatories are reluctant to include the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as suitable periods of study.

A second English music academy, The Guildhall School of Music and Drama, introduces their course in this way: 'Recognised by all departments in the school as fundamental to any musician's training, Historically Informed Performance offers students a solid basis for a sustained and rewarding career in the music profession.'²³⁹ But what if students find out that they love playing and singing the early repertoires, but do not find they want to present it in an 'historical' way? The Guildhall seems to emphasise the importance of the individual student's insight into possible ways of

performing music. By saying that 'knowledge of traditions and techniques of the past can always inform our performances of the future' they appear to be open to a variety of possible performance results, although their entrance requirements ignore medieval music altogether.²⁴⁰

Two of the most well known European mainland institutions, Das Institut für Alte Musik at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Trossingen (Germany) and the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis (Switzerland), founded 75 years ago, offer educations in all areas of early music.²⁴¹ The Early Music department in Trossingen specialises in 'Historische Aufführungspraxis', and in their course description for 'Music before 1550', they point out that their aim is to give the students a solid education both as solo and ensemble performers. The course work includes comparing and transforming 'theoretical knowledge into workable, practical and sounding music by studying, and performing from, original notation'. Both institutions emphasise the importance of ensemble singing, and the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis has recently started a Masters in Advanced Vocal Ensemble Studies. In Scandinavia too the interest in ensemble singing has grown immensely and subsequently become a part of the educational system during the last ten years. The main academies provide courses in both folk and early music. At the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, the 'Early Music' course description includes historical performance practice of 'the classical repertoire spanning from medieval to early romantic music'. The students are encouraged to start ensembles and combine knowledge with creativity in a cooperative environment without conductors or leaders. This is in contrast to the English institutions, which appear to focus on music from the sixteenth century and onwards, and seem to train their students to become soloists rather than ensemble musicians (probably as a consequence of mainstream ideology).²⁴² Medieval and renaissance music involves a substantial amount of ensemble singing, something which the European mainland institutions emphasise strongly.²⁴³

Historical awareness amongst classical singing students at academies and conservatories is, from my own as well as my colleagues' experience, not very substantial.²⁴⁴ During my period of studies in Oslo and London, neither students nor teachers appeared to be aware of the latest developments in musicology when approaching the mainstream standard repertoire. The production of a sound which coincides with the modern appreciation of an 'ideal' sound for different repertoires guided the interpretations, vocal techniques and performances. Institutions (especially

British conservatories) seem to take it for granted that singing students ultimately aim for a solo career and not chamber music and ensemble singing (something which is, by contrast, more or less compulsory for string or wind players during their education). I have encountered students who have been told neither to sing in choirs nor ensembles since it might harm the voice and disturb their technique and vocal quality.²⁴⁵ Can it possibly be the case that the institutions do not have singing teachers who are able to coach their singing students in ensemble situations and subsequently protect the students from vocal damage? If ensemble singing is done in an attentive, sensitive and supportive manner it might help students to find out much more about their own voice than if they are only doing exercises and practising repertoire on their own in a practise room.

Modern performers: sound and technique

None of the performers interviewed felt that a healthy modern technique was a threat to the medieval music singer, but rather the opposite. None of them had engaged with the secondary literature available, preferring to rely on their own tried and trusted techniques. Authoritative recent works on medieval performance and sound, such as McGee's *The sound of medieval song*, were not mentioned or discussed during any of the conversations. Their basic sound was generally influenced by the models available to them (from institutions and on record, for example), and the fact that many did not start out aiming to become professional singers. Institutions rather than research also had a decisive influence on the way they related to a possible original medieval sound: most acknowledged a certain standard of vocal ability based on the assumption that medieval singers sang many services per day, and that some of the music continues to be vocally demanding even for modern singers with a solid technique. Livljanić said she imagined the medieval singers had vocal training, but acknowledged she did not know what it would have consisted of. We can, of course, refer to the vocal exercises which have been found in several manuscripts (as discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis) but we do not have any information on how they approached the material or how they rehearsed. It is also difficult to imagine that everyone involved in a religious establishment was able to sing in tune. Most of the interviewees were conscious of creating an appropriate sound determined by criteria

in the present rather than the past. Sykes, for example, admitted that a line-up of many instrumentalists and one singer was probably not used in the medieval period since such a line-up requires a vocal projection which projects through the loud instruments.²⁴⁶ None of the singers aspired to a sound which might be equivalent to a possible medieval original, and everyone agreed that it was impossible to know what it sounded like.

Despite my interviewees' apparent lack of engagement, with either conventional or historical vocal pedagogy, considerations of technique were paramount, and all the singers had strong convictions about how to use the voice. Most needed to have a sufficiently firm foundation to cope with very diverse repertoires covering a wide historical period. Some, such as Catherine King, always use their full technique whatever the music, finding medieval music even harder than the mainstream classical repertoires because it needs such fine control.²⁴⁷ Rose pointed out that her vocal production used to differ between the warming up sessions and ensemble singing sessions with Anonymous 4, and she drew attention to the fact that as a young singer she had no problems in floating light and high, but that as she became older her voice changed and she now found it harder to sing the high register with a straight and pure voice. King referred to the same experience saying she had found out that she needed to sing the earlier repertoires in a lower range, since singing high and straight made her hoarse and vocally tired.²⁴⁸

The English performers King, Kirkby and Sykes, all drew attention to the fact that the 'early music voice' has been associated with negative attributes even though they are meant as positive qualities: a voice which 'does not wobble', a voice which is 'not mostly out of tune', a voice which 'does not obscure the words' and a voice 'without expression'. There are certainly many reasons as to why people like and enjoy different kinds of music and different kinds of voice types, and as discussed earlier there are numerous reasons why we, as performers, choose to perform certain types of music. Kirkby argues that the way to a steady vocal technique is through an active articulation of consonants, and instead of singing vowel exercises (something which constitutes the basis in many classical singers' practices) she uses the texts and words actively and argues that the start of every phrase needs to lead straight in to the note to get the cleanest sound possible.

All the performers I interviewed point out the importance of keeping the voice flexible, and most of them regularly practice mainstream classical repertoires (even if

they do not actually perform it) in addition to their medieval solo/ensemble singing. Belinda Sykes is the only interviewee who did not find classical singing useful, since she started to produce a voice type she did not want. She has developed her own technique based on folk, Middle Eastern and Balkan traditions. In doing so she has discovered that her chest voice carries a number of different colours and qualities which enable her to match and blend with her fellow ensemble members. Even though her chest voice can sound very soft and light she finds it hard to shift between her chest and head voice, and avoids the latter as much as she can.²⁴⁹ Noorman on the other hand, enjoys the swift shifts between her distinct voice types. Sykes and Noorman are the only two singers who refer to two different vocal qualities in their voices, and Noorman is the only singer who points out that she was very conscious of changing her vocal quality to accommodate different repertoires. By using her head voice for the sacred music, and the 'Reservata' style for the secular, she found a sound which she was happy to produce, and was never afraid of harming her voice even though she sometimes had to switch promptly between the two in concerts. There are not many singers today who would dare to sing one piece using only the chest voice and the next using only head voice without worrying about harming the voice. But Noorman describes her experience of it as being like gymnastics for the voice. The 'Mediterranean/Middle East' sound which Sykes produces might help to widen the frame of reference for different possible medieval music sounds. By not trying to recreate the past, but instead replacing the missing performative elements of vocal delivery and style with a personal vocal 'authentic' quality, the creative work of every individual performer can be realised.²⁵⁰

Tuning, vibrato, ensembles

In medieval and renaissance music, we tend to think that open and pure intervals need steady voices to be able to tune, so many singers straighten their voices and reduce their vibrato. There is not much historical evidence for this, but because we can identify the beginnings of modern singing in the nineteenth century, it is reasonable to assume that earlier singing styles were very different, and modern singers and critics have been preoccupied with the question perhaps because it is one of the ways that early music is perceived to differ from mainstream singing. If we take

away the richness of modern singing, what we are left with is a sound more akin to speech. We can justify a relative lack of vibrato by the fact that vibrato does not occur in speech.²⁵¹ Once we understand this, our ears attune to intervals and musical shaping and the voice will often automatically straighten out to serve that purpose. Another reason for singing with a straight voice is to emphasize the tensions in dissonances and suspensions. Kirkby points out that 'if someone is holding a note, and the next one joins it, and they're both wobbling, then the chances of them being able to create that suspension are very small, they'd have to wobble at exactly the same speed, and why bother?'²⁵² Sykes has yet another perspective on the tuning issue. She suggests it is probably easier to tune when using the chest voice, which is not as 'clean' as the high straight voice: 'It is easier for me to sing in tune, without even thinking about it, than people who have ... higher purer voices. I think they have to work at it a bit harder'.²⁵³ All medieval music singers I have talked with agree that the habit of straightening the voice is just something that happens naturally, rather than a conscious vocal tract manipulation.²⁵⁴ Tuning and vibrato are important modern criteria, however, and all acknowledge their significance. Carolann Buff of *Liber unus* and *Tapestry* recalls many situations where members of the audience have said 'oh, you sing with intonation' and 'oh, you sing with a straight sound, and it's really striking to us!'²⁵⁵ As performers we get so used to our own sound within an ensemble, that we take it for granted that we will sing in tune. Lesne suggests that medieval treatises confirm that vibrato was used as an ornament and not a 'steady' vocal sound (Kirkby also refers to vibrato as an ornament) but there are no unambiguous references to vibrato in any medieval source, despite the fact that scholars, such as Lesne and McGee, are able to find a degree of certainty.²⁵⁶

With the exception of Kirkby (once she had become successful soloist) all of the interviewees are closely involved with ensemble singing which in itself is a purely modern phenomenon (almost all of the medieval sacred repertoire was probably sung by choirs).²⁵⁷ Women's ensembles have become particularly successful, despite the lack of evidence for female polyphonic choirs. The charm of making music in a group, singing one-to-a-part and enjoying the harmonies, the blend of voices singing together, collaborating and creating an event as 'team work' contributes to intensify the result where you become a part of something larger than yourself. Genensky points out the excitement of being part of a group effort and emphasises the value of 'group responsibility and group reward'.²⁵⁸

For performers, sound is of prime importance whether or not they engage with historical sources: their sound is what they are and is fundamental to their musical persona. None of the performers I have talked to would compromise their vocal health in order to accommodate 'musicology'. While there are some very successful performers of medieval music with 'classically trained', flexible voices, who also sing mainstream classical repertoire, one does not often come across professional recordings and performances of 'classical' music sung by untrained voices. Today's singers have to maintain a viable technique that they can depend on. Musicologists on the other hand may or may not have a notional sound in their heads, and most of those interviewed do not seem to have strong feelings about the original sound: all believe it is impossible to recreate it. The fact that for musicologists the sound is less important than textual considerations is ultimately liberating for women singers. This sense of freedom is further enhanced by the practical considerations that all modern performers have to confront.

Chapter 3: Singers and original sources: the problem of recreation

Since the start of the early music revival there has been great enthusiasm amongst musicologists of early music to discover as much as possible about the actual history and to make that research available to other musicologists, performers and interested people. Many editions of medieval music that were published before the start of the revival are still being used both by performers and musicologists; sometimes performed straight off the score, but probably more frequently used as a basis on which corrections are made after having visited the original manuscript. Questions about sound, distribution of voices, tonality, reconstruction of instruments and vocal techniques are just a few of the frequently debated issues when it comes to the question of authenticity and HIP. These performative issues go beyond the score itself. Contemporary female singers of medieval sacred music also have to face the problem that most of the surviving pieces were composed for male voices, so they must justify a sound for which there may be very little historical evidence. One of the things that inevitably interests us as performers is how the music we make in the present relates, if at all, to performance practice in the past. We re-contextualize the music: none of the medieval music we sing was composed for a concert hall, or indeed for the kind of audience that we perform for. This chapter focuses on performers' attitudes to musicology, the extent to which they use it, and its usefulness as a performative tool in a present-day context.

Conversation with performers

Jantina Noorman always used modern editions of medieval music, because the leaders of the groups she performed with (George Hunter in North America and Michael Morrow in the UK) always transcribed and prepared the editions for the ensembles. She never thought about the fact that some of the music she performed was not originally written for female voices. She says: 'Why shouldn't I sing a song that's written for a man? Why should I be deprived?'²⁵⁹

The arrangements of medieval pieces during the 60s and 70s were normally broad, full-sounding and clearly 'arranged'. Today it is rare to hear such elaborate arrangements: the justification for large instrumental ensembles with bagpipes, crumhorns, flutes, portable organ, harps, fiddles, percussion, and many singers

presumably derives from iconography, but with little evidence to connect it to actual music. Noorman also believed that the instrumentation that Morrow suggested for different pieces were a part of the attempt to recreate a medieval sound world.²⁶⁰ In 1988 Howard Mayer Brown referred to *Musica Reservata*, which Noorman was part of, as a group 'which challenged the audience's conception of the sound of early music by cultivating a harsh vocal quality based on Morrow's firm ideas of authenticity'.²⁶¹ Fifteen years earlier in a review of *Musica Reservata's French court music of the thirteenth century*, Mayer Brown wrote:

Jantina Noorman's ebullient 'Kalenda maya' that begins the recording is the quintessence of fishwifery, and she makes the anonymous 'Prisoner's song' genuinely moving. To be sure, this manner of performance is doubtless not the only possible one; and it does ignore everything that is courtly and refined, even over-refined, in the music. But, it embodies such a strong, personal and coherent conception of the music, that it succeeds admirably well.²⁶²

However, Noorman's personal, moving and intense sound did not appeal to all critics. In 1971 Nigel Fortune expressed strong doubts about her vocal production, which he found displeasing:

Jantina Noorman's raucous recreation of (presumably) street singing I find intensely disagreeable. If heard once it might be tolerable as an attempt at realism, but surely not perpetuated on record; moreover, her 'normal' voice elsewhere ... detracts from the generally high standard of performance.²⁶³

Morrow succeeded in creating a sound which was unconventional and whose vocal quality was regarded as 'shocking' at the time, something rare in current performances of medieval music. In *Performing Music in the Age of Recording* (2004) Robert Philip draws attention to the 'surprise' component in performance and argues that we are in danger of losing it.²⁶⁴ Philip suggests that the reproduction of music (with its multitude of styles) in combination with the high quality of modern recordings is a threat to a surprise element which, he argues, is an important attribute when producing music. As an example Philip reflects on Noorman's pioneering and striking sound which was a completely unfamiliar way of projecting the voice, especially to people in the western world. Her thrilling and unconventional singing style, combined with her ability to match the sounds of different instruments such as

crumhorns and shawms, left her listeners with an experience which was different from anything they had heard before. He argues that 'it is impossible to recapture the original impact by listening to her recordings now. They are still impressive, but they are familiar, and therefore cannot any longer convey the edge of stimulating discomfort that she produced at the time.'²⁶⁵

In his 1978 article 'Musical Performance and authenticity', Michael Morrow talks of the ability of the human voice 'to produce virtually any sound imaginable.'²⁶⁶ However, he finds that singers do not use their potential capacity:

Unfortunately, singers (and their public) today and through the ages have always maintained that there is only one valid vocal style – their own.... Even provided one had exact evidence of lost vocal styles, one would need first to convince the singers (no mean task), instruct them and then educate the audience. For there are two things most audiences and all music critics abhor: non-conventional singing and non-conventional violin-playing. With crumhorns, of course, anything goes.'²⁶⁷

In an earlier conversation with J.M. Thomson in *Early Music* he points out that 'singers ... are very disinclined to do anything that is vocally unfamiliar – and, of course, they're often technically unable to do things that singers in the past learned as part of their basic training' though it is not clear what period he is referring to when talking of past traditions of vocal training.²⁶⁸ Morrow refers to his interest in medieval music, European folk music and 'non-European folk and art music' (most likely what we today call world music). He singles out a particular moment when he heard Yugoslav male singers performing with what he calls 'perfect intonation'. Struck by the pure intervals which they produced, he immediately imagined their vocal colour to be the perfect sound of a thirteen-century motet. Apart from relating to the folk music tradition Morrow stresses the importance of studying the characteristics of sound in terms of 'articulation, intonation, vocal and instrumental colour' for each specific language, country and period. But while he emphasizes the importance of these aspects of the music for the singers he also says that he had 'a definite policy of not telling the singers what the texts were about so that they wouldn't put any false feelings into their singing.'²⁶⁹

A completely different medieval sound world was imagined by Christopher Page, who suggested that most polyphonic medieval sacred music was probably written for voices and performed *a cappella*. To demonstrate the results of his

research he created Gothic Voices in 1980, using singers with a background in the English cathedral choir tradition (the very sound that Michael Morrow avoided at all costs). This was the group with which Emma Kirkby had her initial encounter with medieval music.²⁷⁰ Medieval ensembles that had been using instruments, or a mix of voices and instruments (such as the Medieval Ensemble of London), were suddenly considered 'non-authentic'. During the next few years the *a cappella* wave flourished; many groups were formed and musicians started to make a living out of ensemble singing. In 1981 Gothic Voices recorded Sequences and Hymns by Hildegard von Bingen, and as a guest soloist they had Emma Kirkby singing a few solo pieces, joined by other female voices in the refrains and accompanied by a hurdy-gurdy.²⁷¹ Christopher Page writes 'a note on performance' in the accompanying booklet where he refers to monastic musical life:

Ideally, singers were to allow their activity to absorb the whole spirit and body, inducing a state of meditative calm and so intensifying the quality of devotional life. Distractions, such as the intrusion of instrumental decorations or of extrovert vocal practices, were therefore to be avoided. Discretion was the basis of the ideal: voices betraying a poised, attentive spirit dwelling upon the inner meaning of the text, sensitive to musical nuances but never seduced by them. This is what the performances on this record try to recapture.²⁷²

He then goes on to say that this is not the only way to do it, but claims that it relates to the ideals underlying medieval performance. Kirkby had not heard of Hildegard von Bingen before she was asked to sing on the record, and she says her response to Hildegard's music was to the 'Latin texts ... and the beautiful images in her sequences'.²⁷³ Page further writes that they were trying to create a performance that would correspond to 'Hildegard's creative personality':

A Romantic notion of her as an intensely individual artist striving to establish a new poetic and musical language could easily encourage a do-as-you-please approach to performance, complete with instruments and wayward vocal techniques. But this would be a falsified picture. (Hildegard's writing suggests a quiet mastery that controls ecstasy and shuns delirium, always working within the mainstream of Christian tradition.)²⁷⁴

Whether the performance corresponds to Hildegard's intentions or not will always remain unknown. Since there is no actual evidence that tells us what this music sounded like at the time, it is brave of Page to state that the performance he has chosen is not a falsified 'do-as-you-please' performance, but rather a 'true' performance that re-captures Hildegard's intentions. In the 1982 August issue of *Monthly Guide to Recorded Music* a reviewer of the recording writes: 'One criticism alone occurs to the admiring reviewer; all the singing here, though free from any trace of romantic nuance, is 'art' singing of much refinement and ideally one wishes for untrained natural voices, something perhaps impossible in our world of high technology'.²⁷⁵ So what is a natural voice? Kirkby says: 'I've loved singing, I've worked with fantastic people, I've met amazing repertoire, and I get really freaked if people say "you're an expert, you're a specialist..." I'm a specialist because I've lived with the music, but not a fount of knowledge about it'.²⁷⁶ She does not think her way of performing has changed because of trends in musicology and terminology, and admits she has always relied on other people for specialist knowledge. She has always reacted instinctively to the music regardless of period and considers herself a 'vessel' rather than a researcher.²⁷⁷ She was very willing to engage with the thoughts of musicologists, but was aware that 'the whole word "authenticity" hung over us like a dead weight, in a way, because you were always worrying'.²⁷⁸ However as a performer she saw her main task as communicating the music with or without its associated musicology.

Catherine King has always been interested in the primary sources for her music, but her direct involvement depends on the repertoire in question, and she has different approaches for different periods. For the later lute song repertoire for example, she usually compares the modern edition with its original publication, since she finds the modern editions potentially untrustworthy. King's first professional experience with medieval music was with the New London Consort, and in 1995 she became a member of Gothic Voices. When singing medieval music she works closely with people who do the background work and prepare the editions, which is why she has never done much original research within that period herself. She trusts the editions devised by the group's musicologists, who include former director Christopher Page, John Nixon (who sings with the group) and Yolanda Plumley and acknowledges that 'in a way, I leave it in other people's hands'.²⁷⁹ However, when

she is engaged as a soloist she has no choice but to accept the edition provided by the conductor or promoter. For her own projects King always consults specialists in the field to make sure she is up-to-date with recent research especially about such questions as the original way of using ornamentation. But her principal aim, above all, is to communicate the music to her own audience. She says:

I would say, overall, my objective when I'm singing medieval music, and any music, is to make it meaningful in whatever way, to the audience now, is more important than ... what would the opposite be? Doing a performance that doesn't carry any emotional weight or is perhaps very scholarly ... but if it doesn't mean anything for the performance, to the audience, as far as I'm concerned, there's no point in doing it.²⁸⁰

This approach has been very effective and has received considerable praise from critics, David Fallows for example, singling her out as being an 'indispensable artist'.²⁸¹

Like Michael Morrow, Belinda Sykes has always been interested in integrating elements of folk music into medieval music. When she started her degree at Guildhall School of Music and Drama she did not leave her folk music interest behind, but kept singing and going to folk music clubs and concerts. She says that she never told her fellow classical music students about her enthusiasm because 'folk music was a severely-not-trendy-thing to be in to when I was a teenager'.²⁸² In 2004 Sykes completed her Masters in Ethnomusicology specialising in medieval Arab-Andalusian music, and her performances demonstrate this scholarly awareness, together with the freedom that is found in improvisation.²⁸³ Sykes takes what she wants from the original sources, and then, combining this with her own intuition, she creates her own piece. She does not claim to practice HIP, but goes for what she thinks of as an 'authentic' spirit:

To myself, here in the modern day, folk music is what I have absorbed the most deeply, which means that then if I hear something modal or similar, then to me it sounds most convincing as having the correct spirit if it matches what I was brought up on, which is of course the exact opposite for people who had a completely different musical upbringing. So, that's the only thing I am trying to re-create: does it convince me, and, if I say 'yes', then that's fine.²⁸⁴

As one reviewer puts it: ‘Scholarship and committed music-making unite, underpinned by Sykes’s knowledge of folk music from Europe and beyond.’²⁸⁵ Another review (of the same CD *Magdalena*, released in 2003) says: ‘Joglaresa’s performances, whose imaginative use of improvisation creates an exciting air of authenticity, are equally varied, exploiting every possible combination of their four female voices and two instrumentalists to give each piece its own distinctive character.’²⁸⁶ One effective element in Sykes’ performance has been the addition of drones, the idea for which came from studying modern performances of folk music, especially from the Mediterranean countries (mainly Corsica and Sardinia) and the Balkans. She also draws attention to the use of vocal drones in the Russian and Arabic Christian traditions and says that the tradition is very conservative and has probably not changed much over the course of time, so that even if there are no actual records of the drone tradition it is likely that it has sounded very similar for many centuries. Sykes points out that ‘in the Maronite Christian tradition in Syria and Lebanon they have both sorts, they have a vocalized drone and they also do ones with text as well.’²⁸⁷ She further refers to the use of drone instruments (such as the *sinfonye* or bagpipes) in the medieval period, but declares she has found no hard evidence supporting sung drones. In a review of a Joglaresa concert of *Laude spirituali* in London (2005) the reviewer Hilary Finch writes:

Believe it or not, these exquisite manuscripts indicated no rhythms, harmonies or instrumentation — so informed guesswork is the order of the day. And Sykes is more informed than most. Her study of voice and improvisation in North Africa, Spain and the Middle East was thrillingly evident in the instrumental dervishes and drones.²⁸⁸

The term ‘informed guesswork’ probably justifies most groups’ approach to medieval music-making. The same piece can sound quite different depending on the performer, and I would argue that this is one of the great strengths of medieval music-making.

Susan Hellauer has acted as the medieval scholar for her ensemble, Anonymous 4. Since much of the musicological scholarship up until the 1970s was in German, Hellauer’s fluency in German has enabled her to read much of the research published through the second half of the twentieth century.²⁸⁹ Hellauer has transcribed a large proportion of the ensemble’s medieval repertoire. Her aim has always been to keep the editions as close as possible to the original notation, and when the ensemble

occasionally uses a modern edition, not edited by Hellauer, they generally consult the manuscript to make sure they are using an edition which corresponds with the original. She remarks that they are happy to sing from an already existing edition (except for the chant repertoire for which they have always relied on original sources) pointing out that if a 'person did a good job they should get money from the publication. No need to reinvent the wheel.'²⁹⁰ When they prepare a programme which includes chants, Hellauer tries to find chants which are as close as possible in time and place to the extant material. Even though Hellauer, Genensky and Rose are 'scholarly informed singers' with a background in musicology, Anonymous 4 has worked closely with several musicologists, such as Ernest Sanders, Alejandro Planchart and Laszlo Dobszay.²⁹¹ Hellauer points out they have never aimed to reconstruct a medieval past, but rather to re-contextualize the music in the present. She draws attention to the importance of performers and scholars working together, but remarks that in the end the performer's job is to perform and present the music in a way which is musically satisfying as well as to make sure that the programmes are exciting for the audiences.²⁹² In a conversation with Bernard D. Sherman, Hellauer says:

The facts that scholars have uncovered are the firm foundations on which our imaginations can build. But sometimes the facts are insufficient to complete the picture, or scholars disagree about what they mean. Then we have to make choices that convince us, and that will convince our audiences.²⁹³

In the same conversation she talks about the women's role in sacred medieval polyphonic music, and remarks that 'we don't know whether or not women sang sacred polyphony; but since much of this music is for equal voices (and since *we* can sing it), we think it's possible, and even probable, that they did.'²⁹⁴ She says some of their listeners have commented that the polyphonic lines become clearer when sung by female voices rather than lower male voices.²⁹⁵

When the group released its first CD *An English Ladymass* in 1992, medieval polyphonic music sung by all women's voices (one to a part) was still a rare phenomenon.²⁹⁶ As Marsha Genensky puts it:

When we first started to sing together there was the Big Question of whether women would have sung medieval music. Those of us who have

studied enough about it know that there's strong evidence that women definitely sang chant, both privately and in public, and that they probably also sang polyphony in certain situations. Although they weren't allowed to be paid performers or to sing in the public cathedrals, they certainly sang in their own convents.²⁹⁷

To avoid questions and negative criticism about the 'women's voices and medieval polyphony' issue, Anonymous 4's record company Harmonia Mundi asked Alejandro Planchant to write a comment to defend and justify their work.²⁹⁸ Hellauer points out that 'we ourselves had no ethical or performance-practice issues with what we were doing.'²⁹⁹ In the end the note was never used, but it is interesting to observe that the record company saw the potential risk of a negative critique about what could possibly have been called a 'non-authentic project'. The record sold over 150,000 copies in the first two years and spent 76 weeks on Billboard's classical chart.³⁰⁰ Anonymous 4 certainly convinced listeners, musicologists and reviewers that it is possible for women to perform medieval polyphony, and with the notable exception of John Barker (*American Record Guide*) I have not yet come across any writing that suggests that it is problematic for them (or any other all-women groups) to do it.³⁰¹ David Fallows addresses the question in this way:

There may be some questions of whether it is historically appropriate to sing the English polyphony of the years around 1300 with women's voices only; but that is not the point. What is clear is that some of it sounds magical that way on their record.... This is because the higher voices help to clarify the texture in a way that pays enormous dividends for complicated music.³⁰²

Ernest Sanders supports this opinion when he remarks: 'it sounds clearer to my ears when women sing this polyphony than when men sing it, so I can't imagine that women didn't sing it at some point.'³⁰³ Both Fallows and Sanders are struck by the clear sound the Anonymous 4 produces, especially the clarity of the polyphony, and it seems as if its quality has taken them slightly by surprise. I would argue that groups such as Gothic Voices and the Hilliard Ensemble, which also have a one-to-a-part line-up, have the same clarity of texture as Anonymous 4, and that the purity and structural comprehensibility probably has to do with elements such as vocal production, the art of ensemble singing and musicianship, rather than a general statement that women's voices produce a more distinctive polyphony. The 'element of

surprise' discussed earlier, is probably also important here: a new sound world appeared when women started to perform and record the sacred medieval polyphony in ensemble formats.³⁰⁴ The musicologist Mary Berry also commends Anonymous 4's clarity, captivating simplicity and unpretentious voices in a review of *An English Ladymass* in *Gramophone*. She refers to the basic programme structure of the English Lady Mass as a reconstruction of a past, and identifies the record as a turning point away from old traditions: 'Here is a record to dispel the old myth that chant and early polyphony are really uniquely the province of male voices, men and boys.'³⁰⁵ The question of the medieval women's involvement in polyphony was brought up ten years later a review of the Trio Mediaeval's debut record *Words of the Angel*. Rick Anderson writes:

There is a grist for the gender-political mill in the choice of repertoire – in the fourteenth century it would have been unthinkable for women to sing these compositions in their intending setting – but, like Anonymous 4, these women wear that aspect of their project lightly.³⁰⁶

Hellauer argues that, when singing medieval music, the most important historical reference is to put the music into a context. Anonymous 4 have always been concerned to do 'thematic programming', which means they build the programmes around a specific manuscript, a historical liturgical practice or a certain occasion such as a Saint's day or an important date in the church's year. They look for texts that suit a special event, and make sure that the chant has its place in the programme, inserted between the polyphonic pieces to give a sense of the original context. There are obvious references to historically informed performance here: the structure of the programmes usually has a basis in liturgy.³⁰⁷ Like Hellauer, Genensky refers to the substantial research work Anonymous 4 do when preparing and developing each new programme, but adds that their 'end goal is to take our audience to a different time and place, musically. So at a certain point, we have to put the research aside and simply present our program in our concerts and on our recordings in the most convincing way we can.'³⁰⁸

Genensky and Johanna Maria Rose's main contribution toward programmes of medieval music has focused on contextual and linguistic/pronunciation research. Once the research was done, one of them would coach the others on how to pronounce the separate words and then they would all sing using that pronunciation. Genensky says

they 'really wanted to see what it felt like musically to try and approximate the sound of the language we sang, and we found that, in some cases, it really did affect the music.'³⁰⁹ She points out that there are almost as many questions regarding the pronunciation of the texts as of the original medieval music sound. Genensky continues:

We have not done original linguistic research, we've followed the research of historical linguists, and they don't always agree with each other! But generally, the pronunciations we follow seem to make sense, and going with historical pronunciation does seem to affect the sound and the presentation of the music.³¹⁰

The French singer and musicologist Brigitte Lesne has a different approach to pronunciation. At the start of her career (with *Discantus* and *Alla Francesca*) she tried to keep different pronunciations for different kinds of repertoire, which meant she modified the Latin pronunciation depending on the origin of the manuscript. But this was problematic when she prepared and performed a German programme and was confronted with an unfamiliar language. Lesne made a decision to consistently use the French pronunciation for the Latin repertoire, even though, as she remarked, the old French pronunciations also differed immensely between the south, centre and the north of France. She points out that it is logical and natural that a French person has a French pronunciation and draws a parallel to the medieval period where copies of manuscripts, such as the *Notre Dame* repertoire, travelled from place to place and was sung by different people in different countries with different accents and pronunciations. Lesne prefers to read from the original facsimiles, especially for music written before the *Notre Dame* repertoire. She uses medieval treatises to inform her interpretation and says that reading from the original has been especially important in working out the ornamentation for the *Notre Dame* repertoire. She enjoys palaeography and argues that 'it's really hard try to find a way to transcribe the music into modern editions keeping all the information that you have in medieval notation,' but since some of the singers in *Discantus* do not read original notation very well, she makes modern editions for the ensembles.³¹¹ When she transcribes the music she tries to keep many of the signs used in the original notation, so as not to miss out on important information. When she approaches *Troubadour* and *Trouvère* songs she always looks at the original manuscripts first, because she finds that the facsimile provides her with valuable dynamic information:

For a Trouvère song you have only one melody and the text and you know nothing. What about *instruments*, which kind of singing, what 'patois' [regional languages].... You have to construct 'esthétique' [aesthetics, judgement, sense] with all that, and, 'bien sûr', you will sing for modern audiences ... so you have to have a good balance between being serious with the sources we have and the interest of a modern public.... Fantasy is necessary ... but sometimes there is too much fantasy, in regards with the original sources.³¹²

She says that she can allow herself to be more creative with the secular repertoire, and explains that with 'religious repertory I think you must be very humble ... because it's religious music, it's church music ... and we are not religious people.'³¹³ Her chief concern, regardless of what music she performs, is to be true to the manuscript and its notation, but apart from that everything has to be reconstructed. In relation to Gregorian chant, she argues, 'the notation is so precise, it's so well done, well written ... [that] we are only servants of the music'.³¹⁴ Her approach has certainly been very successful. In 1994 Goldberg magazine declares: 'Brigitte Lesne has become the true incarnation of female plainchant through her concerts and recordings', and a few years later Mary Berry writes:

The result is a cluster of pieces that are utterly convincing, suggesting what may well have been not far from the sound of the chant when it was still a living oral tradition, in the ninth century, just before the advent of musical notation.³¹⁵

Her editions, which are kept at the Centre de Musique Médiévale de Paris, are an important source for performers of medieval music. When I ask her if she has been thinking of publishing them she tells me the Centre has approached editors but since they assume that the medieval repertoire is not commercial enough, there are no editors who are interested in publishing the material. Though she does think that good modern editions would help to increase the interest amongst teachers at conservatories and singers of mainstream music.

Like Lesne, Katarina Livljanić's primary aim is to try and get as much information out of the original manuscripts as possible, and both of them talk about the importance of having an historical perspective in addition to the musical interest. However Livljanić says that even though the musicological research is very helpful and prevents us from going too far from the original sources, performers cannot

neglect the emotional and imaginative dimensions when interpreting the music. The sources provide her with a dimension both inspirational and educational which helps her to understand, at least in part, how the music was originally sung. She feels that being able to see the original manuscripts gives her an insight into their original context. Livljanić has what we might call an emotional respect for the manuscripts. She is amazed that we, in the present, can have access to material used by people who lived many centuries ago, remarking that singing from the manuscripts 'is an attempt to speak the language of people from the Middle Ages but also a reflection of how it speaks to us.'³¹⁶ She is conscious of the need to have a solid theoretical comprehension when creating programmes, but finds it difficult if the performance comes a poor second:

Sometimes it almost felt as if music was the second plan, as I was hearing musicians who could not escape from the musicological aspect and a certain "rational" aspect in the medieval music, and it was very painful for me to realise that.³¹⁷

I ask Livljanić whether her work as an active musicologist has been straightforwardly an asset to her as a performer, or whether it can introduce an element of hesitation into her decision-making. She replies: 'I get frustrated because I feel that intuitively something should sound 'this way' and then I know I can never validate that in an article ... because I have no way to measure it by scientific criteria.'³¹⁸ She finds it more rewarding to present a CD than to publish an article; 'If I am publishing an article about some repertoire it will somehow remain less concrete. If we can sing it, it is so much more real.'³¹⁹

Livljanić has recorded four CDs with her group Dialogos, and in the booklet of their debut CD *Terra Adriatica* (which Livljanić refers to as her 'record of young age' with a 'youthful quality about it') we learn that the group specializes in Mediterranean liturgical repertoires and medieval music, and that their performance practice is based on oral transmission and musicological research on medieval musical manuscripts.³²⁰ In the liner note Livljanić writes:

Dialogos discovers new ways to bring these repertoires to life: through a very unique composition of its members, with singers coming from different cultures and traditions, through preparing programmes in a

form of an 'atelier' where the collective energy creates a constant plural unity which emphasizes the bond between singer and actor.³²¹

It is hard to imagine quite what this might mean in practice, or what it has to do with historically informed performance. The connection between singers and actors might possibly imply a more speech-related sound, but this is not born out by the singing on the recording. Since its start in 1997 Dialogos has become one of the most active medieval music ensembles in the world. Livljanić has found her own performance niche by combining musicology and vocal ensemble singing (performed by memory) with theatrical performance. She cannot recall that she has ever been criticised for singing medieval music originally written for men's voices 'but [has] certainly [been] reminded that it was the world of men'.³²² This invites the same kind of observation from her as the question of authenticity does:

Why would I want to build Notre Dame Cathedral stone by stone looking the same? I am sure I can never do it the way they did it at the time. I always say the same thing: would I like it if I would hear how they sang it?³²³

Gro Siri Johansen, who sang with Livljanić in the *Terra Adriatica* recording, is also concerned about the original context for the music she uses. She regularly consults a musicologist to make sure her work is well grounded. She has worked closely with Nils Holger Petersen on medieval dramas, and remarks that 'it is very nice when the musicologist wants to actually meet the musicians and actually also have this communication with them, and not thinking that this music is just for the writing table.'³²⁴ Like all the performers I interviewed she says it is impossible to know what the original performance would have been like, but that all available information has an impact on the final contemporary performance; research inspires and informs it. Johansen observes that 'you have to do it contemporary, whatever you do, but you can choose to make it contemporary in a way that sounds like medieval, or you can choose to do the contemporary in a way it sounds contemporary.'³²⁵ I ask her how we can make something that sounds medieval, and she responds that:

You can go in to the musicologist's world, where there are a lot of theories about how things were performed, but they were only in the books.... There are treatises about how to work with the words and there are a lot of treatises which gives us a clue of the medieval world.... We

know about the churches which stand there, the acoustics. We have the scores of the music.³²⁶

This specific information is very limited in terms of a possible medieval sound world, but combined with a performer's personal engagement with the epoch itself it can be inspirational and perhaps it can increase our understanding of the music and its sound.

The American mezzo-soprano Carolann Buff, of the trio Liber unUsualis, consults both original manuscripts and modern editions when writing editions for the ensemble.³²⁷ In addition to this, each member of the trio writes out their own part, without bar lines but in modern notation, which is the score they will then use in a concert. The vocal line-up in the ensemble, with a soprano, mezzo-soprano and tenor is unusual today, and was probably never used in the medieval period either, but Buff says there is a large quantity of repertoire that works very well for the ensemble. She argues: 'Ultimately, we are performers, we are not musicologists, we don't want to spend all of our time in a library. I mean, I could. But, we do need, at some point, to pick up the music and perform it.'³²⁸ She believes the singers in the middle ages not just read their own line, but that they also memorised all the music. Liber unUsualis aims, some time in the future, to be able to perform all their repertoire by heart. For now, as this reviewer in the Irish Times observes, they have found a good balance between the musicological and the intuitive:

This group struck a well-nigh perfect balance between academic authenticity and heart-warming expressiveness. Their vocal style is neither raucous nor over-cultivated, and it has all the agility of sean-nós [the highly ornamented and unaccompanied Irish solo singing tradition]. They sing intently to each other, but in a way that deeply involves their audience.³²⁹

Archive of Early Music Recordings

In August 1990 it was announced in *Early Music* that an 'Archive of Early Music Recordings' (hereafter referred to as AEMR) had been founded in 1989 by Thomas Binkley at the Early Music Institute at Indiana University.³³⁰ Binkley advertised and asked people to donate recordings (78, LP, tape, CD and video material) containing 'historically-informed musical performances'. All recorded performances of early music were apparently welcomed, and given that the archive

was not limited to the 'historically informed', and that many of the groups who were active at the time of the announcement did not claim or aim to be practicing HIP, it is surprising the advert did not request records of early music in general.³³¹ It appears to be a basic assumption of the archive that performances of early music are almost by definition historically informed and that performers naturally want to re-create the past as far as possible just because the music is historical. The North American radio programme Harmonia is a production of WFIU in Bloomington, in conjunction with The Early Music Institute at Indiana University's School of Music. The AEMR has been one of the main resources for the programme which runs weekly and presents both old and new recordings.³³² Harmonia's webpage contains the following information:

Indiana University's Thomas Binkley Archive of Early Music Recordings enriches Harmonia's musical offerings. Combining this unique collection of resources with commercial, private and archival material, Harmonia brings historically informed performance to today's listeners, adding evocative commentary to illustrate, inform and entertain.³³³

The same radio programme is advertised on Minnesota Public Radio's web page but there is one interesting change in the start of the text which puts the theme in a slightly different perspective.

The Thomas Binkley Archive of Early Music Recordings, *an unmatched resource for rare, out-of-print, and historically important Early Music recordings*, [my italics] enriches Harmonia's musical offerings. Combining this unique collection of resources with commercial, private, and archival material, Harmonia host and producer Angela Mariani brings historically informed performance to today's listeners, adding evocative commentary to illustrate, inform, and entertain.³³⁴

Historically important records can certainly be far from *historically informed* records, and it might be that the recordings in the collection are more historically important than they are informed. They may be historically important, for example, because they reflect distinctive musical achievements and different practices of early music performance. The programme broadcast on the 30th of August 2007 featured two 'medieval trios', one of which was my own ensemble, Trio Mediaeval, and the other of which was Liber unUsualis.³³⁵ The groups were both represented by a number of musical examples, but there was no discussion about whether the groups'

performances were based on HIP or not. In truth neither of these groups claims to give historical informed performance but the programme and its listenership clearly assume their performances to be in that category. It was important for the programme that their recordings were attached to HIP, to satisfy the programme's commercial agenda. The way in which Harmonia presented the two groups offers us an illustration of the confusions that arise over how much or how little can or should be known about how to sing medieval music.

Performers and critics

It was partly the fear of negative criticism of concerts and recordings that caused many performers to urge magazines and journals to employ specialist musicologists and historians, such as Howard Mayer Brown, David Fallows, Nigel Fortune, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, Mary Berry and John Barker, to review their recordings. The performers' wish for musicological support in reviewing the historical awareness in their interpretation was an important element in the early days of modern recordings. But as the gap between performers and musicologists has slowly increased (as shown in Chapter 5 of this thesis), the quest for musicologists as reviewers has perhaps restricted the performers' own creativity rather than encouraged it. Benjamin Bagby, like Peter Phillips, is aware of the risks of taking source material too literally:

...what happened in the 1980s and 1990s, when the critical voices were largely musicologists, was that their criteria for judging a good or correct performance were based on the degree to which the performance sounded like the manuscript (or in some cases, the transcription) "looks". Performative elements which were not found in the manuscript were judged to be 'make-believe' and therefore the performance was not considered to be serious. It is very visual. And it made performers, I think, very cautious.³³⁶

The American historian John Barker, who writes for the *American Record Guide*, is probably one of the few critics not to have been seduced by the prospect of female voices singing medieval music, but rather presents a conservative view regarding the use of women's voices in modern performance of sacred polyphony. The tone of his review also suggests that it is more important for him to get the history

right even when the history discriminated against women, than to emancipate women in the present. In his review of the record *Quem Queretis?* by Discantus/Lesne he points out that the way in which Lesne has approached and presented the material is in no way similar to what a medieval listener would have heard, and argues that ‘it defies all we know to perform everything here with women’s voices, and women only.’³³⁷ In the CD liner notes, Lesne explains that she ‘uses her detailed knowledge of the manuscript sources to give us the full flavour of the Middle Ages.’³³⁸ Performers can certainly give modern audiences a certain ‘flavour’ of the music of the Middle Ages, but we all know it is impossible to recreate the original details. The liner note probably incorporates the word ‘full’ in connection with ‘flavour’ to emphasise the fact that Lesne is concerned about the way she approaches the original sources in her work. Barker suggests that:

Maybe, just maybe - even quite likely - women's roles in some of these playlets would at time have been taken by female performers. But there are men's roles in them, too, and they would hardly have been given to females; quite the reverse!³³⁹

Barker points out that it might well have been the case that nuns in sophisticated convents had access to parts of this or similar materials, but argues that the polyphonic conductus as well as the liturgical sections would probably have been sung only by men’s voices in religious establishments. He finds the timbre of female voices ‘sonically inappropriate and tiresome’ (though he admits that not all people will agree with his aesthetic objections). He regards Lesne as being an excellent singer as well as an intelligent and earnest scholar, and he compares her way of approaching medieval music with that of Anonymous 4’s, and it is very clear that he favours her interpretation and sound:

Certainly Discantus presents by no means as brash and in-your-face a feminist assault as Anonymous 4 usually does. And, if you are more willing than I to overlook the issues of gender, you will find this collection a valuable gathering of liturgical dramatizations.³⁴⁰

Hellauer points out that Barker was their ‘sworn enemy from the beginning, and wrote negative reviews of our CDs, saying that we were “distorting the repertoire” by singing “men’s music.” He did state, however, that we sang beautifully.

But that wasn't the point.³⁴¹ Barker's rather conservative view is an exception, and as shown by the other reviews quoted in this and the previous chapter, the critics have shown an almost unanimous enthusiasm for women's approach to the material.

The cultural differences between the countries and areas in Europe in the Middle Ages were probably more diverse than they are today. The monastic singing practiced in different regions varied immensely in both vocal quality, pronunciation, material and approach, and was so diverse that pieces may have sounded entirely different depending on where they were sung. As Bagby points out:

we have to admit that in the European middle ages there were as many musical traditions as there were villages, rivers, mountains and distances.... And how can we then say 'this is the way it sounded in the middle ages'. There is no middle ages, there are millions of middle ages and in a way the one that we create today, or re-create today is just another one of those thousands and thousands of middle ages.³⁴²

When making artistic decisions all people, consciously or not, consider and incorporate previous experiences. What is probably most important for the majority of performing artists is that we like the result we present. Depending on what performance criteria we have chosen we form the material in a way that is natural to us. When new information is available, when we hear something which inspires us or something which we have never heard before, we inevitably process that even if unconsciously. The term Historically Informed Performance (HIP) is very broad, encompassing a huge variety of performances. Some performers of medieval music might be historically aware and well informed, but decide that the lack of hard information leaves them free to do whatever they like. They are, in a sense, informed by the lack of evidence, or they may have considered the available information but decided to disregard it. A non-historically informed performance does not necessarily mean non-informed performer. Barbara Thornton's eloquently expressed attitude to the problem will resonate with many performers today:

Authenticity of performance comes with the effort of overcoming one's own desire for non-involvement and distance. To continue to cast doubt about 'authenticity' on the revival of early music is to help preserve that distance which denigrates the immortality of art, its ability to communicate across the ages. When the early music performer finds that he can speak to the music's, the poet's, his audiences' and his own

condition all at once, the need for arguments about authenticity will be stilled.³⁴³

All performers interviewed for this research have their own perspectives on how to use the original sources in modern performance. All groups discussed either consult with a musicologist, or they have a scholar/researcher/musicologist in the group who carries out what each group understands as necessary research.³⁴⁴ The involvement with primary sources varies from group to group and performer to performer but my research has shown that all the singers engage with the original material in one way or another in that they have clear views and strategies for programme planning and performance intentions. None of them refer to existing volumes of modern editions of medieval music as the only source on which they base their performance, and not one refers to secondary written sources as a guideline for their own way of approaching the music.³⁴⁵ Each of the vocal ensembles presented has produced an individual and recognisable sound during their lifetime.³⁴⁶

An individual performer's musical background contributes significantly to the way they approach the medieval repertoire in the present. Sykes, with a background in folk and world music, interprets and presents the music in a way that sounds right to her in terms of 'personal authenticity', while performers such as Lesne and Livljanić are primarily inspired by aspects of the music to be found principally in the primary sources, such as the palaeography, notation and the 'feel' of an original manuscript. Anonymous 4's central aim is to construct a thematic frame for each programme and the group has divided the research work between them. Hellauer who is the ensemble's medievalist finds the music and makes editions for the group if she does not agree with existing ones.

My research has shed light on the different ways in which performers engage with contextual issues in the modern presentation of sacred medieval music. As discussed in the next chapter, many of the performers find the medieval texts crucially important when creating a frame for their programmes. Different themes, such as the cult of the Virgin Mary or the Saints, special days in the church year or the Mass liturgy itself create the basis on which the programmes are structured.

Although many groups have used the mass structure as a basis for their programmes, not everybody is convinced that this makes a viable concert programme. In 'Beyond Authenticity', Peter Phillips, the director of the British Tallis Scholars,

believes that the 'present trend for performing sacred music in its liturgical context, with the correct chant and orders of pieces should never take the place of a carefully-planned concert programme'. He argues that modern audiences are taking part in a concert experience and not a church service, and even though the liturgical context can occasionally reveal a possible past these reconstructions 'encourage a bloodless, museum-like attitude to an activity which is supposed to create something fresh at each performance.'³⁴⁷

There seems to be an assumption that early music is in some way 'academic' and needs explaining, whereas it is relatively rare for a performer to explain sonata form at a piano recital. Mainstream music can work powerfully without benefit of education, and so, surely, can early music. Ultimately, both performers and audiences are seeking a musical experience valid on its own terms and not dependent on theory: some musicians might find it hard to explain their music-making in words, but Phillips argues that there is no reason why they should since the performer's musical vision is the most important factor in performance, and not the explanation of how you do it.³⁴⁸

Chapter 4: Medieval texts and modern translations

As discussed in Chapter 3, the circumstances in which medieval music is presented today differ dramatically from the original contexts. The modern performer's relationship to medieval texts inevitably contrasts with that of a medieval singer's, and similarly, the modern audience will appreciate the language differently from the original listeners. As Christopher Page reminds us, 'medieval Latin has no exact equivalent of the verb "to perform"; it is a language which does not precisely identify the self-conscious and extrovert activity that we associate with "performing".'³⁴⁹ Modern audiences generally expect to be provided with informative programme notes as well as texts and appropriate translations, which raises the question of what medieval texts actually mean to audiences when they hear the music in a concert or recording. This question, in turn, requires performers to think about exactly what they are transmitting to their listeners. Does a literal translation do justice to the original text? How much (if anything) of the original meaning is relevant or amenable to communication in the new context? What works best: verbal introductions, programme notes or neither? Performers have different strategies to cope with these questions. This chapter explores performers' and musicologists' attitude to text, focusing on meaning and the problems of trying to communicate texts which may have lost their original meaning when re-contextualized for a modern audience, and which may be in a language that listeners will not understand. Traditional solutions such as programme notes and verbal presentations, are examined, and also the increasing use of technology (especially in the USA and mainland Europe) in the form of supertitles.

Arguments for and against including original texts and translations in concert programmes

Catherine King argues that a text in general is very important for the understanding of a piece, especially when there is substantial narrative content. For her own part, she finds it vital to fully understand a text if she is to present a piece in a meaningful way, and for many years believed it was vital to provide the audience with printed translations.³⁵⁰ However, she has become less rigid about this recently and

now believes that it should be possible for a performer to deliver the meaning of a song without providing the text and/or translation, simply by letting the audience immerse themselves in the sound world, and thereby experience different feelings and emotions.

Over the years most promoters (and singers) of medieval music concerts have been keen to provide translations. But perhaps this has become a convention without anyone ever questioning if the audience actually wants it. The musicologist Ross Duffin suggests that a vocal performance which lacks the translation is almost the equivalent of an instrumental performance which 'invites listeners to appreciate [the music] in the abstract.'³⁵¹ He argues that the music will serve a totally different purpose when performed in this way. Originally it would have been composed to highlight and decorate the text. But if the music is performed today with no translation, then the text will no longer have a meaning apart from colouring the sound, something which Duffin believes 'in some ways to go against the whole concept of medieval singing.'³⁵² However, though he is an advocate of providing texts and translations, he can see both sides of the issue and points out that excluding the texts can be an advantage in that it gives the listener a chance to focus solely on the performance and not on the printed programme.

Jantina Noorman also points out that too much information might distract people from the music and prefers a synopsis of the text rather than a full translation. *Musica Reservata* usually printed the translations in the programme, something which she today would be quite happy not to do. Noorman acknowledges that the audience is a very important part of the concert, and so argues against her own ideals concerning programme information (which would only include piece, composer and performer) saying that one should provide sufficient information to satisfy everybody in the audience.³⁵³

Marsha Genensky is similarly aware of a need to consider the breadth of the audience's needs, observing that there are always some people who follow the texts and translations all through the concert, while others close their eyes and seem equally focused, just listening to the music. The American musicologist and performer Elisabeth Aubrey refers to the same experience and says she always hears people saying they enjoy having the translation available, but in the same audience she also sees people who make eye contact and do not seem to consult the programme at all, focusing only on what they hear and see on stage. Genensky says: 'we want to make

what we do accessible to both the analytical and the instinctive audience members. We appreciate both kinds of attention from our listeners.³⁵⁴ Anonymous 4 has always considered texts and translations essential for their printed programmes, and they always provide programme notes to give the audience a sense of context.³⁵⁵ Genensky further points out:

whatever you sing, whatever you provide, whatever you don't sing, whatever you don't provide, somebody's going to love it and somebody's going to hate it, and you just have to live with it.³⁵⁶

For Brigitte Lesne, it is important that the audience knows what she is singing about, and she would like to encourage all promoters to provide texts and translations in their concert programmes. She claims it rarely happens, due to the promoter's lack of time and money.³⁵⁷ It is partly a matter of what the individual promoter decides to do, but there is also a great variation in how different countries deal with additional programme material.³⁵⁸ Lesne believes that people become detached from the actual music when they are reading at the same time as listening in a concert. So she prefers a situation where the audience can read the programme notes and texts before the performance starts (or afterwards), and then when the concert starts, the light goes off and the attention is drawn to the sound and music. Carolann Buff is also aware of the significance of texts and poetry but recognises the risk of overwhelming the audience with too much information, especially with repertoire that may have three different texts going at the same time. Her ensemble, Liber unUsualis, aims to keep the 'magic' of the original texts and works closely with a translator who writes poetic renditions rather than literal translations. However, there is one disadvantage with poetic translations which might be disturbing for people who appreciate a direct visible connection between the original and translated word: you simply cannot follow the original text and compare it with the translation line for line.³⁵⁹

Is it possible to recreate the original meaning of a medieval context in the present?

There is no consensus among performers or musicologists regarding this matter. The many different views and reflections presented shows that this particular question has engaged them all to a great extent. The New York-based American

musicologist Susan Boynton argues that there is less distance from the medieval sensibility for some audiences than we might think, drawing a parallel between the cult of the Virgin Mary in the medieval period and the current Virgin Mary cult which is a part of the New World and Latin America. There are common themes in the Marian texts that are as important for people now as they were then, although the audience may need to be reminded of this, and so she says that 'there is not really a barrier between us and that time'.³⁶⁰

Johanna Maria Rose, however, draws attention to how differently secular and sacred are represented in these different ages. She highlights the importance of programme notes in helping a modern audience to understand European medieval mythology. This saw the 'intertwining of the secular and sacred' as an obvious part of the society, something much less common in present-day Europe. She especially draws attention to the thirteenth-century motets, such as the Montpellier Codex, where some of the pieces present sacred and secular material blended together by three simultaneously sung texts. The tenor, normally based on plainchant fragments (or sometimes a dance or a popular tune) constitutes the structural material on which the two remaining more melodically and rhythmically flexible upper voices, motetus and triplum, are placed. The content of the texts is usually closely connected, but there are occasional texts which deal concurrently with totally different subjects. Rose observes that the figures in Christianity were personalised through mortal people, and to illustrate these inseparable connections between the heavenly and worldly she cites the sacred Marian texts that are combined with medieval profane stories. The Montpellier Codex contains love songs in praise of the Virgin Mary combined with texts about passionate love for Lady Marian.³⁶¹ Rose argues that a programme note can guide the audience towards the parallels in the sung texts, something that would be easily missed in the absence of printed information.

Like Rose, Anna Maria Busse Berger refers to the different layers in medieval texts. She points out that our understanding of the texts today differs dramatically from the original listeners'. As time has passed it has left us with 'hundreds of other pieces of literature' that in turn have shed new light on the texts without necessarily reflecting their original meaning. She draws a parallel with texts by Shakespeare and says that we might today 'recognise authoritarian or dictatorships in there which Shakespeare might not have known about.'³⁶² It is inevitably the case that we incorporate our modern reflections into the medieval texts whether we want to or not.

By providing a programme note it is perhaps possible to give the audience a sense of the original framework, but to try and forget all we know and instead imagine how the medieval person might have comprehended these texts, seems an impossible task.

This difference of understanding between the medieval and the modern listener is something that Catherine King also speaks of. She draws attention to the fact that the original listener would have understood both music and text for a number of reasons. The context and the language would not have been strange, but entirely familiar to them (especially for secular music in their vernacular). The storytelling texts represented their own lifestyle and their confirmed beliefs. She compares that with a twenty-first century audience and says:

To modern audiences, particularly sacred texts don't have the importance and the meaning that they would've done to people where religion was the most important thing in their life and was how they'd led their lives with real fear of God ... and I think that just doesn't apply to modern society on the whole.³⁶³

Boynton points out that people in the Middle Ages spent a lot of time learning and memorizing texts as well as discussing, trying to understand the meaning of the texts. She thinks it is important that this relationship between music, text and meaning is not lost in modern performances, but is aware that the engagement with the material and its original context will of course differ between the modern performers who inevitably interpret and approach it in different ways.

Elisabeth Aubrey suggests that secular medieval music's original context is an important guide for modern performers in navigating their way through its many different genres.³⁶⁴ In some kinds of repertoires, such as the *Ars Subtilior*, she is unsure if the music actually had an audience in a conventional sense, but suggests that the people who sang the songs did so for their own amusement. This would be in contrast to the Troubadour tradition, where the musicians performed for a patron or a court, and in either of these contexts the texts were likely to be far more important than the music. We can interpret her reflections in different ways. Is she saying that we should recognise some texts as more important than others? Or that it doesn't matter if the modern audience for *Ars Subtilior* can understand it since the music might not have had an audience in the first place? What she probably means is that the texts are important, either as an amusement for the performer or for the

patron/audience, or for both. Anne Stone argues that in secular songs, which are 'all about words', there is inevitably a certain amount of conjecture and acting going on, and if the audience does not understand the original language they can follow a translated text and at the same time experience the nuances in the singer's voice, and through that they will get a sense of the content.³⁶⁵

When Katarina Livljanić prepares her programmes, the texts are an important part of the process both in a contextual and interpretative way. She suggests that there are many ways in which the text can influence the musical interpretation of a piece. Her programmes are built on thematic ideas and contexts that unify the performance, and when she performs programmes based on a story from beginning to an end, she finds it very useful to provide supertitles to help the audience understand the content. She says that overall more people are happy with supertitles than unhappy, so she is in favour of using them. Besides, the audience can always close their eyes if they want to concentrate solely on the music.

Supertitles

The debate over the use of supertitles in concerts and opera reflects the ongoing argument about the relationship between textual meaning and music in the early music world. In January 1983, the Canadian Opera Company introduced supertitles, also called surtitles (from the French 'sur', meaning above or on) for their operatic performances, something which has since then been used by many opera houses around the world.³⁶⁶ Texts and/or translations are projected above the stage, on the sides, or on personal screens (the electronic libretto system usually called *Met Titles*) in front of each individual audience member in the hall.³⁶⁷ The use of supertitles has subsequently increased in classical vocal performances in general, and although there are audience members (supposedly those who are frequent opera-goers) who might be disappointed by the omission of supertitles when attending operas or other vocal concerts, there are also those who opt for a 'non-supertitle' experience.

As recently as summer 2008, the *Guardian's* arts correspondent, Charlotte Higgins questions the use of supertitles in her 'blog' article, 'Opera surtitles mustn't steal the show'. She believes this to be especially important when an opera is sung in

English and performed in an English opera house.³⁶⁸ She describes what she sees as ‘a vicious circle’: the audiences complain about opera singers’ lack of articulation, which results in opera houses displaying supertitles rather than encouraging their singers to increase their textual clarity.³⁶⁹ In other words: supertitles become a substitute for clear articulation. This issue is probably more acute when the sung language is familiar to the audience, and it may be unique to opera. I am not aware of any reviews of a medieval music concert or record where there have been complaints about unclear articulation. Higgins points out that even if an audience understands only fifty percent of the sung words, there are other elements that contribute significantly to the understanding of a story, and these might be lost to audience members who are focusing on a screen:

There is so much going on in an opera, so many ways in which you are being told the story, from the music to the design and the way characters interact, that you are never going to experience any one element fully - nor, perhaps, should you.³⁷⁰

Higgins’ reflections might just as easily be made about the many ways in which the audience could appreciate medieval music without being provided with a text; a solely musical experience might get lost in the desire to provide all possible information as effectively as possible. We might think that since the audiences are the ‘consumers’, performers should let them decide whether supertitles should be the standard in performances of vocal music or not. However, there are factors to take into consideration when we are thinking about the performance of medieval music. In contrast to most opera singers (who normally do not get involved in ‘technical’ questions), medieval music singers and ensembles generally make all production decisions themselves. With a few exceptions, the use of supertitles in medieval music concerts is still uncommon, and I would argue that it is up to every individual group/performer to decide how they would like to present the music, as well as what information should be available and communicated to the audience.

Trio Mediaeval has, on several occasions, been contacted by promoters wishing to supertitle the performance. For example, in the autumn of 2004, some weeks before a tour, the trio was asked by an American promoter to provide copies of all scores so that she could prepare supertitles for the concert. The trio declined to do this, which resulted in a number of emails between the parties involved. The promoter

said that she recognised the ensemble to be highly innovative and forward thinking, so she was surprised at their rejection of her proposal. She went on to say that she would question the performers' 'artistic integrity' if understanding and communicating the text was not important to them, because she believed that all performances should benefit from supertitles.

The promoter explained that earlier that same year she had attended a supertitled concert with Benjamin Bagby's *Sequentia* during the Boston Early Music Festival, and now she wanted to give the trio's Kansas City audience a similar experience. The promoter had been captivated by *Sequentia*'s performance, especially by the fact that supertitles had helped not only to convey the texts but also to unify the audience in to a 'single entity' focusing on the stage. The translations, projected on a screen ten feet above the stage behind the singers, were easily absorbed by the audience without them having to take their eyes off the stage, and added to their aural, visual and textual experience. The promoter drew attention to the pleasure of reading the translation and simultaneously experiencing the performer's engagement with the text, which she felt strengthened the understanding of the piece.³⁷¹ However, although these are valid reasons for using supertitles, there are also important factors which may argue against their use. The performers' musical intentions might be different from those of the promoter's. Trio Mediaeval was singing a Christmas programme for this particular concert, containing English medieval Marian motets and Christmas carols (in Latin and English) as well as traditional Norwegian holiday songs.³⁷² When different languages and musical styles are presented in the same programme, and some of the translations are literal while other are synopses (in this case the Norwegian repertoire) it can be confusing for the audience, trying to follow the different kinds of translation. Furthermore, following the composer's engagement with text is a difficult task, especially when the translation is a synopsis of the original language. For this kind of event the Trio had judged it to be more helpful to provide printed programmes with explanations which the audience could choose to read or not.

Supertitles are controlled and coordinated by a person following the score who makes sure that the correct translation or text appears at the right moment. This can work without problems if the supertitles are thoroughly prepared and rehearsed together with the singers, but the prospect of meeting up with a 'supertitle engineer' in a rehearsal a few hours before a concert is a risk that not all performers are happy to

take.³⁷³ From their perspective, there are a number of problematic issues to consider. First, the use of supertitles only works if the performers are absolutely sure they will make no changes to the concert programme. Improvisation or alterations during the concert are then out of the question which means that supertitles do not work for performers who wish to have room for this possibility. Then if the performers decide to exclude a verse of a song, or indeed a whole piece, the person running the supertitles will not be able to make the required adjustment to the supertitles, which will leave the audience in some confusion.³⁷⁴ Secondly, what happens when several texts are being sung simultaneously, a relatively common phenomenon in medieval music? Which part should then be displayed?³⁷⁵

Another problem with supertitle use is that it focuses the performance platform on the stage and restricts the singers from using different positions in the venue. Since the conventional concert format is for the audience to be placed in rows behind each other with the performers in the front, the performers must then perform from the stage throughout the concert. Experimenting with the venue's acoustic is impossible if the focus has to be on the stage at all times. It might be possible to have performers placed in different spots and still run supertitles at the front, but then might be disconcerting for the audience, because sound and translation will appear in different places.³⁷⁶

Clearly however, where supertitles set up limitations and rigidity for some performers, others experience greater freedom and communicative potential in performing with them. For a group who sees the translations as a fundamental part of the performance, and for staged productions such as medieval drama or storytelling, the use of supertitles can be of great advantage. Benjamin Bagby, one of the most successful medieval music performers of our time, is well known for his work with *Sequentia* and for reconstructing medieval oral epics. Bagby says his primary concern in medieval music is with text, which totally guides the preparation when constructing a programme. Referring to his own projects where 'the programme has a thematic idea that unifies' the content he says: 'in a way the melodies are almost unimportant, they are not really the reason for singing.'³⁷⁷ Bagby reconstructed the bardic tradition in his version of the Anglo-Saxon epic, *Beowulf* where he performs alone on stage with his six stringed harp.³⁷⁸ The epic is performed from memory in its original Anglo-Saxon language and Bagby argues that it is up to each individual performer and listener to choose how important the texts are to them, but points out that, using

supertitles, with today's advanced technology it is now possible for an audience to associate every sung line with the appropriate line of translation, something which is much harder when reading a translation in a printed programme.³⁷⁹

Bagby prefers video projected translation (supertitles) where 'you can coordinate things you are actually singing with things the audience reads, and it increases the closeness of people to the actual text.'³⁸⁰ Since the audience does not have to read the printed text in the programme, the hall can be totally dark during the performance, which creates a more exciting environment for storytelling while also allowing the audience to focus only on the stage, story and sound. Bagby believes the supertitles are not consciously noticed after a while, since most people in the audience 'are able to relax into a listening/watching mode' already familiar to them from cinema, DVD, TV and possibly opera.³⁸¹ Whether translations are provided or not he points out that he cannot compensate for the lack of them by adding another dramatic layer to the performance in terms of 'acting'. His flexibility on stage is limited since he sits on a chair and most of the time uses both hands playing the harp. However the lack of theatrical movements does not seem to worry audience members or critics:

...when Benjamin Bagby speaks it is as if a thousand years have disappeared. I was sceptical about the pleasures of hearing 100 minutes of this ancient epic told in the original Anglo-Saxon with English surtitles. But something odd happens as Bagby begins to speak, chewing on some words as if they are meat or gristle, launching others like mournful songs. Suddenly you are caught up in the hypnotic rhythms of the story.³⁸²

Many performers and musicologists have referred to Benjamin Bagby's *Beowulf* performance as one of the most enchanting performances they have ever attended. Duffin, mentions one occasion in 2000 when Benjamin Bagby was invited to Cleveland to perform *Beowulf*, and his agent wanted to put television monitors on stage and down both sides of the hall, so that the supertitles could be easily read by the audience. Duffin wanted the audience to concentrate only on Bagby's performance and not to be distracted by screens, so he said no to the intended multimedia suggestion and decided to have a pre-concert talk about *Beowulf* instead.³⁸³ Bagby himself can only recall one concert, in Israel, where the promoter did not provide any sort of information or translation, and says that some people in the audience 'simply walked out when they realized that the sound wasn't going to change

much, and no other distractions were forthcoming from this madman singing in a crazy ancient language.'³⁸⁴

Anne Stone's view of supertitles for sacred music concerts offers an interesting perspective on the modern audience's comprehension of the medieval texts, by contrast with the original listener, who had a broad knowledge of religious references and anecdotes:

it would have to have more than a translation. You would have to have ... a little asterisk with a long explanation.... There is word play ... the sacred texts are full of inter-textual references, biblical references or psalms ... that would be lost on a modern audience.³⁸⁵

The implication of Stone's observations could mean that every sacred programme could easily have a complementary book of references and footnotes to cover the original content and meaning of the text and context. Stone pointed out that 'especially for the supertitles you know, they can get to be very long.'³⁸⁶ There might be a small proportion of the audience with a specific interest in additional informative material, but I would assume that most people are likely to be overwhelmed by a large quantity of information. However, the idea that a performer has to educate the audience introduces another debate.

Educational aspects of translations and programme notes

The educational mission in early music is evident. As mentioned in previous chapters, it is hard to find a musical category where musicologists and performers have a similarly strong desire to enlighten the listeners.³⁸⁷ It is difficult to think of another musical genre in which substantial scholarship amongst its performers is more or less taken for granted, as it is in early music. Anonymous 4 argue that they feel responsible for making the relevant material available to the audience, (especially when the material which supports the performance might not be printed or available elsewhere). Boynton points out the importance of education in a concert situation and argues that people appreciate the concerts even more if they are provided with verbal information which is related to that specific topic and context (such as what text fits in with what day of the church year) and liturgical form.³⁸⁸ In this sense the texts are

crucial:

I think part of education is choosing programmes, in other words, texts that are matched in certain ways, that are related to one another in certain ways.... It is not that it is not a music based set of criteria for choosing a programme, nor that the music is not important, but that the text is equally important.³⁸⁹

Like Boynton, Carolann Buff of *Liber unusualis* takes pleasure in speaking during their concerts because she feels it enables the audience to find particular moments to listen out for, something which she hopes stimulates the audience in a different way from just letting the music wash over them. She likes to think of ways to make the performance interesting for the audience, especially in helping them understand the structure of the music.

we found that the moment that we say, "oh, hey, look, this is actually a really interesting puzzle. You know, we're doing a song that is actually only one line of music but it fits together in a funny way," you know, like there's a canon or something that's happening. And people suddenly go, "ah."³⁹⁰

Buff finds it fascinating to imagine that the patrons and courts who were sponsoring the music (or the 'tricks' as she also calls the compositions) in the late medieval period were not just amused by the music, but also entertained by camouflaged messages that some composers were hiding in their music:

I think they really appreciated these sorts of puzzles, that maybe you didn't even see, maybe you only saw if you looked at the page or something. "Oh, wait, that's great ... I recognise that, that's my motto, or that's my emblem" ... and if you don't explain that to people, they have no idea.³⁹¹

Gro Siri Johansen has also experimented with verbal information (especially in her recent projects featuring songs by Machaut) and engaged an actor to read the translated poetry as a part of the concert instead of printing texts and translations in the programme. Aubrey on the other hand, has found a slightly different way of working. She prints translations in the programmes, and in addition she provides the audience with a verbal presentation of the repertoire.

Boynton draws attention to the fact that most musicologists' research into

sacred medieval music is connected to text-related issues, while actual musical research often comes second. She emphasises the importance of the performer's engagement with every individual piece and its text in addition to reconstructing a frame in which the texts work, and she argues that the audience should always be provided with the translations of the texts, which not only supply the listener with information about the textual meaning but also with any relevant medieval history.³⁹² She draws a parallel between a vocal performance and a film, where the singer's work is equivalent to the actor's:

Obviously the speakers, the actors, have to know the language, and if you have subtitles then people can ignore the subtitles and not look at them but at least they're being given the access to the meaning that the actors themselves know of the text.³⁹³

In a similar way, Stone points out that for the secular songs, which are 'all about words', there is inevitably a certain amount of conjecture and acting going on, and if the audience does not understand the original language they can follow a text and at the same time experience the nuances in the singer's voice, and through that they will get a sense of the content.

Hellauer explains how in their sacred music concerts, which last approximately seventy-five minutes without interval, they 'try to project a universal concept rather than a very dogmatic one'.³⁹⁴ As discussed in Chapter 3 their programmes are very carefully planned, not only around a specific theme, voicing, texture and key relationships between the pieces, but also in the way they present a story. For some of their programmes they include elements of poetic and prose readings, and Hellauer argues that the narrative component, as well as the omission of applause, creates an atmosphere which contributes to the understanding of the context: the 'story-like function, with continuous communication and dramatic flow, is really at the centre of everything we do.'³⁹⁵

Beyond the text: the concert as a spiritual experience

Today we assume that the women and men who sang the sacred vocal music in its original context in the middle ages were connected to religious establishments

and convinced of their Christian religious lifestyle. Modern professional performers of medieval sacred music have a different *raison d'être* for performing the music. None of the performers who have contributed to this research have implied that the reason for their singing medieval sacred music lies in religious conviction: they simply enjoy singing it. Today anyone can sing the music whether religious or not and there are probably as many individual perspectives on spirituality as there are performers. However, questions about the performer's own religious faith are frequently asked both in interviews and by audience members (both in connection to concerts, or in emails after a concert).³⁹⁶ This raises the question of why it is interesting to know about the performer's personal life. Is this not one of the most personal questions to ask someone? It might be that a person who has a strong religious faith wishes to be connected not only musically but also mentally with the performer. Do performers who are religious themselves present the music with a deeper earnestness than performers who have no religious faith, and further, how do you perform with conviction if you have no religious convictions?

Brigitte Lesne argues, a little like Boynton, that singing is like acting: 'when you have a text you can project yourself in this text or not, but your business, your *métier* [profession] is to be capable ... to do that.'³⁹⁷ She points out that even though Discantus is an ensemble performing sacred music, it is not relevant to her whether the singers might be atheists, Catholics, Protestants or other, but she expects them to understand and deliver the meaning of every word they sing. All her singers respect the repertory independently of their own religious faith, and she reveals that they often have to deal with questions about their religious orientation after their concerts.

Ruth Cunningham of Anonymous 4 says she wants to be able to give every member of the audience something which feels right for them, suggesting that spirituality means different things to different people, and the texts should not get in the way of a person's own connection to spirit or to the power of the music. She says there have been many times when members of the audience have come to her after a concert and said: 'I don't believe in Christianity, but your music makes me cry.'³⁹⁸ She points out that experiencing and being 'in the sound' unifies people without the explanation of text, and adds: 'some people connect very strongly to text and want to know what is being sung about. Some people connect only to the music and don't care about the text. The text should be available so that people have the choice.'³⁹⁹

The same point is made by Gro Siri Johansen who refers to Gregorian chant

(which has its basis in text) as an example of a style that might leave the listener with a spiritual closeness even if they are not provided with full literal translations. She points out that there is a risk of losing the whole sense of music by translating and analysing the material, something which we do much of in today's society. She also questions the arrangement in modern concerts whereby performers and audience are physically separated from each other, preferring a more interactive concert format where the performer and audience are connected.⁴⁰⁰

Many performers feel obliged to provide translations even when they themselves believe them to be unnecessary. The musicologist and performer Elisabeth Aubrey says her scholarly mind would never allow her not to equip the listeners with texts and translations, even though she also sees the advantages of not providing them. She sees the function of programme notes as being to communicate the centrality of religious thought to the sacred medieval repertoire and to enhance the audience's appreciation of this. Aubrey agrees that the singer's own engagement with text makes the connection with the music 'deeper'. It is important for her that the performer knows what the text is about, though not necessarily word for word, 'otherwise it is just pure music with a bunch of nonsense syllables.'⁴⁰¹

You could make a case that it is less important that the audience know what every single word is that you are singing of in Ave Maris Stella, Hail to the star of the sea ... than it is that they understand at least something of the ... social contexts.⁴⁰²

Aubrey refers to the relationship between a medieval population and the Marian texts and the importance of the devotional act of the Rosary, She argues that this is more deeply personal and intense than other sacred texts, such as the Mass ordinary which is God-oriented and has a ceremonial frame which generates a different kind of worship. She draws attention to the medieval aesthetics where the text was central and music was a way of communicating the text and making it more radiant and worshipful:

There is plenty of melismatic music which is ... a bunch of notes, but that is also part of the worship experience, but in that case you had no texts so it is not really relevant to [the] question [of what medieval sacred texts mean for us today]. Just singing long melismas, that is just pure ... mystical cognitive kind of worship.'⁴⁰³

Aubrey seems to refer to a spiritual dimension beyond the literal translations where the listener does not necessarily have to understand every word of the piece to experience the essence of the music and culture.

Anne Stone sees the issue from yet another perspective. She argues that in a concert performance of a fourteenth century Mass setting, for example, most of the audience is probably already familiar with the Mass ordinary and will principally be listening to the polyphony and the blend of the ensemble. Stone says she is a totally secular person and has never, in her work as a musicologist, focused on the sacred repertoire. She points out that it is likely to be the case that the musicologist's/performer's own view on what is important or not (regarding text and translations) is personal to them. This makes it likely that a musicologist with a religious conviction will be more concerned about providing the sacred textual content than a non-religious person would, just because of their own religious standpoint.

Like many of the singers I interviewed, Belinda Sykes is very much aware of the metaphysical nature of music beyond the notes themselves. This 'spiritual' dimension is particularly felt when singing religious music even if the singer is of no specific faith. For Sykes, Marian texts are especially significant, but in terms of what she refers to as 'the perfect mother' rather than because of their original Christian context.

Recordings: full texts and translations in CD booklets?

For live performances, Trio Mediaeval provides programme notes, original texts and modern translations if the promoter specifically asks for them.⁴⁰⁴ However, the group's first three CDs, containing sacred medieval and contemporary music, did not include printed literal translations in the accompanying booklets, something which created debate and was questioned by a number of critics.⁴⁰⁵ In *The New York Times* audio online review of Trio Mediaeval's first CD, *Words of the Angel* (2001), James Oestreich says:

Unless you remember your high school Latin better than I do and unless you can grapple with bits of archaic French and Italian, you will have to

puzzle out whatever meanings you can from words resembling their English counterparts.⁴⁰⁶

Anthony Pryer of *BBC Music Magazine* writes:

It is a great success in spite of the rather worrying challenges the singers have set themselves – the choice of repertoire (mostly anonymous pieces in Latin with no translations provided), the obvious competition with another all-female early music group (Anonymous 4), and the refusal to provide any liturgical or social context ('this is simply intended to be a musical experience').⁴⁰⁷

ECM Records asked John Potter, the producer of the CD, to write a statement for the ECM website explaining the thinking behind the omission of the translations.⁴⁰⁸ When the CD booklet was being prepared, Potter, ECM and the three singers of Trio Mediaeval had discussed whether full texts and literal translations should be included in the booklet or not. All were convinced that the music itself was the main focus, and therefore they decided that only the original medieval texts and not the translations (which inevitably have a different meaning today from the original texts in their original context) should be printed in the booklet. As Potter put it: 'there is never a simple semantic correlation between composer/poet, performer and listener: the "meaning" changes at every stage in the creation of the piece.'⁴⁰⁹ Six months later in his article 'Meet the Latest Thing in Early Music' in *The New York Times* Oestreich brings up the subject again, this time having read Potter's statement:

That first album ... also stirred mild controversy for its failure to include translations of the extensive Latin and Italian texts -- or for that matter, texts themselves for the familiar parts of the Mass. The omission, it turns out, is a matter of principle on the part of ECM and the trio's producer, John Potter.... Mr. Potter, a former member of the acclaimed Hilliard Ensemble, explains on ECM's Web site ... "I feel that literal translations are at best misleading, and at worst restrict the creative listening process by appearing to channel listeners' attention into meanings that are no longer there." Debatable, but let it pass.⁴¹⁰

Potter's reasoning questions many aspects of our informative 'need' in today's society. Today it is assumed that all possible information should be available for, and easily consumed by the receiver. The performer is not only responsible for delivering the music, but also for delivering understanding, something which goes beyond the

musical aspect of their profession. Are we, as performers responsible for educating and guiding the audience in a direction that we think corresponds with how things should be done and perceived?

There are certain areas in which the performer is expected to provide information. They are not obliged to inform the audience or journalist about how much they practise, what their rehearsals are like, how they prepare new material or other questions linked to concert preparations. If they were to share information such as pointing out what parts in a piece are difficult to sing or to tune for example, or what parts in a piece are their favourite moments and why, the audience's attention would naturally focus on those specific places, to the detriment of other parts of the programme. All sorts of information will channel the audience's ear in one way or another, and it is up to each individual performer or ensemble to decide how much information they wish to provide. There are many advantages to providing information, but one can also think of the question in the opposite way and ask: to what extent should we, as performers, deter listeners from constructing their own creative listening experience?

Including translations has been the convention for a long time. If the performers and record companies continue to maintain that custom, there will be no debate about why the performer/record company chose to include them.⁴¹¹ When releasing a CD without translation one is prepared for a critique. Perhaps there needs to be as much of a critique about releasing a CD with translation.

The relationship between the medieval sacred text and its modern translation is at the heart of how music is contextualised today. One of the key differences between the medieval performance of a piece of music and the contemporary performance of that same piece today lies not in the probable difference of sound, but in the different relationship between the performers and the audience.

The people in today's audience are free to make up their own minds about how they relate to and connect with spirituality. Unlike our medieval forebears, modern performers of medieval sacred music are not necessarily religious. In its original context, the music was, as Aubrey points out, composed to embellish the texts and make them even more beautiful and worshipful. But should we exclude the possibility that some of the composers in the Middle Ages composed sacred polyphony for its own sake, as passionate musicians rather than as Christian

worshippers? If, for now, we assume this speculation to be true, then it places medieval composers and contemporary performers in a closer imaginative relationship than might have been thought. In medieval sacred polyphony, text and music are inseparable. If you want to sing it, you have to make your peace with the text and present it in a way that makes sense to you. At the same time, modern performers must also accommodate promoters' and audiences' various textual wishes and needs.

Some performers choose to present the music as a purely sonic experience, some are equally interested in music and text while others single out the text and its original contexts as their primary concern. As discussed above, many performers and musicologists wish to leave the narrative and mythological context intact in the script and so provide a literal translation (either printed or supertitled), while only a few favour poetic renditions in synopsis format. One of the strong arguments for including translations is that you can either choose to look at them, or not: the option is there, and it is up to every individual listener to decide how they want to engage with it.

Another way of informing the audience about context and texts is to do pre- or post-concert talks, where the audience can, to some extent, be actively involved in the event, by asking questions and engaging in conversation with the performers. Some performers might find these talks slightly problematic. If the performers do not wish to give the talk themselves (singers might not want to speak much just before the concert) the promoter hires someone else, who might not be known to the performer, to give the lecture. There is then, of course, the risk that they will have different ways of appreciating and explaining history and context, which might result in two totally different views of the same material: explained one way, performed another.

Omitting any translation of the medieval text is something very few of the performers and musicologists would support, although it makes possible a very pure, aural impression for most listeners, which in turn makes room for a particular kind of personal engagement, association and emotion. This has been discussed at length in relation to ECM's decision to exclude translations of Latin texts in CD booklets. There is a strong argument to say that the concert or CD audience might benefit from the omission of written texts and translations because then they simply experience the sound and atmosphere and use their own creativity in comprehending it (instead of relating what they hear to a printed text). This might seem tempting to some performers, but as the convention of including texts and translations has become more or less compulsory, not many consider it an option. If texts and translations were

excluded, then, as Duffin and Berger have pointed out, the audience might experience a vocal performance in a similar way to a purely instrumental one. However we should not forget that the text has much more to it than just literal and mythological meaning. Each language, with its specific sound constructed by particular combinations of consonants and vowels, adds an additional dimension to the sound picture (which Aubrey expressed as 'a bunch of nonsense syllables').⁴¹² In this context the appreciation of the language as sheer sound will evidently vary according to whether the language being sung is familiar to the listener or not. But still the importance of words just as a sonic experience should not be ignored.

At a concert at the Vienna Konzerthaus in 2005 Trio Mediaeval found that the house managers and promoter were reluctant to darken the light in the hall. This form of lighting, which was almost as bright in the hall as on stage, was customary there for vocal performances, and they did not want it changed. It was set to accommodate that audience's expectations and their need to follow the text while the music was being sung. Clearly for them textual engagement was as (or more) important than the sonic experience. This example, however, does not represent the general views of European nor North American promoters, who are usually more concerned to use the light creatively, rather than accommodate those who wish to read and listen simultaneously.

Living in a world which has gradually become more or less dependent on constant information I would prefer concert promoters to check their need to over-stimulate audiences, and instead provide their public with only a minimum of information, so that the music is free to speak for itself.⁴¹³ But there is still a long way to go (and it might be close to an impossible task) since most promoters (both mainstream as well as early music) have yet to be convinced of the value of letting go of their long-established traditions. Performers, on the other hand, are very much alive to the immediacy of musical transmission, and are continually exploring creative performance practices. These developments are to some extent reflected in their attitudes to musicological research, which are the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Communication and collaboration between musicologists and performers

Much of the research into historical performance practice inevitably has its origins in academia. Although many current performers acknowledge the importance and usefulness of musicology their essential task is ultimately a practical one; academic research is only one of many elements that contribute to the totality of a performance. Musicologists may have more specialised outcomes in mind, and this chapter looks briefly at how they engage with practical performance issues, including the performance by women of music intended for men. During the last forty years, musicology has had an enormous impact on medieval music-making and has appeared both as an accelerator and brake pedal depending on what kind of performance path the performer has decided to take. At the beginning of the 1980s, the English scholar Christopher Page's work with Gothic Voices, later christened the 'new secular *a cappella* heresy' by Howard Mayer Brown, suggested that the combination of instruments and voices in late medieval polyphonic music probably did not exist in the Middle Ages.⁴¹⁴ As discussed in Chapter 3, the immediate implication of the 'heresy' meant that (in particular) the English instrumentalists or mixed instrument/voice ensembles began to find it difficult to get work.⁴¹⁵ The wave did not seem to reach the continent with the same weight, and now, more than twenty years later when we review the history of the early music revival we might look at the '*a cappella* construction' as a contemporary fashion rather than an historical fact. In the Mediterranean countries there was a strong tradition of mixed groups as well as purely *a cappella* ensembles. Pedro Memelsdorff (director of Mala Punica) argues that it is 'absurd to affirm that in the past there was only one way of performing music' and is very critical of the English '*a cappella* heresy':

...it has left a very important mark. Much is owed to this error (I think it has to be termed an error). But the real error is not the debatable technical-musicological error itself, but that of believing it, believing that a simplification such as this could resolve a very complex polemic which needs to be continued on many fronts.⁴¹⁶

While the *a cappella* movement was disastrous for a large number of medieval music instrumentalists and instrument makers, it created new opportunities for singers who were interested in chamber music and early repertoires (rather than operatic/*Lied*

careers). At the American Musicological Society's (AMS) National Meeting in Seattle in 2004, Ross Duffin, professor at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, made the comment that 'performers who tried to do late medieval repertoire with instruments were guaranteed to get a bad review in the English journals *Early Music*, and *Gramophone* because of Daniel Leech-Wilkinson's position (with *Early Music*) and David Fallows' position (with *Gramophone*)'.⁴¹⁷ Duffin argues that the conclusions that we all draw (whether we are performers or musicologists) from the same pieces of evidence are only a matter of interpretation. He draws attention to a specific moment, at a Burgundian exhibit at the Cleveland Art Museum, when David Fallows gave the keynote talk and Duffin volunteered to present a few music examples live for Fallows' lecture. Fallows requested specific pieces and Duffin prepared the music in advance:

And then something came up about a four-voice version of a piece versus the three-voice version, and I said "No, it's fine, we can have that part played on harp". He said "Oh, you mean you're not doing it with all voices?" I had immediately assumed that we would use a combination of voices and instruments and he had immediately assumed that we would do it with all voices. We both started from our prejudiced stance on how it should be done. So we laughed about that.⁴¹⁸

Duffin stresses the importance of introducing students to a variety of performance possibilities within the early music genre and says there are numerous ways of producing convincing performances. He takes the view that the success of the English *a cappella* movement was a result of the 'fine tradition of vocal training' that the English singers were provided with, and suggests that the reason the *a cappella* movement became so popular so quickly was probably because people found the vocal performances surprisingly clear and beautiful, and not because they were embracing possible musicological evidence.⁴¹⁹ Leech-Wilkinson points out that 'Gothic Voices made the *a cappella* revolution happen, but the scholars got the credit for it.'⁴²⁰ It might be true that scholars (especially in England) were credited for initiating and subsequently sustaining the *a cappella* movement, but this 'credit' is probably only known to a limited group of specialists in the field, and not to the average radio/recording listener and concert goer, who probably did not care much about the musicological aspect of the performance.⁴²¹ Duffin does not agree with the more reductive conclusions drawn by some scholars regarding the supposed lack of

evidence for voices and instruments performing together and observes 'it's not that there is so much evidence for the use of instruments, it's just that there is some, and that with the small amount of evidence that survives I just don't think it can be ignored.'⁴²² He further suggests that people like himself who are concerned about the historical aspects of the music are of the view that historical awareness helps to make the 'music sound better', but adds that the information has to be used in a convincing way in order to touch people's souls and make the performance work: 'You can't hear someone do a bad performance and say, "but we used all these historical criteria, how can you criticise us?" That's just not a good enough reason in itself.'⁴²³

Duffin believes that successful modern performers of medieval music are involved in musicological aspects in part because they are aware of the need to justify their performative decisions in conversations with scholars or journalists.⁴²⁴ He compares the modern performer's insight into musicological matters with performers in the 1970s and refers to an AMS meeting in New York at the end of the 1970s:

somebody was doing a performance of 'Robin et Marion' and a musicologist I know went up to them and said "well, this is very interesting what you're doing. Have you read any of the stuff that Henrik van der Werf has been writing about Trouvere song?" and they said "oh no, we don't read any of that stuff, it's just musicology". So that was, to me, an indication that there wasn't a lot of communication between performers and musicologists at that time.⁴²⁵

In the twenty-first century, medieval music research has gradually taken a different form. As much as the research has looked in to the medieval period and its sources, one trend in recent investigation has also been to review the historiography of the movement itself. The published works written by some of today's foremost musicologists raise questions concerning the meaning and purpose of their conclusions. Daniel Leech-Wilkinson's work is a case in point. It is surely the case that musicologists are aware that most of their publications are read and used primarily by other academics and students and not by musicians and singers (a fact which is borne out by the lack of reference to any sort of secondary literature in the interviews I conducted for this study). Questions of authenticity and HIP have produced endless discussions in which many different strands within the 'genre' have been debated. But how do these discussions connect with the actual music being made? Perhaps academia is as far from the core of the music and performances it

investigates, as the performer is from recreating a past. In 1984 Daniel Leech-Wilkinson argued that the movement was under 'reconstruction':

One of the many promising developments in attitudes towards the performance of early music is that an increasing number of scholar - performers are prepared to admit that most of what they do in constructing a performance style is - of necessity - of their own invention.⁴²⁶

The musicologist's task, to research, reflect and produce new perspectives and always consider and acknowledge previous work and scholarship on the subject, differs from the work of the performer's on several levels. Leech-Wilkinson points out that it is often 'not easy to see exactly where the invention happens, because each step that a scholar takes in forming and setting out their view is a small one, and necessarily fits well with views that colleagues already hold'.⁴²⁷ The musicologist's future career however is not based on whether most readers (or perhaps listeners) agree with and like what is being presented or not, but whether the arguments are relevant, original and well-grounded.⁴²⁸ Of course musicologists know that certain strategies will help gain success. Upsetting colleagues might be uncomfortable, but it is no secret that disagreements (whether verbal or in writing) between scholars can be fruitful in the 'creation' of debate and research opportunities. On this point there is a clear difference between musicology and performance. Performers would never use a performance situation to criticize other performers and their interpretations. Since taste and likeability are the driving forces of successful music-making (rather than groundbreaking research), it is also no secret that performers need to charm their audience. As a performer you do not need to show you are clever, just to make a performance that appeals to people. There is also a difference when it comes to the delivery of the material. Musicologists publish articles and books and deliver papers, so acquiring reputation, while performers are judged on every performance.⁴²⁹ It is not rare that you hear that 'a performer is no better than his/her last performance'.

To focus the issue: music research is about strong arguments while music-making is about 'likeability', but both fields have the same original starting point - the music. Is current early music musicology evolving independently of performers' decisions, or is it driven forward by current performance traditions and ideals? Has the gap between the two disciplines slowly increased as a result of medieval music

becoming mainstream music while musicologists discuss issues within the academic discipline?

The criterion for making a career in either musicology or performance (or in some cases both) is to bring to light something new. When the main focus in academic writing (or academic verbal delivery) depends on the complexity of the language so that stressing the main issue seems to take second place, many readers may fall by the wayside and not grasp the essential argument and conclusions. Given the convoluted way in which some academics write (and read papers), one starts to wonder what the purposes of their text is. Might language complexity sometimes cover a light-weight case? Current academic publishing does not by and large invite performers (or people who have a general interest in music) to read the literature, but instead aims at a limited circle of specialists. This might be the strongest reason why the gap between performers and musicologists is growing.

As a performer with an insight into the academic world as well, I have experienced the 'problem' from two different perspectives. Without music there would be nothing for musicologists to debate, but sometimes it seems as though musicologists are creating a scenario in which they can express themselves rather than focusing on music and on what is actually there, or on what might be useful to performers for the future performance of music. Musicologists may argue that performers are not using facts and historical information when they present the music, but it is hard to imagine that musicology is actually closer to real music than performance of that music. We should of course remember that not all musicological work is aimed at performance, but may be of interest purely from an historical perspective. Performers interpret the music in their own way, and musicologists relate to the accessible material from their own academic and intellectual standpoint. The way performers make music is unlikely to have changed simply because of changes in musicological terminology. Rather, performances of early music have been analysed in such depth by musicologists that they have perhaps drifted away from what performers would argue is the main focus: the performance aspects of the music.

My research has shown that communication between performers and musicologists is not at all as vibrant as I had previously thought. It might be, as Susan Boynton points out that there is 'really no dialogue at all' and the musicologist's role is simply to use their scholarly knowledge to find music and prepare editions which the performers can perform and use.⁴³⁰ She points out that singers and instrumentalists

are probably less dependent on scholars since it is now much easier to access all sorts of material, especially via the internet. Boynton further acknowledges that she enjoys the musicologist's freedom to speculate without having to make definite decisions:

I always feel very different from a performer, not because I have any negative kind of stereotypes of performers, but in the research that I do, I can stay very speculative, and for instance I can say "well, it could have been this way, or it could have been that way, or maybe it was this other way", and I can leave it open. I don't have to make a decision. Because when you perform you have to get up there and make a decision.... Once you make that decision, you could be wrong ... somebody might not agree with it, somebody might not like it, but you have to do something.... I like being able to say: "well, I am not so sure how it really was".⁴³¹

Boynton affirms the fact that as a musicologist, she can stay speculative in the face of insufficient evidence; the deficiency of real knowledge is a reason to be 'free' from judgement and definitive statements.

This is remarkably similar to the views of many performers: the same lack of evidence, the 'open space' that appears in the absence of 'hard-core' data, is experienced by performers as a force for creativity. This space invites intuitive music making. Unlike musicologists, performers do have to make a decision when they perform and there is of course the risk that someone will disagree with their decision. One should keep in mind, however, that no one performs the same piece the same way twice. One factor which contributes significantly to a performer's 'decision-making' is the acoustic space in which the performance takes place. Performers have to make interpretative decisions every time they perform a piece. Although a musicologist's work can be of a more speculative sort than the performer's, it might be possible to compare a musicologist's published work with a performer's recorded work. Once the writing is published, and once the recording is distributed, there is nothing the author or performer can do to change the text or sound. Both scholars and performers probably experience similar reactions when they look back on the published and distributed work they have produced; they would not write or record it in the same way if they were doing it all over again.

The American musicologist Anne Stone has the 'impression that there was a long period where musicologists were making decrees about how performance should be', but she does not particularly see why musicologists should have an active role

inside medieval music-making at all, suggesting instead that musicologists 'get in the way of performance'.⁴³² Both Boynton and Stone draw attention to the limitations of the performer/musicologist relationship. They see the musicologist's role as supporting the performer by providing them with basic information which the performer can use as they please. Elisabeth Aubrey on the other hand takes the view that the communication between performers and musicologists has increased. She draws attention to the two-way street where the musicologists inform the performer at the same time as 'the musicologists learn a lot from the performers who are actually trying to make things work.'⁴³³

Women's voices and sacred polyphony

As discussed in Chapter 3 the modern phenomenon of women performing medieval sacred polyphony has not suffered from negative criticism, but rather the opposite. Musicologists have been very enthusiastic about the movement and they unanimously agree that there is no reason why women should not sing the music. Ross Duffin points out that the modern sound of women's voices in polyphonic medieval music has never struck him as unusual. He refers to the singing traditions in convents and draws attention to the virtuosic compositions of Hildegard von Bingen. As he points out, if the nuns were able to sing Hildegard's compositions, then they were certainly equipped to sing anything that might have been available to them.

The musicologist Anne Bagnall Yardley believes women sang polyphony 'just like men, only higher' and enjoys modern female performances of polyphony.⁴³⁴ She suggests the relative pitch in the manuscripts indicates that the music was performed by any range of voices available. People in the medieval period did not necessarily have a strong concept of male-specific or female-specific music, but the rules against women's participation in public churches generated restrictions. Aubrey, too, believes that medieval women performed polyphony, except in public churches, and argues that there is plenty of evidence to support the view that educated women read music and sang polyphony.⁴³⁵ She says that even if there were no evidence of female performances of polyphony in the Middle Ages she would encourage modern performances by women: 'as far as I am concerned, anything goes'.⁴³⁶

Adding her voice to the others, Boynton explains that she has no objections to female performances, arguing that the contrasts between the original and present performances are immense in terms of sound and aesthetic, which in practice means that women's voices represent just one element among many. She draws attention to the *Las Huelgas Codex* with its polyphony and points out that even if it is known that it was owned by the nunnery, there is no guarantee that all of it was actually intended for women's voices. Anna Maria Busse Berger believes that there is no reason why medieval women would not have learnt techniques for improvising polyphony and suggest it is as likely that nuns improvised in their convents as men in their monasteries.⁴³⁷ However, she says that she has never thought much about the issue of women's voices and modern performance. Mentioning performances by Anonymous 4, she says, 'I couldn't care less whether it was sung by men or women, I think these women were better than most of the men.'⁴³⁸

Like Berger, Stone believes that nuns probably improvised polyphony in their convents. After all, she says, 'there is no reason to think that they didn't' and she draws attention to the improvisational traditions in the Middle Ages. But the question, she says, is 'did they write it down?'⁴³⁹ She has no ideological or intellectual problems with modern performances by women, and says the only way in which somebody might object would be 'if they were after some kind of false notion of authenticity'.⁴⁴⁰ She says that the idea of authenticity does not particularly interest her, and like Berger, she praises the performances and recordings of Anonymous 4 for their beautiful blend and impeccable intonation.

The modern sound is clearly sufficiently satisfying for the musicologists interviewed for them not to worry about historical accuracy in these instances. Significantly, like the performers, none of them raise the question of gender in its modern sense.

Having met and interviewed musicologists it has become evident to me that many are aware of a change in the role of musicology as a result of developments in the modern performance practice of medieval music. The musicologists' responses support women wishing to sing medieval sacred polyphony, even though it might not have been customary in most of the original religious establishments. They are, however, reluctant to express definitive views on the modern performance aspect of the genre, and there seems to be a mutual understanding between scholars and

performers that the two disciplines have different purposes and might not necessarily work together. This is an encouraging development: the performer has often seen the musicologist as a 'policeman' rather than a collaborator and resource, while the performer has been the 'thief', stealing the musicologists' product and creatively extrapolating from the original manuscript or modern edition, and possibly disregarding what the musicologist had in mind.

As discussed in Chapter 3 performers can have an historical understanding and decide to disregard facts in a performance situation. Musicologists have to acknowledge facts and strong beliefs even if they do not fit in with their personal ideas and ideals. Ultimately both scholarship and performance depend on a mutually creative relationship.

Chapter 6: The nature of medieval singing in the present

The presentation of medieval music around the world today differs extensively from its original context.⁴⁴¹ We re-contextualize the music: none of the music was written to be a part of a concert programme or a recording, and was not intended to be performed to an audience (as we understand the term today). Professional performers of today have a completely different lifestyle and agenda from the original singers and the purpose of performing the music diverges from the medieval model on several central points. Today we presume that the men and women who were involved with sacred vocal monophony and polyphony in its original context were convinced of their Christian beliefs and connected to religious establishments. Modern medieval music performers and their audience are, unlike our medieval forebears, not necessarily religious. In the present anyone can perform sacred medieval music, whether they are religious or not. They have no obligations towards a certain system, and there are probably as many individual perspectives on spirituality as there are performers. Likewise, today's listeners are free to relate to and connect with spirituality in what ever way feels comfortable to them. One of the crucial matters for contemporary female singers wishing to perform medieval music is that we cannot in any way be historically authentic (however much we might wish to be), partly because of the historical marginalization of women by the church. The sacred medieval music that the Trio Mediaeval normally presents would most likely have been sung by male voices in the middle ages, which means we create a sound for which there is very little historical evidence. We know however, that nuns had the same liturgical agenda as their male counterparts and that they sang monophonic pieces in their convents. We might never get to know to what extent women sang polyphonic music, or how much polyphonic music was available to women, but there are manuscripts from sixteen convents in Europe which contain two and/or three part pieces, which suggests that women probably sang polyphony if it was accessible to them.⁴⁴²

It is impossible to know what this music would have sounded like in the middle ages, and therefore impossible to re-create a medieval vocal sound. We have no recordings or precise descriptions regarding the sound or singing techniques that might have been used, and we can only refer to small amounts of written instructions

for singers (which were mostly built on complaints about the sound and singing the medieval writer had recently experienced) rather than constructive advice.⁴⁴³ The most problematic issue when interpreting a medieval source (apart from the fact that most of us have to have the medieval Latin translated for us) is that the norm (what was obvious at the time) is to us unknown. We have of course an extensive amount of medieval iconography to refer to, but to trace a sound from a picture is probably even harder than from a text. And, if we succeeded it would of course be impossible for us to know. Another issue is that the vocal and musical ideals in the innumerable European medieval establishments probably differed considerably from each other. So do performances of today. There is a lot of guesswork in modern medieval music performances and performers have different backgrounds and criteria for their music making. Medieval music is now performed all over the world, and established groups have created their own trademark based on their particular sound, interpretation and image.

Reflections on the performance: Trio Mediaeval, February 4th 2009 in the Chapter House, York Minster, UK.

The world that we live in today is more or less dependent on constant information and we have learnt to expect verbal instructions and/or textual guidance in many situations. For the York Minster Chapter House programme we chose to provide our audience with a minimum of textual information, and instead present a sonic (and visual) experience where the music is free to speak for itself. There are many reasons for this decision. Firstly, the literal translation might do little justice to the original text. It is hard to know how much (if anything) of the original meaning is relevant or amenable to communication in the new context: the medieval listeners' appreciation of the Latin texts was obviously very different from that of the present audience, who inevitably incorporate their own modern reflections into the old texts. Secondly, there is a danger that the texts and translations channel the listening and restrict the listeners' own creativity. The members of Trio Mediaeval feel that performing medieval music today gives us the freedom to let our imagination and ideas flow, as though we were creating contemporary music. We can choose whether we want to be close to what we think may have been the original way of performing,

or not. Questions of historical performance practice are not a major consideration but may in certain circumstances inform the group's performances, which are based on wider and current professional criteria. We have chosen to use the lack of original information to inform our performance in the present. The Trio Mediaeval sees its performances as a part of a 'post-historically-informed' era.

For this performance, as for all trio concerts, not many predetermined interpretative decisions were made, but the music was rehearsed sufficiently to accommodate a variety of possible interpretative outcomes in a live situation. During a rehearsal period of a new programme many different interpretative solutions are explored, but never fixed. No two performances are the same, and we enjoy the freedom of not being limited by fixed rules. This flexibility recognises the uniqueness of every performance. We never, for example, write dynamic markings in our scores, and we have a relaxed attitude to *musica ficta*, using it as a creative tool to explore different sonorities. When a *ficta* question presents itself we will usually follow the first person to encounter the problem, and we always aim for what we think sounds good. The sound is more important than musicological accuracy. Most of the time we know our programmes by heart, something that we feel increases the possibility of being more free and daring with the material. It would be very hard (and not very satisfying) to try and recreate exactly the same sound, speed and interpretation twice. When we rehearse a piece we never talk very much about how to shape the lines or what speed to sing it at. Repetition with minimal discussion allows the piece to find its own shape and tempo. The speed of a song is very often defined and adjusted according to how the breathing works in the different parts, something that shifts according to each venue and also the singers' physical status. After having sung together for almost thirteen years we know each other very well, and we very quickly sense each other's musical ideas and vocal condition, which naturally affects the music making. The moments in between phrases can also be adjusted slightly if one of us suddenly needs to take a longer breath or swallow. This accordingly affects the pace of the flow as well as the timing of the following onset. The Chapter House at York, like many venues is at sea level: Mexico City (and many other cities we have performed in) is at 2500 meters above sea level, and concerts there require different breathing strategies. There we will need to breathe more often and possibly less deeply, which may mean shorter phrases, faster tempi or modified phrase shapes,

depending on the piece. Our response to the acoustic works in a similar way: if the acoustic is generous there is more space and time for instant decision making; the voice responds differently depending on the feedback from the acoustic; greater reverberation tends to mean more opportunities for shaping longer phrases. The first few seconds of a concert are particularly important because the acoustic will naturally have changed with the presence of the audience. We do not need to discuss this, but we respond instinctively to it, otherwise our ability to manage our voices over the course of a whole evening may be at risk. We try not to reveal the mechanics of a performance. We take an off stage note and would not normally resort to the use of a tuning fork during the concert. The pitch does not need to be absolute: if there is a change in pitch during the first piece it is likely to be the case that we have adjusted to a slightly different sense of tonality. We would then aim to keep in this 'slot' for the rest of the programme. The voice appears to have atonal memory that may make it relatively easy to maintain the pitch. This process can be helped by choosing pieces with related tonal centres. None of the three of us has perfect pitch.

The programme 'A Worcester Ladymass' uses the structure of a medieval Lady mass.⁴⁴⁴ Although this concert did not present a complete liturgical reconstruction we have used the mass ordinaries (the unchanging elements Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus and Agnus Dei) as a frame. The nature of the Lady Mass was flexible, so we felt able to insert other music while still acknowledging a possible original context.⁴⁴⁵ Nicky Losseff, the trio's medieval music editor, reconstructed and edited all the medieval music for this programme. She has been involved with the group since 2003, when we asked her to edit some English and French medieval pieces for a recording. The editions, made especially for us, are based on the latest research, where Losseff has used manuscripts as well as existing twentieth century editions to create her versions and reconstructions. It has been very important for us to collaborate with a musicologist without strong preferences regarding performance rules, but with an open mind to different sounds and possible interpretative outcomes. The process of working out a new programme is always very inspiring. In our case, we bring an idea to Losseff, and then leave her to research and to find suitable repertoire which she finds exciting and well suited for the group. We then try the material out. She does not take part in the rehearsal process of the material, and neither does she give instructions or interpretative advice, but she shares her expertise

in medieval musicology in conversations regarding the material such as questions related to the repertoire and the structure of the programme. The Worcester material that Losseff chose originally consisted of twenty pieces and with the addition of the three pieces by Gavin Bryars these twenty-three pieces constituted a fully reconstructed Ladymass (in musical terms), where the all of the original mass items were presented. In addition to Nicky Losseff as editor we engaged Selene Mills to translate all the Latin texts to English.

Performance pragmatics: source, score and sound-world

Salve sancta parens (Worcester, Chapter Library, Additional 68, Fragment XXXI (no further foliation); Oxford, Bodleian Library, c 60, f. 1) is a troped Introit setting for the vigil of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary from Worcester 1 (the earliest and one of the largest of the surviving manuscripts in the compiled selection). The first part of the Introit is a polyphonic setting of a chant where the vocal line up of the trio members is the one we usually apply when singing medieval and contemporary music: Friman on the top line, Fuglseth in the middle, and Ossum on the lowest part. Our three voices have different qualities and we try and make use of the different colours so that the more homogeneous sound contrasts with that of a single voice. We can sometimes swap parts for a whole piece, or only for parts of a piece, in order to create different sound pictures.⁴⁴⁶ The middle section of the *Salve sancta parens* is a monophonic psalm verse (chant) where Ossum sings the melody line. To create a fuller and more stable sound for that section of the piece we added a unison drone on the tonic C sung by Fuglseth and Friman. The Introit is then repeated after the chant. We chose to learn this piece by heart so that we could start the concert by standing in front of the music stands and immediately try and connect with the audience. When the piece ended we moved over to the music stands to be able to have the sheet music as a point of reference for the next two pieces. To make a smooth and comfortable transaction into the troped **Kyrie** (Worcester Gradual (Worcester, Chapter Library, F.160), f. 288v) we chose to continue in F, which meant that all three of us started a fourth up from the final chord of the *Salve sancta parens*. Parts of this troped Kyrie (also from Worcester 1) have been reconstructed by Losseff since short sections of the music are missing in the manuscript. In between the Kyrie –

Christe – Kyrie sections there are short chants sung by either Friman or Fuglseth or all three voices in unison. At the end of the second Kyrie the first phrase of the chant is sung by the three of us in unison, but for the last phrase we added a drone, this time the tonic (F) and fifth C, to colour the melody line sung by Ossum. Since the upper voices tend to carry the melody lines and be slightly more in the forefront of the sound picture, we like to bring Ossum's voice forward when possible. Ossum then continued with the introduction to the freely composed **Gloria** setting (Worcester, Chapter Library, Additional 68, Fragment XIX, f. c2b and b2; Oxford, Bodleian Library, c 60, f. 82v-83v) from the latest of the surviving manuscripts, Worcester 3. Unlike the previous pieces this mass movement is not based on a chant, but all three voices have a similar rhythmic structure all through the piece. This element of rhythmic homogeneity is an effective contrast to the foregoing Kyrie.

The next piece **Munda Maria** (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Latin liturgical d 20, f. 12) replaces what would have been a collective prayer for the people present during the mass service. The piece, which is a rota (round) has the same melody line in all three parts and is sung in canon. All five verses have two textual lines, and before the text starts there is a line sung on a vowel (usually the vowel on which the previous verse ends with), which means that two texts are always running at the same time while one voice stays on a vowel. Before the piece started Fuglseth checked the pitch using a tuning fork to establish the new tonality and we took our scores and moved forward on stage and placed ourselves with a few meters gap between each other in order to create a kind of stereo effect. Fuglseth started the canon on a D, which was also the tonality of the following rondellus **Quem trina polluit** (Durham University Library, Select 13, f.1). In the original mass structure there would have been a reading either from the Epistles or Acts of the Apostles at this point. Here we moved down from the stage and walked down the aisle and performed the piece by heart, facing each other, in the middle of the audience. Often, after concerts audience members tell us they find it exciting when the sound comes from different places in the venue, and in order to create this atmosphere we always try to find several places to sing from in order to move away from the more frequently used stage position.

The combination of polyphonic pieces and monophonic chant sung by either a single voice or in unison creates different sound and textural contrasts, which we find is an important part of both delivering and experiencing music. The next mass item,

the Gradual, presented the extravagant plainchant *Benedicta/Virgo dei genitrix* (Worcester Gradual (Worcester, Chapter Library, F.160), f. 295v), which is assigned to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. There are fragments of polyphonic Gradual settings in the Worcester manuscripts but all are too fragmentary to use. We found that the plainchant was perfectly placed here, and decided to split it between Fuglseth and Ossum. Vocally it worked well in D for both of them, which happened to be the same pitch as the previous two pieces. In addition to the solo line we wanted to introduce our melody chimes as drone instruments at this point in the programme, and since they are constant in pitch we had to find a way of introducing them without disturbing a possible pitch change. We solved this by starting with the chimes only, using the F and C chimes together and then shifting to the D and A, which constituted the open chord on which the chant was being sung. There is no academic basis for droning either vocally or with instruments, but for us it is primarily about finding an interesting sound that works. It is also comfortable to sing a solo line when there is an underlying support, and with the addition of a drone the possibility to linger on specific notes and create tension and release between different intervals increases. These chants went straight into an unrehearsed sequence where a large extent of the music was improvised. In advance we agreed on a few directions, for example that the opening would consist of us playing a few chords using all of our six melody chimes (D, F, G, A, C, D), and then gradually adding voices to that. We placed ourselves in front of the music stands, and when we had established the sound we slowly walked down from the stage and found positions at three separate places in the church in order to create a contrasting and new sound perspective. We also introduced a few different short phrases from Gavin Bryars' Credo which came to appear at different occasions and speeds in the middle of the sequence. Towards the end of the section, before we walked back to the stage we vocalised elements from the Norwegian traditional hymn *Eg veit i himmerik ei borg*, in an arrangement by Fuglseth. The improvised section ended with the three of us standing on stage with our backs towards the audience. To add improvised sections to programmes is a rather new event for the three of us and we have had to work hard to dare let go of the more safe experience of singing composed music. We found that after having had a more strict way of structuring programmes, we needed to find a way of challenging ourselves, and by working with jazz / improvisation musicians such as Tord Gustavsen trio, Trygve Seim, Jan Bang, Arve Henriksen and Terje Isungset we became inspired and

encouraged to include open sections where we could be more flexible and spontaneous. Since the medieval music usually has a rather limited vocal range the improvised section creates an opportunity where we can be flexible with our voices and extend the vocal ranges to a greater extent. We have found that the audience find these sections exciting and engaging, and that musical and vocal contrasts strengthen the experience of a concert if planned with care.

As the Worcester manuscripts lacked a Credo and a *Benedicamus domino*, we decided to have these pieces composed specially for us. Since all the medieval music was English we chose the English composer Gavin Bryars.⁴⁴⁷ For the last twenty years Bryars has been writing music for various performers of early music and since the start of the twenty-first century these compositions have been modelled on forms, techniques and structures from the medieval, renaissance and baroque periods. When he received our request he was already familiar with some of the Worcester material since he had been listening to a recording of the Orlando Consort in connection with a commission he did for them some years ago. We sent him the medieval pieces in the programme along with the translations as well as Losseff's programme notes. Bryars had the idea that the Credo and *Benedicamus Domino* had to 'be composed and then inserted in such a way that, while being audibly different from the surrounding sections, they maintain the same ethos and can be accepted as part of such a *Ladymass* without any sense of incongruity.'⁴⁴⁸ The Credo (2008) text (originally sung only on the most solemn feasts) was set for the most part with one note per syllable but in order to create textural variety he sometimes lets one or two voices sing the text while there is a short drone in the remaining part/parts. Harmonic and chromatic shifts follow the textual moments of the Credo, but it is not until the final Amen section where all of the parts have individual florid movements. **Felix namque** (Worcester Gradual (Worcester, Chapter Library, F.160), f.295v) is another melismatic plainchant which (together with the following piece) presents the Offertory in the mass structure. There are some incomplete polyphonic offertory settings in the manuscripts but like the polyphonic Gradual settings, these are too fragmentary to use. Friman, who sang the piece solo, started on an F (taken from the last chord of the Credo) and ended on a G, which became the fifth in the polyphonic chant setting **Inviolata integra mater** (Oxford, Bodleian Library, latin liturgical d 20,

f. 23v). Fuglseth checked the pitch before this piece, and hummed the C (tonic) to Ossum and Friman in order to make sure that the pitch was in the right place for the next four pieces. This was the only time in the programme where an audible note was given in order to secure the tonality. For this piece we did make a number of interpretative decisions. Many of the phrases had the same melody line at the end of phrases, and in rehearsals we experimented with different ways of forming and ending this repetitive structure. We ended up by pre-deciding some fermatas. The sustained chords came to characterize the start and end of the piece while the middle part was sung more or less straight forward without tempi changes.

In the original Mass structure the next item would have been the Secret where the priest spoke silently. Losseff replaced it with the rondellus **De supernibus sedibus** (London, British Library, Add. 25031, f. 1v). After our first performance of this programme (USA November 2008) we found the programme was slightly too long, so we had to reduce the programme. We all enjoyed the main body of *De Supernibus sedibus*, but we never found the beginning of the piece very exciting. Therefore, we made the decision to use the introduction of another piece, the conductus **Quam admirabilis** (Worcester, Chapter Library, Additional 68, Fragment XXVIII) instead, which meant that we combined two pieces into one. Since the programme contained both complete pieces and fragments of manuscripts we thought we could allow ourselves to be creative even with the material. The word 'Quam' (which was the only word in the introductory section) was replaced with 'De'. We liked the result, and since Losseff agreed to the new construction we decided to keep the piece like that. The following mass item, the Preface (originally a spoken part) was replaced by the motet **Dulciflua tua memoria** (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Latin liturgical d 20, f. 23). The text and melody shifts between the upper two voices, and each phrase ends with a short coda on the words "O Maria" which makes this composition stand out in that the end of each phrase is repeated frequently through the piece. The next mass movement, **Sanctus** (Worcester, Chapter Library, Additional 68, Fragment XXXII), also in C, is a polyphonic chant setting from the same manuscript as the Gloria (Worcester 3). This was the last piece in the programme where we used our music stands and scores as a point of reference. After the piece we moved our music stands back on the stage to make more space at the front.

The only polyphonic *Agnus Dei* setting in the Worcester Fragments is too fragmentary to reconstruct, but the troped *Agnus Dei* plainchant, (Worcester Gradual (Worcester, Chapter Library, F.160), f. 350) from the same source as the previous plainchants, fits very well into this programme. It is a contemplative piece where we shift between the three of us singing in unison and Ossum singing a solo line. We sang the piece in D and chose to include the melody chimes. This time we used four tones (D (tonic), G, A and C) in order to extend the possibility of creating occasional chords to surround the monophonic line. Ossum was, as usual, placed in the middle, with Fuglseth on her right and Friman on her left facing each other. The tonality of the piece was given by starting with the melody chimes, playing a fifth. After the *Agnus Dei* movement we went straight into two plainchants *Beata viscera* (Worcester, Chapter Library, Additional 68, Fragment XIX) and *Alma dei genitrix* (Worcester Gradual (Worcester, Chapter Library, F.160), f.295). Both chants, associated with the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, replaced what would have been the Communion in the original mass. The first was sung in unison in D, and the second was sung by Friman solo in A, which was the tonality of the following polyphonic *Beata viscera* (Worcester, Chapter Library, Additional 68, Fragment XIX) This short piece, which replaced the post-communion (a spoken item in the original structure) was succeeded by the *Benedicamus Domino* where the priest blessed and released the congregation. The progressive entry of the three voices in Bryars' *Benedicamus Domino* (2008) mirrors the congregation leaving the service. Bryars compares the composition with his *Credo* and says 'the music is much freer in its use of extended quasi-improvisational lines with each word being considerably extended by having several notes to a syllable.'⁴⁴⁹ The piece was originally written in E, but vocally it worked better for us in D, so we transposed it down a tone. The last chord of the piece ended with an open octave and fifth, which meant that Fuglseth's A was the starting note of the final piece in the programme, the *Ave Regina Gloriosa* (2003) (also called *Lauda 7*). This piece replaced the processional that would have been sung during the exit of the congregation. This setting was the first three part piece that Bryars composed for the Trio Mediaeval. Bryars used C12 Italian *Laude* texts (to date there are 39 of them, of which 32 have included Friman's voice), extrapolating on the anonymous monophonic originals, sometimes adding lines and textures but retaining the ancient outlines.

As discussed in the beginning of this chapter, performances of today vary enormously from the medieval context. Audiences are different now from the audiences listening to the music in the medieval period, and modern audiences differ again from each other. The audience for the Trio Mediaeval concert in 'old' York on the 4th of February 2009 was different from the one in New York on the 23rd of November 2008. The trio inevitably performed differently; no performances are alike. There are many different circumstances that influence the way in which a concert works. The acoustics were not the same, and this, in turn influenced the way we used our voices and formed the music. In York it was not the last performance of a two week-long USA tour, but a single concert where we performed the same *Lady Mass* which reflected my research which in turn built on my own experiences as a member of the trio.

Conclusion

The expectations I had when starting this research eight years ago have extended immensely as the work has progressed. Up till 2002, my involvement with medieval music was located in my own experiences as a performer. But as I began to investigate the literature associated with medieval music performance, I found myself examining topics such as 'historical' authenticity versus 'personal' authenticity, historically informed performance and non-historically informed performance. In addition to studying the written material I spent many hours in the British Library's National Sound Archive, where I listened to a large number of recordings of medieval music (from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present), as well as archived BBC radio programmes related to the topic. Critical engagement with literature combined with analyses of recordings threw light on different aspects of the era and contributed significantly to my understanding of medieval music history as well as its present performance status. The next stage of my research was to contact a number of female professional performers of sacred medieval music as well as some of the musicologists whose publications had influenced my understanding of the topic. In addition to the questions prepared for the interviews, the conversations inevitably generated a new set of questions, and these together with my original outline came to form the chapters of this thesis. The excitement and commitment with which

performers and musicologists talk of their professions is encouraging for future performances and for research into medieval music.

I have chosen to focus my research on musical aspects of the medieval music business rather than commercial and economical factors, but we should not forget the underlying economy that supports the artistic work; the fact is that if the management, record company and performer cannot create enough interest in the product none of the performance elements discussed in this thesis would be economically viable (though they might apply in an amateur context). These are questions which would benefit from further research.

All the performers discussed in this thesis are creative artists, and each is 'informed' about how she performs in one way or another. Each approaches the music in what she finds to be the most convincing and satisfying way. But performers, and the ensembles they perform with, also have to address a range of other questions that arise out of their musical performance. These have to do with such things as vocal production, original source material, texts and translations, and the result is a wide variety of contrasting performances. Artistic development begins early. Musical upbringing, together with educational background, has been shown to play a significant part in every performer's artistic development. Then all performers put a lot of effort into pursuing a sound with which they are happy, and each of the ensembles has formed and established their characteristic sound. All singers agree that the most important vocal aspect of performance is to keep the voice healthy and each has found a technique which enables them to use the voice in a way which is comfortable, and fits in with their preferred ensemble sound (none of them considers their own sound in isolation from their fellow musicians). Some performers are perhaps more excited about the art of ensemble singing than they are about music history, but irrespective of these differences, it is obvious that all the interviewees have a personal and emotional commitment to medieval music which gives them the confidence required for professional music making. I would argue that a positive environment (which, I would suggest includes ensemble members, managers and record company) increases the confidence of all parties involved, something which is very important for a successful and well-balanced career, both in music-making and in fulfilling the supporting parameters of music-making, such as administrative work, research, practising, concert-giving as well as the possibility of spending many days of the year together on tour.

There are particular issues that continue to be a subject of debate among both performers and musicologists, and there are some aspects of history that performers ignore altogether. The question of memory, for example, is one that has rarely troubled professional performers. According to Anna Maria Busse Berger, memorising text and music was an important skill to learn for medieval singers. Contemporary performers differ in their use of the score during performance. Many use a score, some memorise, and some do a bit of both. However, greater emphasis on memorising the music might help modern performers establish a more meaningful connection with the past. My own experience (which began when I started to learn the Suzuki violin method at the age of four) tells me that if a group learns the music by heart, their communication with each other and with their audience increases significantly. With eye contact the performer can invite the listener to become a part of what happens on the stage (or wherever the performers are positioned), and this creates a stronger bond between the two. This has been my experience with the Trio Mediaeval, which as much as possible sings from memory.

The question of medieval texts and modern translation has been debated at great length, and performers and musicologists have different answers to the literal, textual and contextual problems raised. Some performers prefer their audience to concentrate solely on what happens musically without additional textual engagement, while others choose to print texts and translations in the programmes. Others give verbal introductions during the concert, or in pre- or post-concert talks. The use of supertitles in vocal performances is a relatively new phenomenon but they have already provoked fierce debate within medieval music-making, with strong arguments both for and against them. The critic Anthony Holden recently observed that the Covent Garden audience started to laugh at jokes before they had been sung. Of course, this might happen, too, when translations are provided in printed programmes. However, what Holden's observation reminds us of is that a translation introduces a different narrative pace into the text from the pace of the original language, so that listeners who are also following a translation are unlikely to experience the textual or the musical narrative at the same time as those who understand the language. Holden's example also suggests that those following a translation may experience events in the text in a different time frame from their musical occurrence, so that the effect of a translation delivered in this way is to separate the textual and musical narrative.⁴⁵⁰

These days we experience most of our music via recordings and not live performances. This means that we usually consume music in a place of our own choice, such as our own living room, in the car, through headphones walking along the street, or wherever else we choose to bring the music. It is now possible to obtain recordings of almost all music we wish to listen to and there are often many different performances available of the same piece or work, so we can compare and evaluate different performers and their interpretations and skills. When we listen to a CD or download we can pause and turn it off when we want to. We adjust the volume level to suit our taste and we regulate the sound by making our own technical modifications, for example by adding or reducing the bass or the high frequency. The listener, in a sense, *is* involved in the performance, so the debate about whether a recording is a performance is certainly worth having, not only because of the present advanced process of recording, but also because of the listener's input to the product. Listeners expect and anticipate perfection in recordings, and this can sometimes lead to disappointment when hearing live performances.

Since the start of the early music revival in the 1970s musicians and scholars have been almost obsessed with notions of authenticity, or historically informed performance (HIP), as we now call it. As I have discussed, this is a very complex phenomenon, and has tended to focus on what the original composer and listener might have considered an ideal performance (a somewhat unhistorical view). As shown in Chapter 3 there is a wealth of creativity both in HIP and in modern performance, and perhaps these two options are in fact one and the same thing: it is just a matter of taste. The knowledge the performers bring to their performances creates freedom and enhances their feelings of non-confinement, and that freedom opens up the creative process through which music can happen in an unrestrictive way. We can inform ourselves and use only the smallest amount of available information necessary to make a performance that sells records or satisfies audiences and critics. In the end if the performers are happy with what they do, and if the audience is happy to listen to the results, then it works. Every listener will always appreciate the music and its context differently, bringing their own individual expectations to the occasion. Perhaps the only thing that all audiences, as well as performers, have in common is that they are alive today, here and now in the present.

While undertaking this research it became clear that there are currently no publications that deal specifically with issues concerning modern performance of sacred medieval music with particular reference to women's voices. There is also no research by performers that analyses professional female singers' and musicologists' views on medieval ensemble singing in the present. This thesis will hopefully be a first contribution to an as yet unacknowledged field of enquiry: how female performers at the start of the twenty-first century look at their profession and bring music from around thousand years ago alive in the present - an act of simultaneous preservation and re-creation.

1 Linn Andrea Fuglseth, the founder of the Trio Mediaeval, received a diploma in Advanced Solo Studies in Early Music at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London 94/95. She returned to Oslo and completed an MA focusing on baroque singing and writing a dissertation on Restoration Mad Songs. She started her musical education as a child with piano as her main instrument. Inspired by the ensemble music making which she experienced during her year at Guildhall she decided to start a trio, and in 1997 she founded the Trio Mediaeval. Torunn Østrem Ossum and Fuglseth had been singing together in various choirs since the middle 80s, and Fuglseth and myself met in the Norwegian Soloist Choir in the summer of 1997. Ossum is the only singer mentioned in this research who has not studied music at an academy or university. She graduated as a kindergarten teacher from the College of Early Childhood Education in Oslo. Ossum has been an active choir and ensemble singer since early childhood.

2 Barratt Due Institute of Music, Oslo, Solo Vocal Diploma, BA, 1995-99.

3 Trinity College of Music, London, Postgraduate Vocal Diploma 00/01 and MMus 01/02.

4 The composers know our voices, often by listening to recordings or concerts, and their writing takes account of our experience in early music.

5 Interview with Anna Maria Friman by Immo Mikhelson 22/01/04 for *Postimees*, Estonia. *Soir, dit-elle*, ECM Records, ECM 1869 (2004).

6 In addition to the twelve singers (eleven women and one man) listed in the appendix, I also had personal conversations with the British singer Belinda Sykes. This interview was not transcribed because of difficulties with the recording sound quality. Private meetings and conversations with Timothy Day, J. Michele Edwards, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, Rebecca Stewart and Richard Taruskin and have not been transcribed, but like Sykes, these conversations are referred to as personal communication.

7 All interviews were recorded. For the earliest interviews I used a mini disc recorder as well as a Dictaphone, but then changed to a digital recorder which enabled me to easily transfer the sound files to the computer and play them at different speeds. Some of the interviews I transcribed myself, but for the most part I used the London based Global Media. Since the terminology was not always familiar to the transcriber I had to do some editing by listening through all the material carefully, and compare it with the texts.

8 Different subjects to which I gave colours to mark the printed interview transcriptions:

For performers:

- Background (for example: music during childhood, education and to what extent did the person consume/listen to medieval music)
- Vocal production
- Ensemble singing
- Use of primary sources and connection with musicology
- Re-creating or re-constructing?
- Medieval text in the modern day
- How important is the venue?

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- Individual reflections

For musicologists:

- What does medieval music sound like inside your head?
- The role of medieval history
- The importance of the medieval text in the present
- Communication between scholars and performers.
- Musicology / reviews
- Re-construction/notation/editing/ questions. Musicologists as surrogate composers?
- Vocal sound/quality of the medieval singers as well as modern performers

9 The interview material and other sources of personal communications (undertaken specifically for this research) have been incorporated into Chapters 2-5.

10 Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press and University of California Press are three among many international publishers who now have a long list of early music publications.

11 See Chapter 3 of this thesis.

12 Haskell, H, *The Early Music Revival: A History* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc. 1996): 9.

13 Berger. A M. B, *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2005): 9 & 15. A vast number of important scholars from the nineteenth century can be added to the list (Riemann, Wolf, Kretzschmar, Adler, Kieswetter, Fétis, Coussemaker, Ambros, Forkel, Bessler). For extensive information on medieval musicology and scholars in the nineteenth-century and the first half of the twentieth-century see Leech-Wilkinson, D, 'The invention of the voices-and-instruments hypothesis' in *The Modern Invention of Medieval Music*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 13-87.

14 *ibid*, 14.

15 *ibid*. Quoting Ludwig 'Der in erster Linie stehende Zweck von Untersuchungen und Publikationen über die mittelalterliche Mehrstimmigkeit ist kein praktischer, sondern ein wissenschaftlicher.' Review of Wolf, *Geschichte der Mensuralnotation*, 620.' By 1905 Ludwig had transcribed most of the surviving medieval repertoire. For further reading see Leech-Wilkinson *The Modern Invention of Medieval Music*: 77-78. Leech-Wilkinson writes: 'Ludwig would undoubtedly have published more, had he not been obsessed with total bibliographic control.'

16 The earliest recording of medieval polyphony in the National Sound Archive (NSA), is of Machaut motets from 1905, and it is clear that there is no attempt at singing it with what we today would call an 'early music sound'.

17 Berger: 14, Referring to Ludwig's article 'Perotinus Magnus', *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, 3 (1921): 361-70.

18 *ibid*, and Leech-Wilkinson *The Modern Invention of Medieval Music*: 49-50.

There were a number of musicologists involved with the Badische Kunsthalle weekend, (24-26th of September 1922) and the director of the concert-series, Wilibald Gurlitt (a former student of Schering and Riemann) gave a lecture before every performance. In his book, Leech-Wilkinson, reflects on the

medieval concert life in the late 1920s and suggests that 'the concerts themselves show a willingness to experiment with different kinds of scoring that is appropriate given the continuing absence of any reliable evidence as to medieval practices. Scholars now had a strong sense that instruments were involved, yet there was too little evidence for them to know how; experimentation was another way of gathering evidence, enabling them to gauge what seemed to work and what not.': 52.

19 For further reading on Handschin and the medieval music concerts in the 1920s see Leech-Wilkinson *The Modern Invention of Medieval Music*: 52. Handschin did not write a book, but in articles written between 1928 and 1931 (when medieval music was still a reasonably rare and experimental music form) he 'proposed that medieval music began as vocal music but gradually became more and more instrumental' (*ibid*). Leech-Wilkinson also refers to the following source: Handschin 1930: 2-3, n. 1; Handschin 1931, esp: 31-42; 'Excurs: Das 'sekundär Instrumentale' in der mittelalterlichen Aufführungspraxis'. For further reading see Grove online dictionary, 'Jacques Handschin' <http://www.grovemusic.com>.

20 Further discussion see John Butt's 'Authenticity' article Grove Online. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/46587?q=authenticity&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit (accessed: 17/12/07).

21 Reese, G, *Music in the Middle Ages: with an introduction on the music of ancient times* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1940): xi.

22 Groups such as The Hilliard Ensemble, Orlando Consort, Red Byrd, Anonymous 4, Liber UnUsualis, Tapestry and Trio Mediaeval have commissioned pieces for their groups, and in concerts they are often sung together with medieval works. There have been several collaborations between contemporary and early music groups (such as that between Trio Mediaeval and Bang on a Can. See n373: 141).

23 Reese, G, *Music in the Renaissance* (New York, 1954, 2/1959).

24 Reese, G, *Music in the Middle Ages*: 323.

25 Craig Wright's research on the Notre Dame account books subsequently confirmed Reese's ideas about the vocal forces used. See Wright's *Music and Ceremony at Notre Dame of Paris, 500-1550* (Cambridge, 1989): 180 f.

26 Both Yardley and Asensio have also drawn attention to this. See Yardley, A. B, 'Ful weel she soong the service dyvyne: The Cloistered Musicians in the Middle Ages', *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950*, Bowers, J, and Tick, J, (eds) (Illinois: University of Illinois Press 1987): 15-38, especially 25. Asensio, J. C, article 'Codex Las Huelgas' (translated by Yolanda Acker) in *Goldberg Magazine*, No. 3 (2003).

<http://www.goldbergweb.com/en/magazine/essays/2000/03/11441.php>.

27 Reese, *Music in the Middle Ages*: 323. In a footnote to that sequence Reese refers to the French musicologist Yvonne Rokseth's 'Les Femmes musiciennes du XIIe au XIVe siècle', in *Romania*, Vol. 61 (1939): 464.

28 There was an unbroken tradition of singing Renaissance vocal music in British cathedrals in a liturgical context but the music was rarely performed in the concert hall. See also n417: 144.

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- 29 Reaney, G, 'Medieval music on the Gramophone', *Music & Letters* Vol. 38, No. 2 (April 1957): 180.
- 30 *ibid.*, 181.
- 31 Katarina Livljanić refers to the low standard of some medieval music singers. See Chapter 2: 47.
- 32 Reaney, 'Medieval music on the Gramophone': 190.
- 33 See Chapter 4 of this thesis: 83-102.
- 34 *Medieval and Renaissance Music: A Performer's Guide* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), *Singing Early Music; The Pronunciation of European Languages in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), *The sound of Medieval Song: Ornamentation and Vocal Style according to the Treatises* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), *Improvisation in the Arts of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (ed.), (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Western Michigan University: 2003), all deal with performance practice. *Medieval Instrumental Dances* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1989) contains editions of instrumental medieval pieces.
- 35 See Chapter 1: 19-21.
- 36 McGee, *Medieval and Renaissance Music*: preface: xx.
- 37 Personal communication with John Potter 29/01/08.
- 38 McGee, *The Sound of Medieval Song*: viii.
- 39 *ibid.*
- 40 *ibid.*
- 41 *ibid.*, 120.
- 42 *ibid.*, 11.
- 43 *ibid.*, viii.
- 44 *ibid.*
- 45 Personal communication 26/04/04.
- 46 McGee, *Improvisation in the Arts of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*: 38, 40-42. The *laude* tradition started off as orally transmitted monophonic hymns in the Middle Ages and expanded during the renaissance and became a part of the more frequent compositional forms. As the oratory tradition became popular the compositional tradition of the *laude* gradually weakened. For further reading see Barr, C, *The Monophonic Lauda* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Insitiute Publications, Western Michigan University: 1988). See also McGee's chapter 'Improvisation' in *Medieval and Renaissance Music*: 186-201.
- 47 See also Barr, *The Monophonic Lauda*: 92-3. Barbara Thornton also talks about the importance of improvisation in medieval monophonic song in her chapter 'The Voice: Poetics as Technique' in *A Performer's Guide to Medieval Music*, Duffin, R, (ed), (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2000), and argues that 'monophonic song should be as much of an improvisation upon a given texts as an actor's': 272.
- 48 See Brown, H. M, 'Fantasia on a Theme by Boccaccio' *Early Music* Vol. 5, No. 3 (July 1977): 328-329, and Barr *The Monophonic Lauda*: 92. For further reading on Italian monophony see also Wilson 'Italian Monophony' in *A Performer's Guide to Medieval Music*: 163-180. Wilson points out that it is

possible that women sang *laude* in informal settings (since they participated in the *laudesi* confraternities) but that the *laude* sung in the confraternity services were sung by men and/or boys voices.

49 McGee, 'Cantare all' improvviso': 40. McGee also refers to Howard Mayer Brown who suggests that the texts were possibly set to melodies of secular songs that already existed, and that the performers (usually laymen in confraternities) found suitable melodies that fitted with the poetry of the *laude*. See Brown 'Fantasia on a Theme by Boccaccio': 329.

50 The two manuscripts, Cortona laudario, Cortona, Biblioteca del Comune, MS. 91 and the Magliabechiano Codex, Florence, Biblioteca nazionale centrale, MS. II I 122 (Banco Rari 18) both contain texts and melodies.

51 Recordings made by the performers presented in this research include Belinda Sykes' *Magdalena: Medieval Songs for Mary Magdalene*, Avie, AV 0026 (2003) and Stella Nuova (Joglaresa), Livljanić's (and Johansen) *Terra Adriatica*, Empreinte Digitale EC 13138 (2002) and Trio Mediaeval's *Words of the Angel* ECM Records, ECM New Series 1752 (2001).

52 Sykes refers to the use of drone as creative element in medieval monophonic music making. See Chapter 3: 72.

53 Composers of medieval organum and discantus had specific rules for creating additional 'improvised' parts. [0]

54 McGee, *Medieval and Renaissance Music*: xx.

55 McGee, 'Singing early music': xi.

56 *ibid.*

57 *ibid.*

58 Wray, A, 'Restored pronunciation' in *Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music*, Knighton, T, and Fallows, D, (eds), (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1992): 299.

59 Isidore of Seville *Etymologiarum sive originum libri xx* quoted in McGee, T, *The Sound of Medieval Song*: 170.

60 From 'De modo bene cantandi' by Conrad von Zabern. Introduced and translated by Joseph Dyer as 'Singing with proper refinement' *Early Music* Vol. 6, No. 2 (1978): 207-227.

61 Potter, J, 'Past perfect & future fictions' *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis XXVI* (Basel, 2002): 12.

62 Appendix: 86.

63 Some performers also tried to recreate a certain atmosphere such as wearing medieval/renaissance inspired outfits and using venues that suites the music in question.

64 Dreyfus, L, 'Early Music Defended against its Devotees: A Theory of Historical Performance in the Twentieth Century' *The Musical Quarterly* Vol. 69, No. 3 (Summer 1983): 320

65 Chris Page is a point in question. Readers are referred to Chapter 3: 68-70, Chapter 5: 103.

66 Dreyfus, 'Early Music Defended against its Devotees: A theory of Historical Performance in the Twentieth Century': 297.

67 *ibid*, 318.

68 *ibid*, 317. Dreyfus also points out that critics of mainstream music are commenting on the performers and their technical skills and interpretations, while the early music critics are more concerned about what pieces have been performed and what instruments were used and often finish off by saying “a good time was had by all.” (Dreyfus: 317).

69 *ibid*, 318.

70 *Early Music*, ‘The limits of authenticity: a discussion’ Vol. 12, No. 1 (February 1984): 3-20.

71 Taruskin, R, ‘The limits of authenticity: a discussion’: 3.

72 Leech-Wilkinson, ‘The limits of authenticity: a discussion’: 15.

73 Fabian, D, ‘The meaning of Authenticity and the Early Music Movement: A Historical Review’, *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (December 2001): 153-167.

74 *Ibid*, 157.

75 Aldrich: 161, *The ‘Authentic’ Performance of Baroque Music: Essays on Music in Honour of Archibald Thompson Davison* Harvard Univ. Music Dept. (ed.) (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1957): 161-171.

76 *ibid*, 162.

77 Taruskin was unaware of these articles when he fronted the movement with his thoughts regarding the subject (personal conversation, 26/11/07, San Francisco). There is a single reference to Aldrich in John Butt’s *Playing with History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) in Chapter 1 ‘Joining the historical performance debate’.

78 Taruskin, ‘The Early Music Debate: Ancients, Moderns, Postmoderns’ *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Winter 1992): 126-129. Other speakers were Laurence Dreyfus, Joshua Kosman, John Rockwell, Ellen Rosand and Nicholas McGegan. The symposium was chaired by Joseph Kerman at Berkeley Festival and Exhibition: Music in History (which was a collaboration between the Music Department at the University of California, Berkeley and local music organisations).

79 *ibid*, 127-128.

80 See the debate around ‘negativism’ in terms of the early music vocal sound. Chapter 2: 76.

81 Taruskin, ‘The Early Music Debate: Ancients, Moderns, Postmoderns’: 129.

82 Kivy, P, *Authenticities: Philosophical Reflections on Musical Performance* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995): 3. Will Crutchfield also refers to the OED definitions of ‘authenticity’ in his chapter ‘Fashion, Conviction, and Performance Style in Nicholas Kenyon’s *Authenticity and Early Music* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

83 Preface index. Headlines in chapter one and two. The same headlines appear in both parts of the book. The first part talks about ‘how to be authentic’ and the second one ‘why be authentic’.

84 Kivy, *Authenticities*: 198.

81 Butt, J, *Playing with History*: 54.

86 Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention of Medieval Music*: 257.

87 Kivy, *Authenticities*: 5.

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- 88 *Ibid*, 165.
- 89 *ibid*, 16.
- 90 Sykes also refers to personal authenticity. See Chapter 3: 71.
- 91 Butt, *Playing with History*: 25.
- 92 *ibid*.
- 93 Zoller, G, review of Reviewing: Kivy's *Authenticities* in *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 106, No. 4 (Oct 1997): 638-640.
- 94 Butt, *Playing with History*: 46.
- 95 Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention of Mediaeval Music*: 4.
- 96 *ibid*, 5.
- 97 Von Ramm, A, 'Singing early music' *Early Music* Vol. 4, No. 1 (January 1976): 12-15; 'Style in early music singing' *Early Music* Vol. 8, No. 1 (January 1980): 17-20.
- 98 Von Ramm, 'Singing early Music': 12.
- 99 Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention of Mediaeval Music*: 15.
- 100 Duffin, R. W, (ed.) *A Performer's Guide to Mediaeval Music*, (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2000).
- 101 Planchart, A. E, 'Polyphonic mass ordinary' In *A Performer's Guide to Medieval Music*: 83-104
Planchart's reference to misogyny is presumably a reference to the church's historical antipathy towards women: 96.
- 102 In her chapter on 'Motet & Cantilena' in *A Performer's Guide to Medieval Music*: 52-82, Julie G. Cumming, a musicologist in medieval music and professional recorder player, covers French, Italian and English motets and cantilena. The history and performance issues are discussed, and again it is assumed that the performers wish to use historical evidence in their performance today. The voice is a central subject in medieval music making, and one might expect to see more than one view on the topic in a guide of this size.
- 103 Thornton, B, and Rosenwald, L, 'The Voice: Poetics as Technique' in *A Performer's Guide to Medieval Music*: 264-292. The interview was conducted in 1993.
- 104 *ibid*, 277.
- 105 *ibid*, 282.
- 106 *ibid*, 277.
- 107 *ibid*, 291.
- 108 The nineteenth century tradition was initially an amateur one which generally did not include memorization and significant public performance (although there were exceptions to this as the century progressed). Lieder began to be taken seriously as art music in the early twentieth century and modern attempts to recreate earlier performances ignore significant elements of nineteenth century performance practice. Potter, J, 'Beggar at the door; rise and fall of portamento in singing' *Music and Letters*: 523-550 and Potter, 'Singers and Early music: Historically Informed Hyperreality' unpublished paper given at the conference Mode Mythos Wissenschaft: Historische Aufführungspraxis im Spannungsfeld (Vienna, 25/01/08)

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- 109 Edwards, J. M, 'Women in music to ca. 1450' *Women in Music: A History* Pendle, K, (ed.) (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991)
- 110 Personal communication: 10/11/06.
- 111 Yardley, A.B, 'Ful weel she soong the service dyvyne': The Cloistered Musicians in the Middle Ages' *Women making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950* Bowers, J, and Tick, J, (eds) (Illinois: University of Illinois Press 1987): 15-38. The manuscript was discovered in 1904.
- 112 The other significant evidence for women's music-making is the work of Hildegard von Bingen.
- 113 Roesner, E. H, 'Magnus Liber' Grove Music online. See also Planchart 'Organum' in *A Performer's Guide to Medieval Music*: 23-51.
- 114 Berger, *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005): 253
- 115 *ibid*, 7
- 116 Neither medieval drama nor secular mediaeval music is included in this statement.
- 117 Berger, 'Mnemonics and Notre Dame Polyphony', *The Journal of Musicology* Vol. 14, No. 3 (Summer 1996): 264.
- 118 Personal communication.
- 119 Medieval music in the first half of the twentieth century was guided by a number of scholars who were eager to determine original facts rather than questioning the sources.
- 120 Berger, *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory*: 5.
- 121 *ibid*, 162.
- 122 *Magnus Liber* is also mentioned in writing by the theorist Johannes de Garlandia (in Hieronymus de Moravia's compilation). (Grove Music Online, Roesner, 'Magnus Liber' and 'Perotin', 2007)
- 123 Berger, *Medieval music and the Art of Memory*: 40. For more information about Roesner's views see his chapter 'The problem of Chronology in the Transmission of Organum Duplum' *Music in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Fenlon, I, (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981): 365-399: 383 ff.
- 124 Flotzinger's entry on 'Magnus Liber' *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* Sadie, S, (ed.) (1980): 501-502.
- 125 Ludwig, Hausmann, Waite, Karp, Reckow, Tischler and Chew.
- 126 See also Roesner 'Who 'Made' the 'Magnus Liber'? *Early Music History* Vol. 20 (2001): 227-266.
- 127 *ibid*. See also Planchart 'Organum' *A Performer's Guide to Medieval Music*: 23-51.
- 128 Yardley, *Performing Piety: Musical culture in medieval English nunneries* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006).
- 129 Yardley, 'Everyday Musical Practices: Psalters, Hours, and the Office of the Dead', *Performing Piety: Musical Culture in Medieval English Nunneries* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006): 95-111.
- 130 Yardley has built her research on original sources such as formal monastic rules, medieval manuscripts and records from bishops' visitations to nunneries.

131 Yardley: 61. The Theoretical Treatise on Music from Wherwell Abbey is held in the St. Petersburg Library and the Vocal Exercises from the Wherwell Psalter are held at British Library. Copies of these in Yardley's *Performing Piety*: 62-63. More information and example of the vocal exercises in Yardley's 'Ful weel she soong the service dyvyne': 23.

132 Yardley, *Performing Piety*: 61.

133 Every nunnery had a hierarchical structures for various duties. The abbess, cantrix, sacristan and ebdomadaria each had a different status within the nunnery. Yardley footnotes cantrix with the following text: Cantrix, the feminine form of cantor, is the most common term for the woman who leads the music. Precentrix, the feminine equivalent of precentor, is often used when there are two officials. The procentrix is the 'head' cantrix and the succentrix is her assistant.'

134 Yardley, *Performing Piety*: 65.

135 *ibid*, 111.

136 *ibid*, 110-111.

137 *ibid*, 109.

138 British Library Egerton MS 2104A include the Marian antiphons 'Sancta Maria non est tibi similes' and 'Sancta maria virgo intercede'.

139 Haynes, B, *The End of Early Music: A Period Performer's History of Music for the Twenty-first Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 10.

140 Oxford University Press www.oup.com/us/earlymusic. Clemens non Papa (1510 – 1555) and Claudio Monteverdi are the only composers represented in this list of recorded excerpts who composed vocal a cappella music.

141 Haynes, *The End of Early Music*: 11.

142 *ibid*.

143 *ibid*. Haynes refers to Harnoncourt's *The Musical Dialogue: Thoughts on Monteverdi, Bach and Mozart* (Amadeus Press, 1989): 32.

144 *ibid*.

145 Primal sound: the sound we were born with, the natural sound we produce before we have learnt a specific style. For further reading see Oren Brown's *Discover your voice: How to develop healthy voice habits* (San Diego and London: Singular Publishing Group, Inc.: 1996).

146 King points out it is wonderful to be the only woman in Gothic Voices, as it enables her to sing the melody line, something which is almost impossible when being a mezzo in a female vocal group. She enjoys the way the different voices interweave and overlap with each other.

147 Appendix: 39. Readers are referred to the appendices for transcripts of the interview material: only direct quotes will be referenced below. Quotes are marked with italics in the Appendix.

148 Göran Forsling, review of Cathrine King's *Galuppi: Forgotten Arias* (Avie).

http://www.musicwebinternational.com/classrev/2006/Nov06/Galuppi_arias_AV2116.htm.

149 Appendix: 41.

150 *ibid*, 42.

151 *ibid*, 41.

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- 152 Personal communication. 23/03/04.
- 153 Kirkby refers to the Second World War. Appendix: 48.
- 154 *ibid*, 47.
- 155 <http://www.emmakirkby.com/biography.shtml>.
- 156 Adam Sweeting speaks to Emma Kirkby in 'The greatest soprano never to sing a note of Verdi'. *The Telegraph* 24/05/07. During Kirkby's final postgraduate teaching qualification year she was studying with Kathleen Fison, who drew her attention to the way she spoke – too fast and too high. Kirkby says Fison got her to 'be like Lady Bracknell in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of being Earnest*, breathe in deeply and say "a HANDBAG?" as deep as I could.' Fison also had a career of teaching clerics how to intone in church. (Personal communication 27/08/08).
- 157 Appendix: 46.
- 158 *ibid*.
- 159 *ibid*, 52.
- 160 Sykes studied Bulgarian folk singing with Nadka Karadzova and Lyubimka Bisseriva (1989-1991). She has also studied voice with various Moroccan singers from 1992 through to the present day, and says her many trips to the Middle East, Eastern Europe and India has contributed significantly to her way of performing. In addition to vocal studies she has also attended courses in Moroccan, Algerian and Egyptian traditional dance (1998-2003).
- 161 She also described this as a 'Wagnerian voice'.
- 162 Sykes also performs with a number of international folk and world music ensembles.
- 163 AGSM course at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (1987 – 1991). PCS course in music/theatre at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (1991). As an oboe player Sykes has performed with ensembles such as Gabrieli Consort and players, King's Consort and the BBC Symphony Orchestra.
- 164 *Magdalena: Medieval Songs for Mary Magdalena*, Avie (2003). The singers Sykes worked with on this record are English, Irish and Bulgarian.
- 165 Personal communication. 23/03/04.
- 166 Hugill, R, CD review of Joglearesa's *Magdalena Music & Vision Homepage* (15/01/04) <http://www.mvdaily.com/articles/2004/01/joglearesa1.htm>.
- 167 Personal communication.
- 168 Picard, A, CD review of Joglearesa's *Magdalena*, *The Independent* (03/08/03).
- 169 Neither Sykes nor Noorman brought up the 'belting' technique in the conversations. They referred to Bulgarian and Balkan vocal sounds.
- 170 Appendix: 79. The fellow singers referred to were Edgar Fleet and Nigel Rogers.
- 171 Morrow, M, 'Musica Reservata' *Early Music* Vol. 4, No. 4 (October 1976): 517.
- 172 Sanders, E, Review in *Fanfare* (November/December 1980): 207.
- 173 Morrow, 'Musica Reservata': 517.
- 174 Appendix: 82.
- 175 *ibid*.

176 Jantina Noorman was born in Holland in 1930, and in 1947 she moved with her family to the USA where she started her studies in music education at The University of Illinois. She joined the early music Collegium directed by George Hunter (a former student of Paul Hindemith at Yale), who greatly inspired her to continue her singing career. With Hunter she made a recording (songs by Machaut) and did extensive touring in the US. She knew Alfred Deller, and through him she got in touch with Margaret Richie. When Noorman attended Richie's summer school in Oxford in 1960 she met John Beckett and Michael Morrow who asked her to join Musica Reservata, which she did in 1961. For further reading see Eelco Schilder's article 'Jantina Noorman, pioneer of Dutch Folk Songs', in the Internet Magazine *FolkWord*, (<http://www.folkworld.de/31/e/dutch.html>).

177 Appendix: 82.

178 *ibid.*

179 *ibid.*, 84.

180 *ibid.*, 80.

181 In partnership with Bagby she started a Master's degree programme in 'The Performance Practice of Medieval Music' at The University of Paris-Sorbonne in 2005.

182 One of Livljanić's first experiences with medieval music was a performance of *The Play of Daniel* performed by the Pro Cantione Antiqua at the Zadar Festival in Croatia. In the women's choir they mainly performed contemporary music, some which was written specifically for the group, and Livljanić says that the experiences she had as a teenager in the choir gave her much insight and many ideas for how to work with female voices, which is her main activity as a performer today.

183 PhD in Medieval Musicology, 1993-1998 with Marie Noël Colette and Jean Vezin at the l'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris.

184 Appendix: 56.

185 *ibid.*, 59.

186 She draws a parallel to the phenomenon which happens when people are speaking their second language: 'It is like French, which is a language I speak very well around some people and very badly around some other people. And there is no way to know why...' (Appendix: 59).

187 Hanna Styrie, review of Livljanić's performance of *Judith* in the *Kölnische Rundschau* at the Romanischer Sommer festival, 25/06/08.

188 Centre de Musique Médiévale de Paris was founded by Dominique Vellard and Marie Noël Colette and has around 200 students. Both amateurs and professional musicians are connected to the centre, which provides a large variety of courses in medieval music. It is an independent centre which is not connected to a conservatory or University. The Conservatoire National Supérieur in Lyon is the only conservatory in France which has a course focusing on medieval music.

189 The guitarist/songwriter/folkmusician John Renbourn mixes English and Celtic folk music with jazz, medieval and classical music. In one of his most influential recordings *Sir John Alot of Merry Englandes Musyk Thynges and ye Grene Knyghte* (1968) he bases his tunes on medieval and renaissance songs. In the CD liner note of the reissue (2002) Colin Harper writes: 'Sir John Alot appeared to a very

warm reception and widespread interest, and at a time when few 'authentic' Early Music recordings were on the market.'

190 Appendix: 70. Munrow who was a friend of Renbourn's, guested, uncredited, on Renbourn's Sir John Alot record.

191 From 1983-1986 Lesne was an external student at the Schola Cantorum in Basle (attended courses three days a month), studying with Dominique Vellard and Karen Smith.

192 She refers to the voice becoming more 'large' with more vibrato as you get older, and she finds Mozart Lied the perfect repertoire for keeping the voice in a good shape.

193 Appendix: 72.

194 Lesne argues that the variety of sound create surprise elements for the audience. See Robert Philip's views on elements of surprise in performances in Chapter 3: 67-68.

195 Appendix: 30.

196 Vocal students at Academies are often put in specific vocal categories very early on in their education, which prevents them from trying out different kinds of repertoires.

197 In some of the Lied repertoire, for example, there are editions for low, middle or high voices which enable the performer to choose what works best. In opera the singers specialise in a certain type of repertoire and role. (In 'classical music' a certain pride attaches to singing the music in its original key.)

198 Appendix: 35.

199 Personal communication: 21/08/03. This conversation was not recorded.

200 For further reading on Anonymous 4 and their way of dealing with intonation and blending issues, see Hellauer, S, in 'You can't sing a footnote' *Inside Early Music: Conversations with Performers*, Sherman, B, (ed.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1997): 51.

201 Appendix: 27.

202 Paul Maynard (1924-1998) was the keyboard player in New York Pro Musica. As a student he studied organ at Yale where he worked with Paul Hindemith's Collegium. Hellauer has returned to Queens College (as a member of the faculty) where she directs Queen's College Collegium, once directed by Maynard.

203 Hellauer is currently also a volunteer with the Nyack Community Ambulance Corps in New York where she works as an Emergency Medical Technician and ambulance driver.

204 During Rose's years (1973-1977) at Manhattan School of Music the faculty did not show much interest in early music. There was a group which performed sixteenth century music but, as Rose points out, they 'didn't get into the repertoire in any serious way' (Appendix: 96). Before studying voice Rose took an acting course in New York at Herbert Berghof Studios in Greenwich Village, something which she continued doing after her years at Manhattan school of Music. Rose has recently joined the vocal faculty of Music & Art Academy in Morganville, NJ where she coaches singing and small ensembles. She is also co-producer of Singing Harp, an ensemble that dramatizes fairy tales. She and her co-producer, Alyssa Reit, are undertaking the First Annual Westchester Storytelling Festival. Rose

and Reit have also created 'The Three Ravens', a program of traditional songs and ballads from the British Isles, which will be premiered in NYC in June 2009.

205 Rose started to take recorder lessons with LaNoue Davenport who played in the American ensemble Music For A While. Davenport encouraged Rose to come and study with him at Sarah Lawrence College, where the Music For A While members were the core faculty. Alexander Blanhly, the director of Pomerium Musices, was a professor in notation and chant at Sarah Lawrence College.

206 Appendix: 91. Rose started to play the recorder when she was eleven years old.

207 *ibid*, 93.

208 *ibid*, 94.

209 *ibid*.

210 *ibid*.

211 Hellauer, Rose and Cunninham had already been singing together in Pomerium Musices for many years when Genensky joined the choir.

212 Appendix: 17. The first original line up was Susan Hellauer, Johanna Maria Rose, Marsha Genensky and Susan Gjenvick. Ruth Cunningham joined when Gjenvick stopped after a few months. Cunningham was in the group when they did their first public performance, and they all considered her as a founding member.

213 *ibid*, 17.

214 *ibid*, 23.

215 *ibid*, 25 and 23.

216 *ibid*, 24.

217 *American Angels: Songs of Hope, Redemption & Glory*, Harmonia Mundi, HMU 907326. Genensky is the main researcher for the American programmes.

218 1973-1976.

219 Ruth Cunninham homepage <http://www.ruthcunningham.com/index.htm>

220 Appendix: 13.

221 Personal communication. 15/01/07.

222 *ibid*.

223 Buff graduated as a Bachelor of Music in 1993. She is currently a research student at Princeton University (studying for a PhD in historical musicology).

224 Elaine Schmidt, review of a Liber unUsualis concert 'Early Music Now', *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* (12/12/04).

225 Appendix: 5. Buff has recently been studying with the opera coach Nina Hinson (Santa Fe Opera).

226 Ross Duffin points out the sound of the Hilliard Ensemble for sacred polyphonic music, and Andrea Von Ramm and Thomas Binkely for secular repertoire, and says he connects the sound with recordings which he enjoys listening to.

227 Appendix: 107.

228 Appendix: 143.

229 Some performers, in particular Lesne, Livljanić, Sykes and Johansen appreciate individuality, and personal timbres are used to colour the sound picture and create an element of surprise. The Anonymous 4 members used to strive for a homogeneous sound where solos and individuality inside the group were avoided. However for their American repertoire they have worked in a different way and included solo songs as well as different vocal timbres.

230 Livljanić specifically pointed out that different voices have different influences on her way of singing.

231 Sykes (oboe, baroque, oboe and recorder), Lesne (piano), Hellauer (trumpet), Rose (recorder), Cunningham (baroque flute), Buff (double bass), (Trio Mediaeval: Fuglseth (piano and flute), Friman (violin and trombone).

232 Also Genensky (Anonymous 4) started her voice career with traditional folk music and studied Folklore at the University of Pennsylvania. She joined the Collegium Musicum choir and started to take classical voice lessons which led her to New York and subsequently to the Pomerium Musices where she met the women who would later initiate and form Anonymous 4.

233 Like Sykes, Noorman developed her own vocal persona, which does not correspond with our expectations of what sacred polyphony should sound like.

234 Thornton, B, 'The Singer's View' *Early Music* Vol. 12, No. 4 (November 1984): 524.

235 <http://www.ram.ac.uk/study/selectadepartment/Historical+Performance/>.

236 Perhaps this is a convenient way of saying that they are covering both HIP and non-HIP as long as the students are aware of different ways of interpreting historical data. The course description for the vocal department says that it includes, amongst other things, 'historically-aware performance', which is yet another way of saying that they choose not to use HIP. Bruce Haynes refers to HIP as Historically Inspired Performance movement in his book *The End of Early Music*. See Chapter 1: 37-39.

237 <http://www.ram.ac.uk/study/selectadepartment/Historical+Performance/>.

238 They announce that 'classes in specialised areas of performance practice (including national styles, tuning systems, ornamentation, compositional techniques, continuo disciplines and dance) are offered by teachers who are active as soloists and in leading period instrument ensembles.' Ensemble singing is not advertised.

239 http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/music/postgraduate/early_music.html.

240 *ibid*. Medieval music is not mentioned on the webpage and the audition requirements do not include music before 1600. "Be prepared to sing three or four items from a varied list of six, which should include: a sixteenth-century song; an opera aria from the first half of the eighteenth century; an extended recitative or monody. At least one item to be in English and one in Italian."

241 Das Institut für Alte Musik, Trossingen was founded in 1992 and in 2006 they started a Masters programme for students wishing to study only medieval and renaissance music. The Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, founded in 1933, was, for almost 60 years, considered the only serious place to study early music. (Brigitte Lesne is the only interviewee who studied at the Schola).

242 In his article 'What is the sound of medieval song' *Early Music America* (Summer 2008): 44-49, Benjamin Bagby reflects on the current status of medieval music education, which he appreciates as

'critical', and argues there is nowhere for motivated young performers/scholars to turn for a professional high level training.

243 Institutions who do not draw attention to the importance of ensemble musicking deprive their students of an important aspect of music making. When I have been engaged to do solo parts in oratorios and cantatas I have regularly been surprised by the lack of 'team work' feeling in the duets or ensemble parts. The soloists seem to be more concerned presenting their own voice than achieving a balanced and dynamic ensemble sound. When I have pointed this out, the result (from my perspective) has improved, but then in the concert situation, the 'showing off' habit seems to take over again.

244 This was my own experience and it will be familiar to anyone who has studied at a music conservatory.

245 This particularly struck me when I was coaching vocal ensembles as well as individual singing classes at the Music Academy in Riga for a week in June 2004. The students were encouraged by their teachers not to be involved in ensemble or choir singing, since that would disturb their focus and technique which subsequently would have a negative effect on their development as a solo singer. The University of York, however, where I taught solo singing and ensemble singing for five years, has a very different approach from any of the other institutions I have encountered. Students are encouraged to start vocal ensembles, and there is also the possibility to do an MA in ensemble singing, which was the course I was mainly involved with.

246 Edmund A. Bowles' iconography book, *La Pratique Musicale au Moyen Age* (Paris 1983) has pictures of groups of instruments divided into soft and loud, with/without singers, and there is no picture of only one singer and many loud instruments.

247 King also points out the importance of being physically fit as a significant factor of keeping the voice healthy and flexible for all sorts of repertoire.

248 Lesne pointed out that some of her singers, who also sing classical mainstream music, have to alter their voices when singing with Discantus in order to make the tuning and ensemble sound work.

249 Sykes on the other hand is the only singer to admit that she consciously changed her voice in a recording phase in order to try and meet the market.

250 Referring to the personal authentic voice in the present.

251 Potter, J, 'The development of the modern voice' *Vocal Authority: Singing style and ideology* (Cambridge, 1998): 58.

252 Appendix: 52.

253 Personal communication.

254 Anne Stone points out that classical singers she has spoken to, who have only sung occasional concerts of renaissance and/or medieval music, very often find that 'the hardest thing about it was singing without vibrato.' Appendix: 138.

255 Appendix: 5.

256 McGee frequently refers to vibrato as an ornament, in his *The Sound of Medieval Song*, esp: 51, 61-79, 119-120. In his conclusion McGee writes that 'it is also probable that many, if not most, medieval voices were clear and free from constant vibrato. The detailed instructions for the

employment of trills, vibrato, glissando, reverberation, and pulsation would seem to support this conclusion' (: 119). It is obvious that McGee has a wish to understand and re-create a possible medieval technique, and he has created a possible medieval sound (in written form) by analysing and interpreting medieval sources and combining these data with a good amount of guesswork. But, even though there are references in the medieval sources which may mention something like the use of vibrato as we understand the term today, it is impossible for us to make these references alive in a modern performance since the basis on which the sources depend is for us unknown territory.

For further discussion regarding McGee's *The Sound of Medieval Song* and interpretation of original sources, see Chapter 1: 11-14, 16-18. See also Montgomery, D, 'The Vibrato Thing' on *Sound post online*, on the interpretation of sources in relation to vibrato:

<http://www.soundpostonline.com/archive/fall2003/page4.htm>.

257 The vocal ensembles represented in this research all have different kinds of line-up. Gothic Voices with three male voices and a mezzo on the top line; Joglearesa with approximately four singers with instruments; Anonymous 4 with three sopranos and one alto; Liber unUsualis with one tenor, one mezzo and one soprano; Trio Mediaeval with three sopranos; Discantus which ranges from six to twelve female voices; Dialogos with female voices.

258 Appendix: 25.

259 Appendix: 90. Noorman says that there was only one thing she would not do: 'I wouldn't sing everything. I remember once we were doing a recording in London and as a lot of these things are in foreign languages, especially Spanish or Italian and I don't know enough about the language to know what's what.... And Michael had to explain what this song was about. As soon as I heard what it was, I discovered that it was a very bawdy and sexy song. "Michael, I can't sing that, I'm sorry." And I didn't, I couldn't. So, somebody else had to sing it.': Appendix: 85-86.

260 Personal communication.

261 Brown, H. M, 'Pedantry or Liberation? A Sketch of the Historical Performance Movement' in *Authenticity and Early Music*, Kenyon, N, (ed): 48. In the liner note of Musica Reservata's record *A concert of Early Music* Vanguard Classics SVC-96 HD (1972, 1998), recorded in London in 1972, we learn that 'Musica Reservata was formed to play medieval music in an authentic style.'

262 Brown, H. M, Review of *French court music of the thirteenth century*, Musica Reservata. Oiseau-lyre SOL-R332 in *The Musical Times*, Vol. 114, No. 1563 (May 1973): 498.

263 Fortune, N, Review of *A Florentine Festival*, Musica Reservata, Argo ZRG 602, in *Musical Times*, Vol. 112, No. 1538 (April 1971): 353.

264 Philip, R, *Performing Music in the Age of Recording* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004).

265 *ibid.* 247.

266 Morrow, M, 'Musical performance and authenticity' *Early Music* Vol. 6, No. 2 (April 1978): 237.

267 *ibid.*

268 Morrow, M, 'Musica Reservata': 515.

269 *ibid*, 515 and 517. This is in contrast to all of the interviewed singers and musicologists views on texts. See 'Medieval texts and modern translation' Chapter of this thesis. Morrow did add that after having worked with the same performers for some time he enjoyed discussing textual matters with them.

270 Kirkby has subsequently specialised in the later epochs of early music, especially baroque.

271 Gothic Voices, *A feather on the breath of God* Hyperion CDA66039, 1986 (recorded in 1981).

272 Page, C, Liner notes *A feather on the breath of God*.

273 Appendix: 46.

274 Page, C, Liner notes *A feather on the breath of God*.

275 *Monthly Guide to Recorded Music* (August 1982): 18.

276 Appendix: 50.

277 *ibid*, 47.

278 *ibid*, 50.

279 Appendix: 43. Christopher Page's last concert as the director of Gothic Voices was at the Edinburgh International Festival in 2000. For their recent recording *The Unknown Lover* (Machaut), Avie Records (2006), Gothic voices consulted the British musicologist Yolanda Plumley, who edited most of the repertoire for the programme.

280 Appendix: 44.

281 Fallows, D, Review of Gothic Voice's *The Earliest Songbook in England*, Hyperion, CDA67177 (2000) in *Gramophone*. 'Nothing is overstated but at the same time nothing is allowed to pass without a burning musical conviction in the performances. Everything – words, intervals, decorations – has a crystalline audibility. The two-voice pieces are done with the purity of intonation that we have come to expect from Gothic Voices and which seems increasingly essential for this kind of music; and the monophonic songs are all given with particular verve – especially in the four sung by Catherine King, who seems to become a more indispensable artist with each recording she makes.'

282 Personal communication.

283 London University's School of Oriental and African Studies. Since 1996 she has also been studying the Arabic language at Goldsmith's and Southwork College, London.

284 Personal communication.

285 Stewart, A, CD review of Joglearesa's *Magdalena* in *Classic FM Magazine* (November 2003).

286 Roche, E, CD review of Joglearesa's *Magdalena* in *The Telegraph*, (30/08/03).

287 Personal communication.

288 Finch, H, review of Joglearesa's *Laude spirituali* concert at St John's Smith Square, London. *The Times* (15/12/05).

289 See Chapter 1: 6-7 and 34, for further information on Ludwig and Handschin.

290 Appendix: 28. Hellauer has done an estimated 90% of the chant editions and around 50-60% of the transcriptions of the polyphony (mainly when modern editions of the polyphony had not already been made by other musicologist they trusted).

291 Anonymous 4 used Ernest Sanders' editions from *Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century* for their recording of *An English Ladymass: thirteenth and 14th-century chant and polyphony in honor of the Virgin Mary*, Harmonia Mundi HM 907080 (1992, 2003), Alejandro Planchart edited both the chant and polyphonic music for *1000: A Mass for the End of Time: Medieval Chant and Polyphony for the Ascension*, Harmonia Mundi, HMU907224 (2000), Laszlo Dobszay was consulted concerning a Hungarian programme and provided the group with manuscript microfilms that were only available in Hungary at the time.

292 Hellauer, S, in 'You can't sing a footnote': 50.

293 *ibid.*

294 *ibid.*, 51. Hellauer calls attention to the Las Huelgas Codex polyphony which was sung by the nuns (who were aristocratic ladies) and points out that they were 'used to having their own way, in spite of a prohibition against nuns singing polyphony.' (personal communication 23/08/08)

295 *ibid.*, 52.

296 *An English Ladymass* reached number three in the Billboard classical chart and their CDs all reached the top five list. The *American Angel*, Harmonia Mundi, HMU807325 (2004), reached number one.

297 Appendix: 20.

298 Hellauer points out that Harmonia Mundi was afraid the record *An English Ladymass* 'would take lots of flak from the French critics'. She says Harmonia Mundi has always given them free hand and full support in terms of repertoire choices and musical decisions. The ensemble leaves all of the marketing business to the record company.

299 Personal communication: 23/08/08.

300 Oestreich, J, 'Meet the Latest Thing in Early Music' *The New York Times* (08/02/04). Anonymous 4 have subsequently sold over 1.5 million CDs all over the world.

301 Barker, J, CD review of *Quem Quæritis?: Liturgical Dramas in the Middle Ages*, Discantus/Lesne Opus 111 30269 (2001), in *American Record Guide* (November 01); Barker, J, *Record Guide*, Vol. 68, No. 4 (2005).

302 Fallows, D, review of Anonymous 4's *An English Ladymass*, 'Quarterly Retrospect' *Gramophone* (December 1993): 33.

303 Appendix: 21.

304 There are also performers who chose a mixture of voices and instruments as an argument to bring forward the texture of the polyphony.

305 Berry, M, CD review of Anonymous 4's *An English Ladymass*, *Gramophone* (July 1993).

306 Anderson, R, CD review of Trio Mediaeval's *Words of the Angel*, ECM, *Notes Second Series*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (September 2002): 145.

307 Hellauer: 'You can't sing a footnote': 'One of our first ideas about how we were going to structure our programs came from an uneasy feeling we had all occasionally had when hearing or performing in concerts of this [medieval] music presented recital-style [nineteenth-century song recital]': 45.

308 Appendix: 17.

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- 309 *ibid*, 20.
- 310 *ibid*.
- 311 Appendix: 70. In addition to a few solo records, Lesne has released 12 recordings with Discantus and 13 with her group Alla Francesca.
- 312 Appendix: 71.
- 313 *ibid*, 72.
- 314 *ibid*.
- 315 <http://www.goldbergweb.com/en/magazine/interviews/2004/02/20198.php>, and Berry, M, CD review of Discantus' *Jerusalem* (Opus 111 OPS30-291), in *Gramophone* (July 2000).
- 316 Appendix: 63.
- 317 *ibid*, 57.
- 318 *ibid*, 58.
- 319 *ibid*.
- 320 *ibid*, 65.
- 321 Livljanić, K, liner note to *Terra Adriatica*, Empreinte Digitale EC 13138 (2002), recorded in 1998.
- 322 Appendix: 64.
- 323 *ibid*, 62.
- 324 Appendix: 36. Nils Holger Petersen lectures at the Danish Centre for the Study of the Cultural Heritage of Medieval Rituals. His PhD dissertation focuses on the liturgical origin and the genre of the medieval Latin music drama.
- 325 Appendix: 37.
- 326 *ibid*. 38.
- 327 Buff studied early notation with Laurie Monahan at the Longy School of Music, Boston.
- 328 Appendix: 8.
- 329 Review by Jonstone, A, in *The Irish Times* (31/05/05).
- 330 *Early Music*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (August 1990): 506. The archive has over 7000 recordings and is stored in the Indiana University Cook Music Library.
- 331 The Hilliard Ensemble, King Singers, Red Byrd and Anonymous 4 are only a few of the vocal groups who do not claim to do HIP.
- 332 <http://www.indiana.edu/~harmonia/about.htm> (25/09/07).
- <http://minnesota.publicradio.org/radio/programs/harmonia/> (25/09/07).
- 333 <http://www.indiana.edu/~harmonia/about.htm> (25/09/07).
- 334 *ibid*.
- 335 30/08/07 broadcast. (Accessed on the 21/09/07).
- 336 Appendix: 57. Bagby further points out that the critical voices in early music were very conservative particularly with regard to medieval music. Belinda Sykes has a very specific view of musicologists who want performers to be as close as possible to an 'authentic' performance. She says that it means in fact that 'they are not going to allow us to be modern professional musicians'. (personal communication).

337 Barker, CD review of *Quem Quæritis? Liturgical Dramas in the Middle Ages*, Discantus/Lesne Opus 111 30269 (2001), in *American Record Guide* (November 01). The performance of this programme is a fully staged and costumed production.

338 Quotation from biography paragraph of ensemble Discantus in the booklet of the CD *Quem Quæritis?*

339 Barker, review of *Quem Quæritis?*

340 *ibid.* Barker further writes: 'Founded in 1989, three years after its prototype, Lesne's Discantus group is France's answer to Anonymous 4 (an unwanted answer to an unnecessary question?).'

341 Personal communication Susan Hellauer 23/08/08. In a review of *Liber unUsualis* in *American Record Guide* Vol. 68, No. 4 (2005) Barker takes the opportunity to demonstrate his negative attitude towards Anonymous 4: 'The singing is responsible, tasteful, and unfailingly artistic, with lovely balancing and blending of voices. Those who may regret the dismantling of Anonymous 4 would do well now to embrace *Liber unUsualis* - and be much the better off for doing so'.

342 Benjamin Bagby at WNYC in 'Ear to Ear',
www.wnyc.org/shows/eveningmusic/episodes/2008/01/19 (52.50).

343 Thornton, B, 'The Singer's View' *Early Music* Vol. 12, No. 4 (November 1984): 524.

344 Gothic Voices (Page, Plumley), *Musica Reservata* (Morrow), Jogaresa/Sykes (Sykes), Dialogos (Livljanić), Disantus (Lesne and Colette), Anonymous 4 (Hellauer, Sanders, Planchart, Dobszay), Modus Ensemble/Johanson (Petersen), *Liber unUsualis* (Buff, Monahan) Trio Mediaeval (Nicky Losseff).

345 This does not necessarily mean they do not use secondary sources in their work, but that they did not think of mentioning these writings during the interview or in later correspondence.

346 Regardless of the changes in musicological terminology none of the performers seem to have changed their attitude towards performing issues.

347 Phillips, P, 'Beyond Authenticity' in *Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music* Knighton, T, and Fallows, D, (eds) (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1992): 46-47. Peter Phillips founded the The Tallis Scholars in 1973.

348 *ibid.*, 47.

349 Page, C, Liner note *A feather on the breath of God* Gothic Voices, Hyperion CDA66039 (1986): 5.

350 Personal communication.

351 Appendix: 128. Berger also points out that a vocal performance of medieval music without providing translations might be appreciated in the same way as an instrumental performance would, but she adds that her scholarly soul would prefer texts and translations in a concert and/or recording situation.

352 *ibid.*

353 Noorman adds that when she occasionally gave *Lieder* concerts she would verbally inform the audience of the textual content.

354 Appendix: 22.

355 Anonymous 4 do not provide texts for their American programme, since it is all sung in English, and mainly to English-speaking audiences. Genensky says the American programme has much more of a 'show' character to it in comparison with the medieval programmes, and argues that the performer – audience relationship is different, since the American songs are generally more outgoing than the medieval repertoire.

356 Appendix: 23.

357 This problem seems to be specific to French promoters. In most countries I have performed in, the promoter provides texts, translations and programme notes.

358 By 'additional material' I mean everything that is not included in the list of pieces being performed, such as programme notes, texts, translations, biographies, photos, advertising, festival information (if there is one). Some promoters, especially in the USA, require the programme information up to a few years in advance, while there are others who only make an A4 print-out just before the concert. There is also a great difference between classical and 'other' promoters (jazz, independent), and this, without doubt, influences the audience's expectations of 'how things should be done'. If there are no programmes at all, the performer can choose exactly what repertoire to perform that day, and repertoire which suits the venue instead of being 'bound' to a specific programme. On several occasions Trio Mediaeval has changed parts of the programme just before the start of the concert, to make sure the music we perform fits with the acoustical space in which we are to perform.

359 Poetic translations, as well as synopses, probably work best when they are being presented verbally or written in a programme. It might be problematic to use them for supertitles, both from the audience and a technician's point of view.

360 Appendix: 113.

361 Anonymous 4's *Love's Illusion* Harmonia Mundi, HMU 907109, (1994) contains thirteenth century motets from the Montpellier Codex.

362 Appendix: 123.

363 Appendix: 45.

364 Aubrey points out that unlike the medieval singer, the singers of today are assumed to understand and pronounce far more languages. In the Middle Ages the singers were probably familiar with one or two languages. Latin and their vernacular.

365 Gro Siri Johansen is aware of a potential conflict that can occur in some kinds of secular repertoire where the text and the instinctively musical feel of a tune do not seem to match. For example when a sad text is connected to a joyful dance tune, something that happens frequently in Machaut's love songs. Johansen ponders whether Machaut actually meant every word he wrote. For example, if the love texts were connected to his own experiences and feelings, or if it was just a sport: a medium in which to develop his own intellectual behaviour.

366 Supertitles/surtitles differ from the more familiar subtitles (usually placed at the bottom of a screen) used for texts and translations in the cinema and for TV programmes and DVDs (where the consumer can also choose the language displayed).

367 The Metropolitan Opera House in New York, was the first venue to introduce an electronic libretto system, hence its name 'Met titles'. The texts are provided on individual screens and placed in front of the audience members and each individual person can operate the system independently.

368 blogspot, http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/art/2008/07/opera_surtitles_mustnt_steal_t.html, Higgins reports from The Opera House, Buxton, in Derbyshire where she attended Daniel Slater's production of Handel's Samson (23/08/08).

369 *ibid.*

370 *ibid.* A few hours after the blog went live, there were already many comments, some in favour of supertitles and some against, and while one person writes: 'read the story in the programme then sit back and enjoy the music and what's happening on stage', another seems to be more concerned about the text rather than the performance: 'I think subsidies should be withheld from companies that decline to display surtitles!' Comment No. 1234464 (24/07/08 at 10:50) by Steviebee and Comment No. 1236623 (25/07/08 at 7:44) by Lambbone.

371 Personal communication: 25/10/05. The promoter pointed out she generally enjoys being able to follow the composer's textual engagement. By looking at a text and hearing the music simultaneously it might be possible to get a sense of the connection between words and musical structure/harmony that the composer is aiming for. This is, of course, close to impossible if the translations are in poetic or synopsis formats as many of the medieval translations are. (It might work if the language being supertitled is exactly the same as that being sung and is projected at exactly the right time.) It would, of course, be possible to display complete scores on a screen behind the musicians, so that everyone could follow how the performers on stage were engaging with the printed music, but the multimedia experience might be more disturbing than helpful to listeners, as well as restricting the freedom of the performers.

372 The programme had been sent far in advance along with original texts, translations, synopses (for the Norwegian songs) and programme note. In the USA it is not unusual for promoters to require the programme details at least a season before the concert is scheduled. This means the performers have to plan a long way ahead, and there is not much room for spontaneous programme changes, even if the performer would rather now play or sing something totally different.

373 When preparing for supertitles the score is cut in sections and the text typed out, ready to be displayed. Most people who have attended supertitled concerts/performances have probably have experienced 'SUPERTITLE ERROR" instead of projecting the text, or when words belonging to the score such as 'Da capo' or 'fine' suddenly appear in the middle of a sentence.

374 There are times when one of the singers in a group might have a cold or suddenly feel their voice will not work for a particular sequence. In those circumstances it is vital that they can decide on the spur of the moment to omit a piece or replace it with something else.

375 There are also medieval pieces which are very quick with a lot of text and it would be impossible to read the translation fast enough.

376 In most of Trio Mediaeval's concerts there are sections where we are moving out in the hall or the church, trying to create different atmospheres, something which has been appreciated by the audience.

The promoter understood the group's point of view, and did not push the question further. The issue was not brought up in connection with the trio's second concert with the same promoter. Trio Mediaeval has worked with supertitles in the contemporary multi-media production *Shelter*, where the projected texts were a part of the performance which included text, film, photo, staging and music. All elements were a part of a common expression. *Shelter: a Contemporary Oratorio with projections*, with music by the American composer-trio Bang on a Can (Julia Wolfe, David Lang and Michael Gordon) was written for the Trio Mediaeval and the German instrumental ensemble musikFabrik in 2005. The project had its European premier in Köln and was later performed for a week, in a staged version, during the Next Wave Festival, 2005, in the Harvey Theatre, Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York. The project has since then been presented (in a semi-staged version) in a number of European countries.

377 Appendix: 62. Bagby himself has constructed the music for his performance of *Beowulf*.

378 The bardic tradition which is a combination of song, poetry and story-telling, played an important role in the middle ages. The six string wooden harp which Bagby uses is a reconstruction based on the remains of an instrument found in a German nobleman's grave site (outside Stuttgart) from the seventh century. The original wooden instrument had been surrounded by clay for more than 1000 years and so was well-preserved when it was discovered.

379 Personal communication.

380 Appendix: 61. He further jokingly suggests that 'maybe some day we will all have a device implanted in our brains and the signal will go to everybody's device and you can choose to turn it on.'

381 Personal communication.

382 Logan, B, review in *The Guardian* (20/08/07) of Benjamin Bagby's performance of *Beowulf* at the Edinburgh festival 2007. 100 minutes of music is relatively short for Benjamin Bagby, whose performances, sung by memory, can sometimes go on for hours.

383 Duffin argues that the relationship between a singer and the audience, where the audience is listening and watching instead of being buried in their programmes, also contributes to the performer's enjoyment of communicating the music. Appendix: 128-129.

384 Personal communication: Bagby further points out that 'the main change I make is when I perform for an audience of medievalists who know the text very well, and this changes my timing since they are reacting all the time, even in an anticipatory manner. This is for me, of course, absolutely delightful!'

385 Appendix: 141.

386 Appendix: 142.

387 The early music educational programmes at conservatories and universities provide substantial courses in performance and theory as well as historical aspects of the genre.

388 Boynton further points out that the educational element in a concert situation has to be professional and worked out. In her work with the young female trio Eus she has been involved in their concerts, providing the audience with a verbal introduction to involve them in the historical context.

389 Appendix: 114.

390 Appendix: 7.

391 *ibid.*

392 Boynton also points out that by giving the audience the texts, they will get 'a little bit more insight in to what knowledge the singers have'. Appendix: 113.

393 Appendix: 113-114.

394 Appendix: 28. Anonymous 4 request no applause in their medieval concerts, since it disturbs the natural flow, but Hellauer says that for their American music concerts they do not ask the audience to hold their applause: 'When people hear one of their old-time favourite songs, they really want to acknowledge it. It is just a different atmosphere. *American Angels* definitely has a story, but it is looser and more of a way of grouping the various pieces.' (personal communication)

395 Hellauer, 'You can't sing a footnote': 46.

396 This phenomenon mostly happens in the USA.

397 Appendix: 74.

398 Appendix: 14.

399 *ibid.*

400 Trio Mediaeval once gave a concert in Oslo which Johansen/Modus Centre organised. Before the concert the audience was given small pieces of papers in different colours with an accompanying note saying what kind of 'emotional state' each of the colours represented (such as happiness, sadness, love). The people were then asked to leave one of the colours by the door after the concert to indicate what 'mood' they were left with after the concert. I did not see the results, and I am not sure what we would learn from it, or what it created in terms of involvement, but it was an attempt to make the audience contribute to the event.

401 Appendix: 102.

402 *ibid.*

403 Appendix: 100.

404 As mentioned earlier in n355: 140, there is a big contrast between 'classical' music promoters and 'other' promoters in this matter.

405 *Words of the Angel*, ECM Records, ECM 1753 (2001), *Soir, dit-elle*, ECM Records, ECM 1869 (2004), *Stella Maris*, ECM Records, ECM 1929 (2005). The group members often had to defend the lack of translations in interviews (both on the radio and in articles). Some people also wondered if the lack of translations was due to lack of space in the booklet; this was not the case. For Trio Mediaeval's fourth CD *Folk Songs*, ECM records, ECM 2003 (2007), containing Norwegian folk songs and medieval ballads, the group included the original texts as well as English translations. The British/Norwegian composer and translator, Andrew Smith tried to recapture the atmosphere of the Norwegian texts, not easy to do since most of the texts were in dialect, and contained expressions difficult to translate from bokmål, which is the main language in Norway. The difficulty of making literary translation of folk songs and at the same time recapturing the original atmosphere can be compared with the problems of translating medieval Latin texts in to modern languages, since much of the actual meaning in both genres is almost impossible to translate into words. For a further discussion regarding translations from Latin to modern languages readers are referred to Chapter 1: 17.

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- 406 Transcription of an Audio review online *The New York Times*
<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/arts/index>. 18/06/03.
- 407 Pryer, A, CD review of Trio Mediaeval's *Words of the Angel*, *BBC Music Magazine* (January 2002).
- 408 John Potter, the producer of the recording, had been in similar discussions earlier (with regard to his recordings with the Hilliard Ensemble) which meant he had been wrestling with the translation issues for many years.
- 409 http://www.ecmrecords.com/Background/New_Series/1700/Bgr_1753.php.
- 410 Oestreich, J. R, 'Meet the Latest Thing in Early Music' *The New York Times* (08/02/04).
- 411 There is of course a potential risk that listeners still find it difficult to understand the text, since the translations might not be in a language they understand.
- 412 Appendix: 102.
- 413 The noise of 600 people turning programme pages can also be a distracting element.
- 414 The term 'new secular a cappella heresy' (later referred to as the 'a cappella heresy', or the 'English a cappella heresy') was first used by Howard Mayer Brown in a review of Gothic Voices' *The Castle of Fair Welcome* in *Early Music* Vol. 15, No. 2 (May 1987): 278. 'Heresy' because the early music movement had until then been characterised by the colourful use of instruments and driven in part by the careers of charismatic players. For further reading see Christopher Pages's 'The English a cappella heresy' in *Companion to Mediaeval and Renaissance Music*, Knighton, T, and Fallows, D, (eds): 23-29.
- 415 Chapter 3: 69.
- 416 Pedro Memelsdorff in conversation with Ernesto Schmied, translated by Yolanda Acker, *Goldberg Magazine*, No 4 (1999). http://www.goldbergweb.com/en/magazine/interviews/1999/09/413_7.php.
- 417 American Musicological Society's 2004 National Meeting, Seattle, 11-14/11/04. Duffin recalls that Leech-Wilkinson, who was one of the speakers at the conference, leaned forward and said 'He's right.'
Appendix: 125.
- 418 *ibid*.
- 419 In *The Modern Invention of Medieval Music*: 107, Leech-Wilkinson points out that the BBC's role in the *a cappella* movement was vital since they gave Page the opportunity to present programmes with Gothic Voices. The BBC was also indirectly responsible for the founding of the Orlando Consort, which frequently broadcast vocal performances of medieval music. See also Potter, *Vocal Authority: Singing Style and Ideology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 115-6, who makes a similar point about the 1970s.
- 420 Leech-Wilkinson, *The Modern Invention of Medieval Music*: 147.
- 421 The majority of listeners to early music are probably unaware of the musicology that underpins the modern performances, focusing instead on the immediacy of the performance.
- 422 Appendix: 132. Duffin refers to Leech-Wilkinson as one of the scholars who has been persistent in his views regarding the omission of instruments.
- 423 *ibid*, 127.

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- 424 Which is in fact one of the reasons why I am doing this research...
- 425 Appendix: 132.
- 426 Leech-Wilkinson, 'The limits of authenticity: a discussion' *Early Music*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (February 1984): 13.
- 427 *ibid*, 3.
- 428 Musicological writings can, of course, be more or less 'charming' in their presentation, which might influence the publisher's decisions regarding future publications.
- 429 Most musicologists are connected to teaching posts at institutions, where they teach and supervise students (in many cases on a wide range of topics). Performers, on the other hand, who do not make a sound that is attractive to the consumer/audience, will never reach the market (not even a conservatory degree with distinction can help performers who do not deliver exciting performances.)
- 430 Appendix: 114.
- 431 *ibid*, 115-116.
- 432 Appendix: 138 and 139.
- 433 Appendix: 104.
- 434 Appendix: 146.
- 435 Aubrey refers to the *Las Huelgas* Codex as well as Christopher Page's writings on women singing motets.
- 436 Appendix: 104.
- 437 For a discussion of improvisation in the Middle Ages see Chapter 1: 14-15.
- 438 Appendix: 121.
- 439 Appendix: 136. Stone further points out that a large quantity of the medieval manuscripts are lost.
- 440 Appendix: 135.
- 441 The following two paragraphs are amended and expanded versions of the performers' note printed in the concert programme.
- 442 See Yardley, 'Ful weel she soong the service dyvyne: The Cloistered Musicians in the Middle Ages' *Women making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950* Bowers, J, and Tick, J, (eds): 15-38 (especially 26-27). See also page 38 of this thesis.
- 443 See for example the treatise 'De modo bene cantandi' (printed in 1474) by Conrad von Zabern. (Introduced and translated by Joseph Dyer as 'Singing with proper refinement' *Early Music* Vol. 6, No. 2 (1978): 207-227.) See also page 17-18 of this thesis.
- 444 All Trio Mediaeval CDs on ECM Records (with the exception of the *Folk Songs* album) have been based around a mass (first two were medieval masses, and the third a contemporary mass written specifically for the trio by the Korean composer Sungji Hong). The Worcester Lady mass programme had its first performance in USA in November 2008, and the York performance was the first in Europe. The programme was recorded by ECM Records at the monastery of St Gerold in Austria and will be released early 2011.
- 445 See Nicky Losseff's programme notes in attached concert programme.

446 Anonymous 4 also trade parts occasionally in order to create different sound pictures. See Appendix: 23.

447 The trio first met Gavin Bryars in 1998 at The Hilliard Ensemble Summer School in Cambridge. In 2000 Friman started to sing with his ensemble and he composed music for her voice, which later led to a collaboration between Bryars and the trio. *Ave Regina Gloriosa* was recorded on the trio's second CD *Soir dit-elle* for ECM records in 2003. Bryars has written pieces for many Early Music Ensembles and choirs including The Hilliard Ensemble (which was the first vocal group he wrote for, in 1988), Orlando Consort, Fretwork, Singer Pur, Red Byrd, Ensemble Amarcord. All these groups are a part of the wider early music scene. Other well known ensembles who combine medieval and contemporary music include Gothic Voices, Nordic Voices, Theatre of Voices and Anonymous 4.

448 Personal communication (29/03/10)

449 *ibid.*

450 Holden, A, 'Dirty Don lets down the masses', *The Observer*, 14/09/08.

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APPENDIX

Performers

Carolann Buff	2
Ruth Cunningham	13
Marsha Genensky	16
Susan Hellauer	27
Gro Siri Johansen	29
Catherine King	39
Emma Kirkby	46
Katarina Livljanić and Benjamin Bagby	55
Brigitte Lesne	67
Jantina Noorman	77
Johanna Maria Rose	91

Musicologists

Elizabeth Aubrey	97
Susan Boynton	107
Anna Maria Busse Berger	118
Ross Duffin	125
Anne Stone	135
Anne Bagnall Yardley	143

Passages in italics are quoted in the main text.

Carolann Buff, Boston, USA, 31 March 2007.

AMF What was your contact with early music, before you started to sing yourself?
Recording, concerts?

CB I was, when I first got out of my primary school education, I loved history, but I'd always been a musician, as well, I played double bass and I was a singer in the high school choir. And I actually studied history for several years, but I really missed singing, and I kind of wanted to combine the two. So I went to the music department at the university where I was studying and said, 'can I study music history?' And they said, 'no, not unless you study – if you're making it as a major.' I said, 'okay, but I'd also like to take some voice lessons, too. I play in the orchestra, but I'd like to sing,' they said, 'well, you can only take voice lessons if you're a major.' And I said, 'well, how do I become a music major?' And so I ended up studying music but just in a general sense. I studied, like, art song. But I realised I wasn't an opera singer very early on, and I really liked choral music.

AMF Did you want to be an opera singer?

CB Not really, I just enjoyed singing. But, all of the people that I was there with, they were all interested in opera and very interested in having that sort of career. And that wasn't really what I was thinking I wanted to do. And then my music history professor ended up saying that there actually were opportunities to sing early music professionally. And so he asked me if I'd be interested in going to a workshop, like the one at Amherst College, well, it was at Amherst College, when I went there. They had a summer workshop. And I met another couple of hundred people that were also interested in early music, and I realised this was something I was really interested in, I really enjoyed doing. So, I looked for degree programmes, post-undergraduate work, and performance, but in early music. And I found one here, at Longy School of Music, it's right across the street from where you sang last night.... Little tiny conservatory. And so I studied there with Laurie Monahan, and, once again, I wasn't really sure what it was I wanted to do, but was able to really explore a lot of different repertoire, mostly in 17th century, like, kind of baroque music, and then also a lot of

medieval music, mainly because Laurie Monahan herself was a medievalist. And I had fallen in love with the sound of Ensemble P.A.N. which was her ensemble for many years. And although, you know, the education at Longy is great because, on one hand, it's very, very small, it's very intimate, there were only three other people that were really studying voice at the time. It has its disadvantages because it is small, you only got who you got. So, if you had a soprano and an alto and a tenor that year, that's all you had.... But, I was fortunate in that, the year that I arrived, I met Bill Hudson and Melanie Germond. And the three of us were taking classes, like, Aquitanian polyphony, and some Notre Dame polyphony, and we said, 'we really like this, what happens if we just continuing pursuing this idea of singing in an ensemble like this?' And that's how actually we formed Liber unUsualis, we said, 'let's put together our own concert. There's no reason we can't, we sing every day.' And we just sang as much repertoire as we could, just to get through.... We kind of gravitated towards the end of the 14th century, most of the time in French. But we've also now, since then included some other repertoire as well.... And I just love it, and it's really – I never thought medieval music was going to be my thing, mainly because the only exposure I'd had was in opera, so, I said, 'oh well, Baroque opera's not so bad,' I still love it, but I really do think that, intellectually, for me, I've really enjoyed medieval music. So, that's kind of my story.

AMF It's not a very usual line-up that you have in your group.

CB Yeah, well, the funny thing is, is we've actually found a lot of repertoire for that particular configuration.

AMF I'm sure there is a lot of repertoire, but it's not the usual sound, it's a very distinctive, sort of, different kind of sound.

CB How do you mean? I'm kind of curious what you think is like –

AMF Because it's a tenor

CB The tenor, yeah, right.

AMF And then with your sort of really quite low voice, and then the top voice - we know about female groups, and we know about male groups with counter-tenor on the top, but having the tenor at the bottom, it's quite an unusual -

CB Well, the thing that's funny about that is that it actually works in a funny way. I mean, once in a while we regret that, oh gosh, if only we had one more singer, it could be a bass, or maybe if we had another soprano, and yet, somehow, that's never really been a huge issue.... If we started to do a little bit later repertoire where it really is two lower voices, like in Dufay for instance, there's two lower, there's a tenor and a contra tenor, and then there's a kind of a cantus that's higher, and then that gets really hard for me, because I'm singing really low all the time, or big range or something, but it's funny, because it does work. And we've actually been validated, because we've worked with some wind players who said, 'oh, you know, actually, this is the same configuration as medieval recorder'.... If you pick up an instrument from the Middle Ages, the recorders actually are in these ranges. And we were like really amazed by that, and said, 'well, you know, how did that work?' It's just by chance that's happened.... I think you are right in that I don't think I know any other group that's configured this way.

AMF No, certainly not. I don't think so.

CB What has come up recently has been the issue of how do we sell this music? How do we get the general public interested in what's going on and how we - you know, what would be interesting to an audience, and trying to figure out, is it programming? Is it, you know, getting a hook, just to get people in the door? And then, once they're there, also, there's an element of education that has to happen, because I just think that people really - most audiences that we speak to, they say, 'I've never heard anything like this.' ... And I think, 'well, how is that possible?' But I forget that it's very, very possible that no one has ever heard it. I don't know if you encounter that, or not.

AMF I suppose we do. I think we've been lucky, we've sort of been played loads on the radio, and we have a record company that is sort of doing quite a bit of publicity and everything.

CB Oh, that's a big advantage, as well.

AMF Your voice, when you sing medieval music, do you change your voice at all when you sing Baroque music or other repertoires, and how does the repertoire affect your voice? And, also, if you could talk about how your vocal technique changes according to specific acoustics?

CB I do know – and this is actually, once again, this is a common question for people who haven't heard a lot of medieval music, is their kind of – '*oh, you sing with intonation,*' and, '*oh, you sing with straight sound, and it's really striking to us.*' And I've never really, myself, *been very conscious of the issue of singing with straight tone.* And, in fact, if anything, I currently study with a woman who is a really, really big opera coach. She's a coach out of Santa Fe Opera, and her name is Nina Hinson she's a wonderful, wonderful teacher. And her focus, all her life, has been opera singers. And I don't know how she got hooked up with this, but somehow or other, she started picking up all these early music people in Boston.... And one of the things that I really love about what she says to me is, first of all, that I have to be true to the sound of my voice, no matter what I'm singing, that I can't sound like anybody else, I can't try to change the colour of my sound to match somebody else. The first thing on the road to really healthy singing is being committed to your voice. And she never – well, only once in a while, will she say, 'you know, try to do that with vibrato, try to do that without vibrato,' and when I'm really focusing on it, it's like, the realisation is it's not totally without vibrato, it's actually still vibrating, but it's just on a very, very small scale, or in a very quiet way. And, as a consequence, the tuning is different, or maybe it's because the tuning ... there's a real emphasis on, like, perfect chords that really, you know, have the sort of ring to them.... But, and then there's, also, there's no need to sing over an orchestra in some giant hall, which is the whole point of having vibrato, that's how your voice stays healthy, by singing that loud for that long, you know. And so, I guess, maybe it's because I didn't have a big vibrato like that, or I have a very fast vibrato, which it turns out, that if I sing with vibrato, it's a very – it doesn't sound like a traditional mezzo, really big, you know, wide, slow vibrato, I just don't have that sort of sound. And yet, I have a low range, so, you know, where does that fit in? Maybe I just gravitated to singing early music because there was a niche for me in this place. I mean, I think, as I say, intellectually, I'm still finding it

incredibly stimulating, but vocally it suits my voice.... I try to be as true to myself as possible. And the little voice teaching - which I'm not planning on doing, as a career – but what little voice teaching I've done, it is very apparent to me that you come in with a lot of preconceived notions about how one should sound, but, often that's just tied up in the head.... I think that the more true you are to your sound, without trying to match the other people, actually, the better the sound is, because it provides –

AMF Different colours.

CB Colour. It provides dynamic, it provides something.

AMF What about the difference between Liber and Tapestry?

CB Well, you know, that's a good question, I haven't really thought about it too much. Well, first of all, Tapestry sings a wider range of repertoire. They sing both contemporary and medieval, which has been interesting to me, because I've never really been interested in contemporary music myself. But ... obviously, they have stuff that's written for them that is more in an older style, you know, it's more suited to this kind of really close choral singing. Tapestry is also interesting because Laurie Monahan is the director, not that we don't have input or not that we don't have – when it ultimately comes down to it, she is the director. And she's our former voice teacher, as well. When I first started singing with them, the whole time I was like, 'oh, she's thinking about what I sound like.' Then, my current voice teacher said, 'you know, think about her actually, because she's working with three of her former students, and probably the whole time she's thinking, 'oh, they're judging me, they're thinking about what I'm doing.' And so that helped me put it in a really healthy perspective.... No one's here to ... compete with anybody else, we're just trying to sing, and that really helped, because I felt tense. 'Oh no, am I singing okay? I don't know if she's going to judge me.' And the funny thing about that is actually that I don't sing as low in that group. And I actually get a chance to sing much higher at times, and that's really fun for me, too, I play around with that.... Different ranges, different way of singing, different styles of singing, the issue of – you know, modern composers use things like dynamics. You have to remember that they've given us instructions, you know, where the mediévalists either didn't care or just didn't bother, it was just instinctive, or they

allowed their musicians – so, in Liber, we have all these decisions to make, is this loud? Is this soft? How fast is it? A modern composer gives you all of that. But I forget, I want to do things my own way, I want to make my own decisions. But, that's been really fun, and we've been very fortunate to have some really good composers writing for us, with interesting topics, too. Do you do contemporary music too?

AMF Yeah, sometimes we do only contemporary music in a programme.

CB The name of our group is Liber unUsualis, well ... how can we be unusual? We want to be challenging.... So, one of the things we've been trying to do is, when we speak – we like to speak during our concerts, because it kind of helps the audience latch onto things to listen for, to find out on. *And we found that the moment that we say, 'oh, hey, look, this is actually a really interesting puzzle. You know, we're doing a song that is actually only one line of music but it fits together in a funny way,' you know, like there's a canon or something that's happening. And people suddenly go, 'ah'....* And you can see people kind of sit up and their eyes light up. It's just interesting that, it's something that's a little bit different than just sitting back and letting it wash over you. It's meant to be something that is supposed to be a little bit stimulating like that, and it's really hard to explain to people, like. I think that – and it is just my opinion – but I have a feeling that these late medieval nobility, who were, you know, sponsoring this music, or the tricks – *I think they really appreciated these sort of puzzles, that maybe you didn't even see, maybe you only saw if you looked at the page or something. 'Oh, wait, that's great,'* you know, maybe something hidden, a name or someone's – or some little puzzle that might, *'oh, wait, I recognise that, that's my motto, or that's my emblem,'* or something like that.... *And if you don't explain that to people, they have no idea.*

AMF I want to talk to you about the use of sources, and if you have been – now, you have a sort of historic background in your own studies, but have you consulted musicologists? What do you do with repertory? Do you use traditional sources?

CB We use a mix of sources. I mean, I'm not up to speed on transcribing notes. The Italian notation is challenging, because it's actually quite different from the French. Well, the French notation, like Machaut, counting up how many things between the

dots, is really quite an experience once you really get into it. So, what we try to do is, we try to consult both modern editions and the original sources. We've actually caught a couple of mistakes here and there.... *Ultimately, we are performers, we are not musicologists, we don't want to spend all of our time in a library. I mean, I could. But, we do need to, at some point, pick up the music and perform it....* And what we end up doing is we actually make – I wouldn't call it our own edition, well, yeah, I guess it is our own editions. So, what we've done is, we've taken a combination of looking at the facsimile and looking at a modern edition, and I actually write out my own part. And this is actually something Laurie Monahan taught us, which was, these musicians were – even if they weren't looking on the page, if they did look at the page, they would see their own part. And the way they put it together was just by listening to each other. Now, it's a little bit crazy when you're starting out and you're trying to learn the piece. They had a very different sort of education, I'm sure they memorised everything. I'm certain that their ability to kind of pick up a tune and pick up a text pretty quickly was much, much better than it is now.... But we make our own part.... My part has no bar lines, but it's in modern notation, just so it's easier to read. And, at some point, you know, our goal is actually to start really memorising all this stuff, because it just is so different when – it's not a matter of showing off, it's a matter of like, 'wow, this is how we interact,' even if it's just a text or something, and, you know, if you're reading the poem, I think it really reveals, and you listen differently. I mean, orchestra players do this all the time, you know, they only have their part, it's not impossible to do, just sometimes it's like...

AMF Yeah, but they have a director...

CB Yeah, and well, it's three people, we can ... check in with each other. And it does, after a while, you get used to a sort of sound, you have expectations of where a melody will go or where it's going to – it's a little tough to put together initially but with a little bit of hard work. And, you know, we'll have the score there, just in case we need to check in. I went really full circle, like, I started out saying, 'okay, I'm only going to do my part, I'm not going to look at any scores, I'm not going to listen to any recordings, I'm just going to do my own thing.' And now I've kind of learned the value of, well, it is sometimes really important to look at a score, because you see things differently, you might see something that lines up, or see something where a

melody goes between voices or something, [that] you may not have heard.... And the same with recordings too. It's like, 'oh yeah, it is interesting how this group perceives this moment.' But definitely, I think there's a real value to having all of those resources available. I've been fortunate, I work at Harvard in the music library, so, I can go and look at manuscripts, which is great. I will miss that if I ever decide to leave. But I do think it is important to look at the sources and check it out and just make sure it's there. I really like that. I would like to do more actual transcribing of my own stuff. But, as I say, at some point you've got to cut your losses and say, 'well, we do need to meld,' actually get in a room and sing with each other, as opposed to staying all the time in the library.... It's really fun, I like that. I also like doing the historical research, as well, that kind of cultural context. I do think it's important to know who was, you know, the patron of this particular thing, or what their court was like or what their politics were like. And so that's been kind of thing that I like to do.

AMF How important are the medieval texts today?

CB Oh, I think that the texts are really important. I wish that I had more fluency in Italian or French, because I do think that the poetry is actually so, so significant.

AMF Is there a difference between – like, for example, in programmes, would you always give translations? How do you want the audience to perceive it? And is there a difference between sacred and secular music?

CB Yeah, I do think there is. I think there are audiences – I mean, I'd like to give them all of the translations, but there's this issue of overwhelming them, again. Because, if you're doing a song that has three texts, and so, you know, the next thing, you'll have a 30 page handout to, like, you go, 'here are the texts,' and they look at it, and they're like –

AMF They won't be able to read it.

CB It's just they can't deal with that. Yet, at the same time, I think it would be inconsiderate at best and, I mean, I don't know, maybe if there was a way to summarise it – there is something really beautiful about the texts themselves. So,

what we do, we do hand out actually all the texts, both in the original and in the translation. We hire someone to translate it for us, and one of our requests to her was that she try to make it as much like poetry, not just word for word, in other words. There's something about the flow of how these things go, if she can kind of adapt them to do that, which has been great sometimes because it makes the text – except that then we're looking at, like, a particular word, and we're like, 'what does that word mean?' You go along the text, and we're like, 'oh, it's down here at the bottom,' so, you have to remember, too, that some things change in translation.... I do think it's important to have it, yet, at the same time, I'm afraid that it overwhelms people who don't understand that this was something that is something really to the medievalist, I mean, I think that audiences want to have something quick and easy that they can hang onto. And we've kind of forgotten that this was the only form of entertainment, you know, it wasn't like a TV set, well, it was like a TV set, it was like, that was what they did in the evenings, or that was what they did after dinner, especially in a secular setting. Now, as far as sacred music goes, I do think that there is a difference, but I'm not quite sure how to put that into words. I mean, we do both, on many programmes, especially if it's music for a particular court, they will have both sacred music and sacred music. I don't think religion – that faith was necessarily so separated in daily life in the Middle Ages.... And it's easy for us to kind of put it in a box, put it in a box on the outside. I don't think it was mixed, necessarily, but I don't think that they were so separate. And, I mean, you see evidence of this when you see ... the change of the motett where it had been a really sacred thing, and then it goes, and it becomes this ceremonial thing. So, it's like maybe a prayer, but maybe it's actually more just glorification of a particular person. And then it puts back around again and becomes sacred again. So, it's a very funny – I think that there is some sort of interweaving of those two lines that were pretty much indistinguishable, which we don't understand, because they are very separate now in this modern – especially in the United States, it's like there's religion and then there's not.... So, I think that that's really difficult to explain to people, that they really were linked. But, I do think that the sacred texts are just as intellectual. I think that there was, certainly, people weren't afraid of being challenged to think about things, and that there would be puzzles and, like, mysteries - that there would be a reference to something, 'oh yes, that has to do with the Virgin Mary' or 'that has to do with the generations before Christ,' or something like that, but there'd be a small reference, and people would know that that was an emblem or

that was a symbol of something that was going on. So, they were still thinking, it wasn't like they just shut down and said, 'okay, this is religious now'.... And so, in that context, in that matter, they actually are very, very similar, they are interrelated. But, you know, are they separated? A lot of people ask us, they say, 'well, this concert is in a church, so we require that you do only sacred music'.... We actually now have a programme that's just – we did some programming where we chose texts that were just about Saints, which was really fascinating, they're very, very fun. They're religious without being overtly Christian. And they're actually fascinating figures with bizarre lives, at best. And it's been a really fun programme. And I do think it works in a sacred setting, like, we have these figures that are almost like comic book superheroes or something.... 'Okay, my head's now cut off, but, no, I'm still alive', you know, man of steel. It's fun to do that. I like programming it that way. The other thing that's been nice about that is we're able to incorporate some contemporary texts about Saints in, like, some poetry or some prose. And so we do a song and then we'll read a bit and then we'll – and we've found, actually, a 15th century English translation of these lives of the Saints, and that's been a great programme. So I enjoyed putting that together a lot.... Yeah, I don't know, the issue of sacred and secular – actually, I know that you guys, I know this is in your focus, the issue of women singing versus men singing, especially sacred music. That is something a lot of people ask about. They say 'well, would women have sung in the Middle Ages?' I'm like, 'well, there's evidence they did.' Because, you know, you see a tapestry or something with a woman with a roll of music, so, they were singing. We do know that nuns probably sang in their convents, you know, Las Huelgas. Hildegard is one example, as well. So, we do have evidence that they were singing, but people ask us, 'would men and women have sung together?' Maybe. But not for the sacred music, that does kind of make some interesting pitch issues, and we do it, anyway. We're modern performers and we can't get around that, and we don't have these constraints anymore that prolong gender lines. And so, as a consequence, there's no reason not to.... And I do think that women did sing in courtly settings, too, that's the other thing. I'm always struck when you go see those ... tapestries in Paris, there's a woman playing an organ. So, obviously, you know, they did perform music. Maybe it might have been for themselves or just for the people around them, but, they were educated in music, so, it's not like it was the exclusive role of men. And, I mean, obviously, there was a lot more documentation about the training of men in

music schools, when they became priests, or if they were going to sing in a choir.... And I do think that – that's another thing that people ask us, it's like, 'well, do you ever do costumes?' So, it's like, 'well, no, because, you know, we're modern performers, we're not trying to recreate something, we're trying to make it new, and to make it a presentation for a modern audience.' And that ultimately is the goal, it's not to be recreationists or anything, like people go to Renaissance fairs and want to have some weird approximation of what life was like, it's impossible. I mean, the only way to do that would be to go 100 percent, you know, this is the fashion of 1420 in Italy.... And you ultimately have to appeal to modern sensibilities.

Ruth Cunningham, New York, USA, 26 November 2005.

AMF How did you, and why did you get in to mediaeval music making?

RC I started when I was a teenager. I sang in a choir and I started to play the recorder and going to early music workshops where I was exposed to renaissance and medieval music, and really loved it. And that was really where my voice fit.... I was in an ensemble when I was in high school.... I then went to New England Conservatory where I studied Baroque flute. But in the Conservatory we also did medieval music ... so I did a lot of early music in the Conservatory as well.... And then when I moved to New York I started studying voice seriously. I was studying with Jane Bryden, who sang with the Waverly Consort.... She had a very light voice also ... and I was doing all kinds of stuff with her.... In New York I was a Baroque flutist and a singer, and just doing both, more Baroque and renaissance repertoire than medieval. Anonymous 4 had already formed, and they'd been together like ... six months, a year, and they lost someone, so they were looking for subs.... I knew them all, because everybody knows everybody in the early music world. And I said I'd love to do that, so I did their first concert with them and I loved it so much.

AMF Do you use your voice differently according to what music you sing?

RC *I don't have one of those giant voices that needs to be cut down. I have a light voice suited for earlier repertoires and contemporary music. In what ever style I am doing I simply try to sing freely and on the breath....* As well as learning the technique ... certainly in the work that I do now as a sound healer, I have to be clear myself. I have to be really clear of all my own emotional issues ... and do my homework.... As a sound healer I'm listening, I'm using my intuition to tune into what needs to be done, and there are different kinds of voices that I'm using with people.... And so that's a whole other aspect of it.... It's another world from just singing medieval music. Although, in some ways, live music, with an audience, you never know what's going to happen. It's like improvisation is one thing, but really all music, I think, should sound like it's being improvised, that you're hearing it for the very first time. Because if you approach music that way it's like you've never heard this piece before in your

life. That's what happens with improvisations, but there's no reason why it can't happen with for example a Bach cantata.

AMF One thing that we have had to struggle a bit with, actually is the whole text issue ... what the [medieval] texts actually mean for us today.... What the text means to us [singers] is one thing I find, and we of course know what we are singing about. But I think you have to give people a chance not to – you don't have to sort of give a [textual] message every time to your audience.

RC Looking at text and reading text uses, I think, a different part of the brain than what just receiving the music is, and you really need to have that sonically receiving. And medieval music especially, it's like a sound bath, how beautiful.... But for devotional music, let it be devotional music. Let it just take you to that place of devotion, whatever that means to you. It's like someone came up to me once and said, 'well I don't like all this Christianity, but I know you're singing about the goddess'... *'I don't believe in Christianity, but your music makes me cry'*. Just the experience of being *in the sound* unifies the audience, they don't have to look at the same words. *Some people connect very strongly to text and want to know what is being sung about. Some people connect only to the music and don't care about the text. The text should be available so that people have the choice....* If they want the text, it's there. If they want to just close their eyes and enjoy this music, they can do it.... We did a lot of concerts with Anonymous 4, but I always felt like all of them were, they usually took it some place else.... I would always do prayers before I sing and always just ask to be an open channel and whatever needs to come through come though.

AMF What is your primary aim? Are you recreating something from the past, or re-contextualising it in the present?

RC I would say for me it's always making something alive right now.... We can't recreate something perfect from the past, we can't do it. I mean, you don't know what it sounds like, but you can bring in that music now and have it touch people, and that's what's important.

AMF Do you adjust your way of singing according to specific acoustics?

RC I think that if you're a good singer and you have a good technique, then you can in some weird way create your own resonance. A black box is not going to give you the great experience that singing in a church does, but if you have enough sheen in your sound, you can make an OK experience for people, and you just do. I mean it's sad when we're in one of those places [dry acoustic spaces], but you just do it, and people will get it anyway.... Of course, I prefer to be in a beautiful resonant church.

Marsha Genensky, San Francisco, USA, 25 March 2007.

AMF What was your experience with early music and medieval music before you started yourself?

MG By the time I was in college, I was singing traditional Anglo-American folk songs. That was my thing, I was a folk singer. And someone said, 'oh, you should take voice lessons'.... From there, I quickly decided to go for a music major. I knew nothing about studying music, had had no training, at all. And so I had to study very quickly to learn how to read music well, and I had to start from the very beginning with music theory and all of that. There happened to be a very good harpsichordist teaching at my school, so, I heard her play quite frequently. Her name is Preethi Da Silva. She played beautifully. And there was someone there who played viol as well, Frank Traficante. Dr. Traficante was in charge of a little collegium. It was a small one and it didn't receive a huge amount of attention from the outside world; but I sang in it a little bit, and it was a nice way to get my first experience with Dowland, etc....

I was 18, 19, 20. In hindsight, I didn't really know much about medieval or Renaissance music. I was curious about it, and I loved to sing it, but it wasn't my real focus at the time and I didn't take the opportunity to pursue it in depth then. I was most interested in folklore, specifically in Anglo-American folk songs. So after college, I went to graduate school to pursue a PhD in Folklore, believe it or not, at the University of Pennsylvania. I ended up leaving with a masters degree, not completing my PhD. But, while I was at Penn, I joined the fabulous Penn collegium. It was at that time directed by Mary Anne Ballard, who was - and still is - part of the Baltimore Consort.... Someone in the Penn collegium - perhaps it was Mary Anne - advised me to go for voice lessons with the Baroque soprano, Julianne Baird, as she lived just outside of Philadelphia, at the time. I did - and I had a wonderful time working with her when her schedule allowed. After some period of time, Julianne suggested that I should take a voice lesson with her teacher in New York. I had left my Folklore PhD programme by then, and at that point, I was basically searching for my future. I went to take a lesson or two from Marcy Lindheimer, and then I said, 'Well, maybe I'll move to New York for two years.'... The year before I moved there, I had gone to the Amherst Early Music Workshop, and there I met Johanna. So, when I moved to New York, I knew her. But I didn't know the others.... When I moved to New York in

1985, I did have one professional gig already set up. I joined Pomerium Musices [now called Pomerium], and that's where I met Susan and Ruth. I met Susan Gjenvick the following Spring (Susan was the fourth person at Anonymous 4's first reading sessions, and at Anonymous 4's first few concerts. She didn't remain with the group for very long at all, so we consider Ruth to be the fourth founding member of Anonymous 4). We spent so many hours rehearsing chant that no one will ever believe how many hours it was, but it was worth it. Yes, all of us sang with Pomerium Musices (directed by Alex Blachly). It really was, and still is, a fabulous, chamber-sized vocal group... It was a fabulous forum for singing Renaissance polyphony. We did sing small amounts of chant, but the emphasis in Pomerium at the time was not on chant. So we didn't sing very much of it, and when we did sing it, we didn't rehearse it nearly as much as we rehearsed the polyphony. So in the Spring of 1986, the four of us got together to read through some medieval repertoire, because we *wanted to hear what it sounded like in higher voices. We all loved the sound of it, and we wanted to continue together, so we decided upon several goals for ourselves. First thing: we wanted to do more chant....* In the beginning, we weren't that brave about it. It was only after we had been singing together for several years that we said to ourselves 'you know, we can put more chant in our programs, we can have as much chant as polyphony. Our audience will love it.' So yes, at first, we were a little shy about performing too much chant. But we knew from the beginning we wanted to do it. Second thing, we wanted to be director-less. We wanted to be a consensus organization. This has turned out to be both a difficult thing and a good thing, in the end. In a consensus organization, every little decision takes so very long to make; but on the other hand, everybody gets shares owns the result. And the third thing, we wanted to do thematic programming. Of course, you can do thematic programming, no matter what kind of music you're doing. But we did strongly prefer to have a concept....

MG We do a lot of research when developing each new program. We have to do all of that research and all of that preparation to make the program happen. But the *end goal is to take our audiences to a different time and place, musically. So at a certain point, we have to put the research aside and simply present our program in our concerts and on our recordings in the most convincing way we can.* I think all of our research helps us to find solutions that convince us, and the fact that we are convinced, in turn helps

us to convince our audience that, yes, this could be it. We can never know for certain that the music sounded this way in, say, 13th century France, but this really works.... We sang our first programmes in concert for years, before we recorded any of them. By the time we started recording, 5 or 6 years after we first sang together, we had a number of programmes that we had been performing for some years. We had had plenty of time to hone them, and hone them and hone them and perfect them. Those programs as they had evolved became what we wanted to put down on record. Later on, when we had run through our backlog of recordable music, we had to come up with recordable programs more and more quickly. There was much less time for that kind of honing and honing and polishing before recording. So, sometimes, we would do a few performances of a programme, then record it and then re-work it, later on. Over the years, we have departed increasingly from the recorded versions of our programs to the concert versions of them.

AMF That's an interesting process.

MG Yeah, determined in part by circumstance. I think we've departed the most from the recording to the concert with the most recent American touring programme that we've created. *Long Time Traveling* feels like a show, rather than a concert program. We did refer to the Gloryland record - touring of this show started out as CD release touring for Gloryland - and to American Angels, as well, when getting this show ready for touring. But the sounds the Anonymous 4 girls and our guest instrumentalists, Darol Anger (fiddle, mandolin) and Scott Nygaard (guitar) make together, and our mutual taste as a six-some, have been the main influences on the *Long Time Traveling* show, both in our choice of the tunes we sing and play onstage and in the way we perform them.

AMF So, it's quite exciting for you, that after 20 years, you've come back to what you originally started with as a college student, with your Anglo-American music.

MG Yes, and it was all Susan's fault! She told us she had had a vision; and the vision consisted of the title *American Angels*. But she didn't know anything about American music, her forte is medieval music. So, she said, Marsha, you do this. It turned into a wonderful opportunity for me to do exactly as you say, come back full circle, to the

music I had been deeply in love with, so long ago. I had left it aside for all those years, after leaving graduate school and helping to start Anonymous 4. And it's been more than full circle, it's been that and beyond. It's been really glorious to come back to it with a stronger sense of how to find music, how to hear it, how to make it sing. So many more resources are available now too. Many Complete Works of early American composers have been published since I left school, field recordings have been released on CD, audio files from unpublished folk song collections are now accessible on the Internet.... This time around, I have had much greater access not only to sources, resources, but most importantly, to people. Having more access to people is a really important thing when you're talking about music that travels between written and oral tradition. It's been really kind of a rejuvenating experience for me.

AMF The relationship between sources and actual performance, and the old notation and modern editions, tell me a little bit about that.

MG Well, for medieval music, we have relied, mostly, on Susan. She's the one who went to 'medieval musicology school', so she has done the bulk of the transcriptions of our chant, as well as of some of the polyphony we sing. We did have some music for our 1000 programme, that was transcribed for us by somebody else.

AMF Do you know who that was?

MG It was Alejandro Planchart. He actually transcribed both chant and polyphony for us for that programme, it's all in that unstaffed notation.... We've had other advice through the years as well, but Susan's done probably 90 percent of the chant and she's probably done about 50-60 percent of the transcriptions of the polyphony, mainly when editions of polyphony had not already been made. She did not transcribe the English polyphony we do since that had already been transcribed by Ernie Sanders and Peter Lefferts and others. So in the case of the English polyphony, we started with their editions. Sometimes in rehearsal, we would look for different solutions for the cadences of the English pieces than the solutions we found in those editions. It's mainly at cadences where the rhythmic notation for medieval English polyphony is a little less clear in the manuscripts; the rest of it is pretty easy to transcribe (for those

who know how!). So it was only by singing the cadences, trying them out with different rhythmic solutions, that we were able to determine how they could be workable for us. But, whenever we have had modern editions of a particular medieval repertoire to work with, we've made a practice of referring back to the manuscripts. And when I say 'we,' I mean Susan!... Johanna and I worked on language.... *We really wanted to see what it felt like musically to try to approximate the sound of the language as we sang, and we found that, in some cases, it really did affect the music.*

AMF That is very interesting.

MG That's the thing about the music. Now we don't know for sure that we have our historical language pronunciation exactly right. There are almost as many questions about this as there are about what medieval music may have sounded like. *We have not done original linguistic research, we've followed the research of historical linguists, and they don't always agree with each other! But generally, the pronunciations we follow seem to make sense, and going with historical pronunciation does seem to affect the sound and the presentation of the music.*

AMF Susan, she's into musicology and has been dealing a lot with questions around editing and that, but have you also been consulting other people outside [the group] for information ... or 'justification'?

MG There were some questions, especially *when we first started to sing together there was the Big Question of whether women would have sung medieval music. Those of us who have studied enough about it, know that there's strong evidence that women definitely sang chant, both privately and in public, and that they probably also sang polyphony in certain situations. Although they weren't allowed to be paid performers or to sing in the public cathedrals, they certainly sang in their own convents.* And there are polyphonic manuscripts that are housed in convents that work for women's voices, so we can only guess that women probably sang from these manuscripts. We knew all of this. But when we first started recording in, I think it was 1990 or 91, it wasn't generally known. Many people thought that women didn't sing this music at all in the Middle Ages.... So, when we were going to put out our first recording – I'm sure Susan told you this – we had to get a note from a

musicologist saying that yes, women did sing sacred music in the Middle Ages, so, no, the four women of Anonymous 4 are not desecrating the music by singing it now. And, in fact, when our first recordings of English medieval music came out, Ernie Sanders, who had made all those beautiful scholarly editions of medieval English polyphony said, *'it sounds clearer to my ears when women sing this polyphony than when men sing it, so, I can't imagine that women didn't sing it at some point.'* That was a really lovely compliment. We don't know if the specific pieces that we sing were sung by women or not, but we know that suchlike pieces were sung by women. So, that was the first hurdle.... In terms of individual repertoires, sometimes we've felt the need to consult outside scholars and sometimes we haven't. I mentioned that we had a lot of help for our 1000 program. When we did a programme of Hungarian music, we consulted with Laszlo Dobszay, who is the 'king' of that territory, and he actually sent us manuscript microfilms that were only available in Hungary at that time. There have been certain other repertoires that have raised musical and performance practice questions for us, and when that's happened, Susan has consulted with various scholars to try to get them answered.

AMF Twenty years ago, it was musicologists who reviewed medieval music, but now it seems like medieval music has become mainstream in a totally different way. Have you felt any difference?

MG It is a tricky thing, because if the review is too musicological, people from the general public, who are not necessarily interested in medieval music because of its musicological aspects, may not necessarily be attracted to something that they might otherwise have tried. From the listening side, our audiences have really been diverse. We've had people who are extremely well versed in what we present, who know that this particular chant would probably have been sung with that piece of polyphony in a very specific way in very specific circumstances. We jokingly call those people the 'three guys', because there aren't very many of people who know at that depth and in that detail the medieval repertoires we've explored. But there are also a lot of people who don't listen critically at all; they just love the sound. And we're happy to have those people listening to us and to have the 'three guys' listening to us ... the 'three guys' can be girls, too.

AMF What about medieval texts in the modern day? How important is it to let people know the meaning of the texts? Or how important is it for you – should it be in the programmes? Should we have translations?

MG We've always really focused very heavily on our printed programmes. We've spent huge amounts of energy preparing texts and translations, and have attempted to provide thorough, yet accessible programme notes, for our medieval concerts. We look out, during a concert of one of our medieval programmes, and see people in the audience closely following the texts and translations we've provided. But, in that same audience, we also see people who seem equally focused, but have their eyes closed the whole time! *We want to make what we do accessible to both the analytical and the instinctive audience members. We appreciate both kinds of attention from our listeners.* We have spent the energy to create the printed programs, because we want those who do want to delve into it more themselves, to have the materials in front of them. It would not be that easy for them to go and find those materials themselves. You can't just go to the music store and buy them! So we feel that we're responsible for making available whatever materials we can, for the medieval programmes. For the American show that we're doing now, we don't provide anything, because we're singing in English and performing in the United States, and when we're in a large venue, we're miked, so, there should be no problem hearing us or understanding us. And besides, we're really treating this like a show.... But what we're really looking for with our American shows is a different kind of interaction with our audiences.... I love both kinds of performer-audience interaction, but it's nice to have a change. And what we've found with the American music is that the songs themselves, are very outgoing: they reach out and they grab the audience. Of course, the texts are in English and we're mainly performing to English speaking audiences, which also helps. As for medieval music, the way I like to think of it is that it's every bit as deeply felt as is the American music. But unlike American tunes, the range of emotions in much of medieval music is very deep, but very contained, all inside a little box. Our audience members need to become very focused, during our medieval concerts, so that they can go into the little box in order to fully experience what is on offer. Some audience members do this in a purely aural way. They close their eyes and listen. Others may need the additional information provided by the texts in order to enter into that little space where these really deep communications are held. That's

how I've viewed it over all these years.... But you know, *whatever you sing, whatever you provide, whatever you don't sing, whatever you don't provide, somebody's going to love it and somebody's going to hate it, and you just have to live with it.*

AG What about your vocal sound, talk a little bit about the technique, for example ... if you sing Tavener, ... French Troubadour music or if you sing American Angels, the American music, what is the vocal difference and how do you adjust?

MG I think the basic production is the same. Hopefully it's the same.... We hope that we sing in an open way, clear and open. I think the rest of it is detail specific to each musical style, and that detail gets added on top of your basic way of producing your voice. I'm guessing that if you asked each of us, we would each give you a different description of how we produce our sound. But I think that, in general, we would all agree that it's clear, open, not held back or constrained in any way. The other important ingredient for us is listening. *The more we listen, the more we blend. And amongst the four of us, you will hear four extremely different timbres, four somewhat different ways of singing, but all of the listening, I think, is what has brought our different sounds together into that blend....* The other thing is this: we have spent so many hours in rehearsal together.

AMF When I listen to your recordings, I wouldn't be able to say, 'oh, that is that person,' I mean, it's very, very hard.

MG One trick that we've played over the years, more in the early recordings than in later recordings, is to trade parts a lot. So, if you listen, especially to our earlier recordings, you can't always count on the fact that Susan, who has by far the lowest voice of the four of us, will be on the bottom line of a song. You might suddenly find her singing the top line of a piece. Similarly, you might not always find the person you normally hear on the highest part on the high part. Instead, you may sometimes find her singing a middle or bottom part. We've traded parts in this way in order to play with variations in vocal colour. And that may contribute to the confusion about our individual identities.... *We didn't give ourselves much individual opportunity at all in the early recordings. That was purposeful. We were focused on the ensemble, and that's where we wanted our listeners to focus, as well.* It wasn't until we had done

quite a number of recordings that were very much focused on the ensemble that we started to have each person singing alone a song of her own choice, at some point during the recording or concert performance. It was only then that our audience heard each of us as individuals.... As for the American rep, I would say our vocal production is the same as usual in main part, but it's true that there is a little bit of a difference. Again, that may come from listening, to traditional singers, in this case, rather than from our consciously singing differently. But the sound does tend to be a little brighter, there can sometimes be a little bit more nasality in it, and it can almost sound as if it's slightly pressed.

AMF You can still of course hear, on your recent recording that it is Anonymous 4. It doesn't suddenly sounds like something else, and I think that is the same thing with the trio. Even if we sing folk music, still you can hear that it's the trio's sound, but we just use slightly different qualities in our voices which we haven't been able to show before.

MG Exactly, and that's the specific style, which is layered on top of the basic way that you sing, and on top of the fact that you sound totally like an ensemble, whether you're singing arrangements of a Norwegian folk song or whether you're singing a piece that was written last week or a piece from the year 1300. It has to do with your qualities as an ensemble, the energy that you spend singing together and listening to each other. And I don't know how it is for you, but for us it is partly a matter of what you described just now, making *a programme or the song the star, and not having any one of us be the star. To do that, you actually have to put your vocal ego aside and just go with the song. You have to sing your best, of course, but you have to put aside your desire to have your listeners hear your individual voice.*

AMF I wonder what your ensemble would sound like if you all really sung very individualistic. It would be interesting to hear what the sound would be. I don't think it would be very different, though, do you?

MG It might not be that different. We've spent so much time together, and so much time listening to each other, that we probably would have come together into our blend all over again, and might never leave what we've been doing.

AMF You probably wouldn't want to sound different. Have you felt that you have been restricted?

MG No, I haven't.... One of the real loves for me, is not really feeling the need to be the one on stage, but to be a part of this group effort. Being a part of Anonymous 4 has almost felt like being part of a musical family. When I have put in everything I have had into it, and when everyone else has done the same thing, we often felt ourselves becoming something larger than our four individual selves.... *Group responsibility and group reward....*

AMF Do you have rituals before a performance?

MG We do have a pre-concert warm-up together, we call it 'starts and stops', where we'll start every piece that we're going to sing that night. Part of that is purely for warm-up, and part of it is to test and work with the acoustics in each venue. So, we'll do that, but I don't really have a significant ritual. We do have a 'rest period' before we go to the concert venue. We call it 'rest period' as a joke. In the United States, the school day is divided into periods. Students have math period, followed by English period, physics period... So we call this 'rest period'.

AMF How does the different concert venues affect your way of singing?

MG Yes, well, there are some places that are so large that our intimate sound does get lost. In these venues, we just have to do our best. But, I think the drier the hall, the more we need to focus inwardly. We will sometimes even re-position ourselves, physically, on the stage, in order to get the best sound access to each other. In an easier space where there's lots of nice clear sound, or even reverb, we might position ourselves in a more open formation. But if the venue sounds very dry and we're not hearing a blend, or we're not hearing enough projection into the hall we experiment with tightened formations. Sometimes we form into a more of a C, sometimes even a V works better. We just have to try it in the hall to see what positioning allows us to hear ourselves the best. And then, of course, there's the balancing act between the questions of where do we hear each other the best and what position allows for the

audience to hear us the best. There are other smaller adjustments that we make from venue to venue. There are certain venues where there's so much sound that you have to enunciate much more clearly and emphasize consonants. There are other places where, because the hall is so dry, we have to almost over-extend our cadences. With *Long Time Traveling* the American show we're touring now, we're frequently miked. So that's a whole other set of circumstances. Sometimes we have to spend quite a long time on the sound check. That's not really as much about warming up and singing, that's more about working with and tweaking the sound system for each venue so that it makes the four voices and the instruments sound great. That's new and different for us, because we've rarely used sound enhancement for our medieval programmes.... We've always spent a lot of energy, with the help of our management company, in trying to persuade somewhat reluctant presenters to move our medieval concerts from the dry hall where they usually present their concerts to a more resonant church. And when they've been able to do it, they've been really happy. It's difficult for some presenters to change venue for us, though, because, of course, their audience members are expecting to come to a certain place, to come to the concert. But those who have been able to do it have always been extremely pleased with the result. And then, of course, when we come back, again and again, to a presenter who has been able to put us in great space, they say, 'oh yes, we'll put it in that great church you were in the last time.' That's more of an issue here in the US than in Europe, of course.

Susan Hellauer, New York, USA, 30 November 2005.

AMF So, it's your trumpeting that drove you towards...

SH Yes, but I think like a lot of people who first did early music, both singing and playing it, many of us came from instrumental backgrounds, we played instruments first, and found medieval music that way. And then started singing here and there, just trying things, the odd vocal lines. But when I was first doing early music it was not to be mixed. It had to be a chorus or an instrumental group, and the people in the instrumental, very often one of them would say well I'll sing that line instead of [playing it].... That's pretty much how I started. It's a little more complicated than that but basically I have since then, I always considered myself to be an instrumentalist, not a singer.... And there are a lot of people like that, who came from the instrumental side first.

AMF And you are one of those people who has really made your living through singing, but you don't consider yourself as a singer?

SH *I know that I am one, and that's because on my tax returns it says, but in my heart I feel more comfortable with an instrument in my hands or in my mouth.*

SH A lot of the first early music I did was mostly 16th century. Very, very complex rhythmically, very complicated. And learning to count and play on an instrument first, that was extremely helpful to approaching that, vocally. Absolutely, very important. And when I played the trumpet I played a lot of contemporary music, I was always in the contemporary ensembles at school.... My ideal is if I sing a song and then talk to someone after the concert I want them not to say what a beautiful voice, I want them to say what a beautiful song, and then I know I did my job.... I don't worry about my voice much. It's pretty loud, it's not that tight. And I think *not thinking of myself as primarily a singer is very helpful, because I don't have to feel that competitive urge. It's a hard world out there for singers.*

AMF How do you use primary sources, if at all?

SH Two ways.... What we try to do is to get as close as possible. So if we're doing a programme that has chanting in it, I try to find a source of chanting as close in time and place to the original.... So for all the chants we'd take from original sources.... But if I think something needs to be transcribed, I'll transcribe it. If I don't think it does, I won't ... *person did a good job they should get money from the publication. No need to reinvent the wheel.* It's nice to know I can do it, and I do.

AMF What is your primary aim, and are you recreating something from the past or re-contextualising it in the present?

SH Re-contextualising.... You have to give the audience the most real, the most honest representation. But you are who you are, they are who they are, and you still have to sell. *People have to come to your concert otherwise ... you have to do something that makes people want to listen to it. But we've found that we haven't had to make too many compromises. But yes we definitely are not trying to reconstruct something. People don't want to go to a four hour religious concert.*

AMF How important is the medieval text in the modern day?

SH Medieval text? It all depends. When we do sacred music, we *try to project a universal concept rather than very dogmatic one.*

Gro Siri Johansen, Oslo, Norway, 20 April 2006

AMF How did you and why did you get into medieval music making?

GSJ Well, it was because I wanted to prepare my voice actually. I wanted to sing something different. I didn't want to sing opera. I didn't want to sing musicals or whatever. I wanted to try something new, and I thought that Gregorian chant was something that I didn't know nothing about. And so I think that's very strange, because really it's a repertoire which is so old and so large also. And I started singing for four years without any knowledge about medieval music at all.

AMF So did you actually study voice before...?

GSJ Yes I studied voice and I did musical singing. I did theatre work at the Norwegian theatre. And I did different things, also some renaissance, that was the oldest thing I did. But yes, it was very limited. Lied and all this stuff that you learn. It is nice and very good but I was very tired of using the voice in that manner and I wanted to have something new and fresh and I saw this course in Tønsberg about Gregorian chant. And I said 'what's that'? And so I made it to this course. And if you went to that course, you could go to France to Solesmes, and be there for, for two weeks. And study with the ... monks.... So I went there, to Solesmes, and I had a course in Gregorian chant, and I was hooked..... It ended with going to Saint Chapelle where I got to sing the solo and everything. And so my voice turned out to love this kind of singing.

AMF But when you were studying here in Oslo, where were you studying?

GSJ In Stavanger.

AMF At the conservatory in Stavanger like a voice student?

GSJ Like a voice, singing and also pedagogical.... Because it was not possible to just to do one thing.

AMF When you were in Stavanger you didn't specialise in medieval music at all?

GSJ No not at all.

AMF You just did like normal stuff that anyone did?

GSJ Yes.

AMF So, no one in Stavanger knew that you would be singing medieval music?

GSJ No, not medieval. But I had one teacher; he was very, very good because he was a lutenist ... and ... I made a special work with that kind of repertoire with him.

AMF And what would you assume that your teachers would say, would have said, if you would have wanted to do Gregorian chant and medieval music when you were studying?

GSJ At the conservatory?

AMF What would their reaction have been?

GSJ *They didn't have a clue*, I mean, who could teach me that at the conservatory? *There was no one there who had the skills to work in that manner*, because this repertoire of medieval music is not something which is based in the ... what you say...? The elementary singing courses in the conservatory.... Because you don't have teachers who know so much about it actually ... [and] still, it's not in a way being established. I think it will be more and more. So if you want to do all the music you have to go to Basel or you have to go to Trossingen. Or you have to go to special places in Paris or whatever.... But in Norway there has not been such a place. And that is why I thought of starting a centre for that.

AMF It's a wonderful thing. So do you feel that wherever you've been studying, and when you have been studying Gregorian chant you've been well supported by all?

GSJ Well I was finished with my degree and everything, so I was really living as a freelance singer in Oslo and doing things, yeah, different kinds of styles, especially in the theatre. But I needed to change because it was as if I was missing something.... And so when I went to Solesmes and to France I found this treasure – because that is what it is – this treasure of music, which was something no one had told me before. Even if I studied music for that long, I didn't know that it was there. And I think the fact is that really it is because it's very connected to the church, and the Catholic church. So it is a very religious view of, you know, this kind of music. But for me it was more and more becoming the art of singing really.... Because I think the Gregorian chant is really an art of singing.... So I found what I was searching.... I found the spirituality, but it was something I did for myself - not to show some one - but really for yourself. And also the technique which requires a lot of reading, a lot of concentrating and focusing, lines, smoothness, all this legality of everything. And also the kind of ... how to say? The scripture of it. I mean really, the way of thinking music.... The musicality of it. It was like discovering music once again, in a way for me when I came to Paris. And I thought well, I have to get rid of ... thinking of rhythm like this and this, and the notation like this. Am I a soprano, am I an alto? What am I? You know, you didn't have to think about that.

AMF that is an interesting point.

GSJ Yes. I think that is because it is just what the voice can do you know? And it's not something like in opera for example, that you have to sing this part because you are a soprano, so you can sing, you know, from Magic flute...

AMF You don't have to be a lyrical soprano

GSJ Yes. But you are out of this boundary in a way.

AMF So what was your boundary when you were in Stavanger?... What did people think was right for you then?

GSJ That's a good question.

AMF Were you put in a certain...

GSJ Not really, but I was a soprano.... I was lucky because I had a very wise teacher who actually was not so interested in what would become of me. No, but in a way that's a relief that you have a teacher who really just focuses on what you do musically. And what you do in the expression of your voice ... that is the most important thing. So the interpretation of the music was very important for her. So I did never really think about how to make a career as a professional singer.

AMF So, before you started making medieval music yourself ... had you at all been in touch with medieval music through recordings or concerts or something like that? Or was that when you started yourself?

GSJ Yes, it was. I didn't know anything about it before I started myself really.

AMF How important is the medieval text today, for the performer and for the audience?

GSJ I think there are so many different kinds of texts. You have the religious text, for example, in the Gregorian chant, which is so very, very important for the rhythm and for the expression of Gregorian chant. Which is really the basic of the melody of Gregorian chant, and the content of the Gregorian chant.... But I don't think – and someone said in the spiritual sense – I read that you don't have to know much Latin words to understand the sense of what is being sung in the Gregorian chant. And that's an interesting aspect, because today we want to analyse everything word by word by word, and maybe in that we lose track of the whole, the wholeness of what they, the whole sense....

AMF Yes, it's a good word to use

GSJ When you go to the medieval music you also find this ... for example, with Machaut which had this eloquent, poetic words, lyrics and was a famous poet. He was a master at putting words together. Yes, and using this courtly love style. So ... the question is did he mean what he wrote? Do we know? Or was it just a sport? Was it

just something they did to develop this, how do you say? Their ... manners, their intellectual behaviour, that it was a kind of game, more or less, no feeling at all? Because we always relate to feeling today. We are much more maybe concerned about 'what do we feel'? I don't know what they thought about in the medieval age. If all the texts, if you had to feel something, you know. Maybe it was just more a practise of writing in this style.... What is funny to notice for me, when I work with instrumentalists, is that for example if a song, for example with Machaut which I work a lot with now, if a song has a very joyful tune they always want to make it as a dance - because instrumentalists want to, you know - but it had the saddest text ever, you know. So we have a conflict. Are you going to think that this song is actually very sad, and so it had nothing to do with dancing? Or could it be that, well, actually this is a very nice example for the medieval practise. That you actually can have a very sad text and you have a dance, you know, that is put together. And it works.... That's an interpretation which we have to make today. And which is the artist's work. What do you want to put first? The music or the lyrics.

AMF Some groups would put together a programme where the texts are guiding what songs you choose for it ... [while] some groups would just take some favourite tunes and try and make a programme out of that. Do you have any specific thoughts about how you do that?

GSJ I like the thinking of a theme, like a project in a way. And of course when you deal with a programme like Maria, which is full of topics, you know, you can choose from the best of it all. But in 'Modus' productions which I work with, we always want to have this element of a communication in one way or another.... We use dancing, for example, in the Gregorian way, in the Gregorian setting, for example. Or an improvisation for example. We just made ... a performance which ... was about breathing. How do we breathe, you know? And so we will have this Gregorian music, and you have the organ which breathes, and you have a dancer who breathes. And we try to make it together like one whole thing, you know, where the theme is breathing. So there a lot of things. You don't have to focus on Maria especially. You can focus on love. You can focus on, like in Machaut, which is love. I mean love in the medieval ages. And that is so ... it's so wide. I mean ... a theme which is something which is actual for human beings today. I think that is something which is very

important when you put together a programme that it's something that has ... or something which can mean something - for people to relate on.

AMF Would you always include the translations in your programmes?

GSJ No, for example with Machaut we don't because we use an actor to translate it.... So we use something living.... The actor is the paper with a translation on, you know. So they don't have to read. They have to have the focus on the stage. Not in the papers.... I think it's very interesting, the whole concert form. How to think of that.... I think we are very lost in that because we think that, well, the performers are there and we are here. But how to make a new ... interaction between that [the audience and the performer]? And I think for the medieval especially because it is so strange and so far away and maybe not so understandable, because we speak in languages which are ... well, it could be Greek, you know? And so it's difficult so we have to find another way to go into or to open up this understanding maybe, without it being childish or without losing the artistic work.

AMF So a concert would in fact be more of a performance production?

GSJ Yes, without losing the concert form. But still it's...

AMF So when you perform medieval music, are you trying to reconstruct the past? Or are you making something new with it today?

GSJ It's not possible to reconstruct the past, because I don't know what that is really. But what I learn, from my greatest teachers, which is from monks in Solesmes.... The understanding of the importance of the manuscript and understanding and learning by doing principle of how to interpret the noise, the feeling of the medieval world music, in a way, gives me something personal of course which I can use in the creating process of doing concerts.

AMF So what about the sound?

GSJ Well, no one told me that I had to sing like this or this, or that the sound should be different or whatever. But what I noticed was by working so much with singing as I did then, and learning how to do it, it was a trend. Equality of course. I was trained to think much more lines. To think much more freedom. The placement of course; to have the placement in one place.... I think it is to find your own voice in a way. It was very much experimenting for me when I started singing the Gregorian also, to find how to lead the lines. How to express this without becoming expressive.... *I think it is because when you sing opera, you sing to the people. You sing really to impress the people.* It is really, 'Here I am with my voice, I will sing for you, I will sing - how beautiful my voice is', and blah, blah, blah. You know? *And you have to prove something.... But in the medieval music, for me I didn't do it for them, I did it for myself....* It was something I did *because it was good for me, it was good for my voice.* It wasn't so important to do it for an audience, because this music is created in an atmosphere also for meditation, especially the religious music, of course. It was something which went inside, and not so much outside. And I think that was the biggest - as a singer, that was the biggest turn-on for me, to actually sing for myself and not for everybody else and pleasing everybody else. And so I think that of course affects the voice also, because you become freer in daring to sing with your voice also.

AMF I was thinking more of a vocal sound. What would be one of the first things you would say was the most important thing when it comes to vocal sound?

GSJ The vocal sound? The first idea is maybe to think that it's a sound which is very, very light. The lightness of the voices is very ... you know, it's something which is very much appreciated. And also that maybe there is not a lot of big voices singing medieval music. You don't hear a lot of vibrato for example, you don't hear voices which have a lot of this. You have to be very simple in a way, in the expression, to express the quality of the medieval music maybe. For example when you hear the *Laude* songs and these things, it can actually be done very popular. It can be done also with chest voice, and people do that too. It doesn't have to be this clear angel sound which is round and should be warm.... You know the placement. Like a typical choir singer in a way.... But that is maybe a lot of the ideal which we have had also, because we listen to important ensemble like The Hilliard Ensemble or Sequentia with

Barbara Thornton.... I think you could find a lot of different voices and expressions of course. And so I think what I love for example with Dialogos was that mixing of very popular voices with very light voices. And so we have, you know something ... which is very connected, which was very interesting to work with for me, because I felt that I could do chest voice or I could do a high voice. You can do all the register really, and I think that is the most fun with medieval music, that you actually can do that. You don't have to be fixed on the high quality and very lightness all the time. You can also go deep and you can think that now I will show some muscles or whatever, you know?

AMF The vocal quality, is that something that comes with the repertoire or is that something you decide to do? Or is that something that, depending on the music, it just happens? Or ... what about blend?

G SJ Yeah, blending, yes. Yes, you can blend. [laughs] What do you mean by blending? Or what are you thinking about?

AMF For example when you sang with Dialogos, did you talk lots about blending?

G SJ No. That's maybe the strange part of it because like Katarina [Livljanić], she just put together a lot of singers with totally different [voices].... I don't know, but in a way during the work it was like you know each other. Like you in the trio, you know each other's voices, so in a way it becomes a familiar sound which you relate on. And your voice will go into this family, and so it becomes something which is real.

AMF So when you decide how you want to sing, it is your own instinct more than reading treatises of medieval people?

G SJ I appreciate musicologists very much. I think it is very, very good to have.... *It is very nice when the musicologist wants to actually meet the musicians and actually also have this communication with them, and not thinking that this music is just for the writing table.* That it is something, not just a thesis of words, you know? But I work a lot with Nils Holger Petersen the Centre for Medieval Music ... /Medieval Rituals [Centre for the Study of the Cultural Heritage of Medieval Rituals] in

Copenhagen ... working with dramas for example a lot. And it's very interesting. I am absolutely very in need of musicologists to know that my work is not just something which is not founded in something. I think that it is very important that it is grounded, and I know that these are the sources and these are the things, and how you do it is of course my responsibility. But I know where it comes from, I know where the sources are and I speak with people who know something about it. And I can always ask somebody who knows more than me.

AMF Is that something you think that you feel more of now that you have your own Centre [Modus] for Medieval Music?

GSJ No, I always felt that really. But well maybe now, absolutely. I would never dare to do something without consulting someone who knew, you know. And we are putting up the dramas and I thought how did they make dramas in the medieval time? Of course I have to do the research of that and find people who know something about that. I can't just go on. But then it is my choice, you know, to say ok, now I know that these are the theories around that, and now I can choose to say, well, I want to do it like that. And so you are free from the – uh – you know you don't have to do like the musicologist says, you know.

AMF A non-historically informed performance does not necessarily mean a non-informed performer

GSJ No ... I will let myself be inspired of it. It is difficult but I think that anyway all performers who claim that they do it the original way, they can't do that because you don't know what the original way is.... It doesn't exist. *You have to do it contemporary, whatever you do. But you can choose to make it contemporary in a way that sounds like medieval, or you can choose to do the contemporary the way it sounds contemporary.*

AMF But how can you make something that sounds medieval? That is a very interesting thing.

GSJ Of course then *you can go into the musicologist's world, where there are a lot of theories about how things were performed. But they were only in the books, you know?... But of course there are theses about how to work with the words. There are a lot of treatises which gives a clue of the medieval world. We know a lot about how they lived in the medieval world. We know about the churches which stands there, the acoustics. We have the scores of music. You know if you put it in that church you will have a resonance which goes ... you know? And so of course all this matters.*

AMF What about the sound?

GSJ Well you can't sing a high C in a chest voice.... So, you know something. You know that, you know.... I don't think the voice has changed that much from medieval times until now. I mean they were still human then. So you had register for the voice, and they couldn't do more than that. But of course someone had a small register and another had a big register. But also the music shows that. For example in the *Lauda* you have verses which go very, very high and with the refrain which is very simple.... Of course they had this variation of voices also. But it is hard to say even so. It is impossible to. It is what you want to express which is the most important thing I think. But knowledge of the medieval music and medieval singing is important.

AMF So after you had been to Solesmes... Who did you study with? Did you study more at the conservatory?

GSJ Yes because I met the professor at the conservatory at Saint Chapelle and he said why don't you come to Paris? And I said could I do that? So that was brilliant. And I worked to find a way to go to Paris. And so I went and I got into this conservatory. I did an audition and these things, and then while I was in Paris I went to the Centre of Medieval Music, which also was an opening and idea to make Modus of course. And also I met Katarina [Livljanić] of course, and that was very, very important.

Catherine King, London, UK, 10 October 2006.

AMF Catherine, how did you and why did you get into medieval music making?

CK That's going back a long way. Let me think. When I was at university – was that the first time? I'd always loved medieval music, even the stuff that was part of our normal repertoire in Britain.... When I was at Cambridge, at Trinity College, we sang quite a bit of medieval music in the chapel choir which I was a part of.... I've always loved the purity of the sound of open fifths. Right from the start, it kind of just gets me in the heart, really. From there on, well, in those days when I was at Cambridge, Gothic Voices were starting.... They'd been going a year or two or three and me and my twin brother, Richard, bought, between us, The Mirror of Narcissus the Machaut LP, as it was in those days and as a result of hearing that, I started programming medieval music into my own concert programmes and indeed, I remember doing a recital with my twin brother, with Richard, and we did some of the English 14th century carols and I sang some Machaut. And in those days I remember going to ... a medievalist at one of the Cambridge Colleges ... to find out about how to pronounce it and get some scholarly advice about it, so I've always been interested in kind of doing it in as pure a way as I can but very much turning to other people for advice. So, yeah, I guess that's how I got into it, from hearing some of the early recordings and just loving it from the start, really.... For my A levels at the age of 16 to 18, I studied music and maths and biology so I'm a scientist as well and I think that very much ties in with the early stuff actually, particularly the medieval music. Certainly some of the Ars Subtilior, they are really complex. I think you need a very mathematical brain for that and that really appeals to me. And then I had a year off and went to Italy to study Italian and history of art and then I went to Cambridge and I was studying music, which was very academic and I sang all the time but the singing was not part of my course, so it was just a tiny fraction of my final year. At Cambridge, *practical music didn't count for much.*

AMF That was academic music.

CK Totally academic with lots of analysis and history, learning to write fugues and harmony and some composition.

AMF That was a three year course?

CK Three year course, yes. But all the time I was performing, I sang in my chapel choir so I had services. I think I had five services a week. At least five services a week with practices. Very, very good chapel choir, Trinity College chapel choir.... Richard Marlowe, who ran it up until this last summer, he had a specialist interest in renaissance English music and medieval, and he loved Verdi, high romantic Italian stuff as well. Not that we sang much of that in the choir. We did do a few things actually. But in that chapel choir we sang a lot of the English Tudor music and as I mentioned, some medieval music. It was all just part of our daily routine. And with that choir ... he always wanted a very clean sound - he didn't want great big mature wobbly voices, he wanted real purity of sound. I was a soprano in those days incidentally, up until my mid-20s I was a soprano. I always had the low notes, [but] wasn't allowed to use them very much.

AMF Can you specify what the difference is vocally - what you do when you sing Early Music, what you do when...

CK Well, essentially nothing different, I think. I sing such a wide variety of music.... I sing Verdi's Requiem, I sing big Elgar with big orchestras and as you know I sing very straightforward straight medieval music, and some very delicate renaissance music with the lute that needs a very light sound. And I struggled for years, particularly with the lute song repertoire, getting tired, getting hoarse, thinking 'how do I do this?' and I've learned over the years that I need to do it in a lower key than I would with later music. Having said that, I've got better at being more versatile. But essentially, the only way I find to do them both is to absolutely use my full technique for the medieval music. I mean, having said that, of course there's a difference when I'm singing with a big orchestra and I need ten times the volume that I do in medieval music but for both ends of the spectrum I very much use my full voice, my full technique, which for me is very much about

speaking the words and using the voice really well from the core of the voice. The difference I suppose when I'm doing later music is I'm using much more *strength of the body behind the voice* which, even without me thinking about it brings a *bigger and richer sound with more vibrato and more weight of expression*. And I suppose I do have conscious ways of lightening the voice when I need to but I have to do it in a way that keeps *a core of sound coming right through the vocal cords....* I mean, *a lot of early music singers take it right off the voice and it all goes into a head voice and you can hear the vocal chords and they're not being used to the core of their sound. It's like the voice is kind of superficial* and I don't tend to do that. I try not to do that because that's when I get tired and I don't think that's using the voice very well.

AMF How is it to be the only woman [in Gothic Voices]?

CK Oh, it's great. I love it. It is great from a social point of view, we all get on really well and there's lots of joking that goes on but we're all really good friends. But musically, I thrive on it. It suits my egoist nature I think and I, being on the top line, I often get very interesting parts and if I don't, I'm weaving around on the top with a tenor below me having the words and it suits me very well and I love the way the voices overlap and interweave and it's great being in amongst where the voices are so close in range.... And I think from the group's point of view, it's just an added interest to have a female voice. It does sound different from having an all male or all female group and it gives us more variety because obviously we sing some pieces which are men only and we sing others with me on my own or with me as a top line and I think it's great to have the variety for the group. We all enjoy it and I also love the times when, often, as you know, there's an equal top pair of lines, with me and Steven [Harrold] usually, and our voices work really well and we love that interplay of the voices - me and my lower register, him and his higher register and we feel it works really well, it's just very enjoyable. It felt very different being in trio mediaeval and me being on the lower part of three. It was a completely different role for me. I enjoyed that as well but overall it suits me better to be the highest voice of three or four.

AMF Is it hard to go from one to the other? How would it be to sing Machaut one night and Verdi the next, for example?

CK I do do that. I've even done that in one day. That is hard. I can't remember now. I'm sure I've done it especially with rehearsals. Well, even the other day I had a rehearsal for some late renaissance/early baroque music with a group of women, actually with Musica Secreta last week and then on my way home I had a singing lesson and I was singing Bellini and Rossini. And then, actually, it just felt great to be able to open up and sing. I felt, I was really tired for all sorts of reasons, 'Is this going to be a mistake having a lesson now?' It was the end of the day and I'd been rehearsing all day doing other stuff but somehow I find the energy and it gives me more energy when I sing that bigger stuff. Ideally I wouldn't do them on the same day but I don't really have a problem with it. It's very much a mental switch, and I tend to find whatever music I'm doing, I'm just immersed in it, in that moment and time and I've forgotten the other music that I've been working on even if it's in the same day or I've been practising something else. I mean in terms of concert work, yeah, I do do those mixtures quite close together and it's OK for me. I don't think many singers do though.... I need to keep myself fit for it, I have to say. I think if I wasn't physically fit it would be much harder, particularly mixing the two. And in some ways, I couldn't even say one is harder than the other. *In many ways the medieval and the early stuff is harder because it requires such a degree of careful control* and it's more, in many ways it's more mentally, there's more of a mental regime and ... what's the word for it, not control but ... can't think of the word for it now, but discipline. Whereas singing the later stuff, of course there's that as well, but there's much more just doing it and going with the feelings. *It's much more of a mental switch than a vocal one for me. I thrive on the mixture really.*

AMF How do you use primary resources if at all?

CK Yeah, I do. It depends on the repertoire.... I always have an interest in them, and when I have the time I try and get them. For instance, in the lute song repertoire, I often work from facsimile copies.... With something like lute song repertoire, I don't particularly trust the modern editions and even if I were

reading off a modern edition, I'd be wanting to compare it with the original publication. Of course the original print may well be full of mistakes.... Have you heard our recordings, me and Jacob?... We've done loads together and we've done millions of concerts together in the past and he's very much an academic whereas I don't regard myself in that way and he's very much a purist so we work through things together and he knows when there are mistakes and when there aren't but I, on the whole, I do try and work from, in that repertoire, from primary sources. For, let's think, for later stuff, it depends. Sometimes I'm doing Bach with a choral society and I'm working from a modern edition and just singing from whatever the publication there is.... I've got a Bach CD with various arias, and with things like that, that really matter to me where I have the chance to go into more depth, I will generally at least consult someone who is more of an academic and who knows more about exactly how the ornamentation was intended to be.... Having said that, with Bach I haven't gone back to the original printings but I've talked to people who know more about it. With the medieval music, I don't work from primary sources.... If Chris Page has done an edition, he's done it directly from a primary source and I'm singing what he's written. The same with John Nixon, who does a lot of the background work and the editing.... So, *in a way, I leave it in other people's hands*, that sort of element of it. It depends what it is.

AMF What is your aim, your primary aim? Are you recreating something from the past or are you re-contextualising it into the present?

CK I would say very much my primary aim is to communicate the music to the audience today in whatever way works best, but in a setting that is as close to what I know of how it would originally be done.... So, for instance, yeah, medieval music is a little different. If I'm singing Hildegard, I'm very much thinking about the meaning of the words and the shapes and the phrases and how this can be put over to be effective to the audience that are there, but in some of the, I don't know, an English Motet ... where it's not really appropriate to sort of put emotion into the words. I guess, in terms of what I'm putting over to the audience, I'm trying to put over the clarity of the sound and the importance of the different sonorities that exist in that piece that you don't get in modern pieces.

AMF Why isn't it appropriate to put emotions in the words?

CK Well, I suppose, in that instance, because I don't think it would've been done at the time, on the whole. It depends a bit what the music is. I mean I think if it's some lullaby about Jesus' birth and the angel coming, then I will be telling a story with that. In other instances it's not appropriate because you've got three different sets of words going on at the same time and people were familiar with the words and it was just a way of setting them. And, being over emotional about them, as I understand it from various scholars, it wasn't done at that time and if you try and do it, particularly in a polyphonic piece, it just doesn't work. It muddies the sound and takes away from the clarity of the sound. But *I would say, overall, my objective when I'm singing medieval music, and any music, is to make it meaningful in whatever way, to the audience now, is more important than... What would the opposite be?* I suppose... *doing a performance that doesn't carry any emotional weight or is perhaps very scholarly accurate but if it doesn't mean anything for the performance, to the audience, as far as I'm concerned, there's no point in doing it.*

AMF How important is the medieval text today?

CK I think it depends very much on the piece and the text. I think overall it's very important. There's a big difference between the people who hear the text now and the people who would've heard them at the time when they were performed and written. The audience or the people who were singing it, or the Duke or whoever who was listening to it, would be much more familiar with the text and would obviously understand the language, whereas modern audiences don't necessarily.... I think many of the texts are absolutely vitally important and were confirming beliefs and telling stories in a very important way. And *to modern audiences, particularly sacred texts don't have the importance and the meaning that they would've done to people where religion was the most important thing in their life and was how they'd led their lives with real fear of God ... and I think that just doesn't apply to modern society on the whole....* For

me it's important in terms of, generally, in terms of how to perform the piece and to give the piece a meaning to put over but less so in medieval music than in anything from probably 1600 onwards, I would say. And from then onwards it's absolutely vital. I think not always in medieval music for modern audiences.

AMF What about translations in programmes?

CK Not always necessary. I think the meaning of a song can come over without the translation sometimes.... I think sometimes it's lovely to have them and particularly in a text that tells a story, but having said that, I think it's quite possible to tell a story where the audience picks up half the meaning in the way that you sing it without understanding every word. I think is quite possible. On the whole I very much favour having translations wherever possible but I don't think it's essential. I used to think it was absolutely essential, I used to be much more rigid about it. But I think an audience can get a huge amount from a piece or a programme where they're just more immersed in the sound and the sound world and different feelings, and emotions come over from different songs and texts without you necessarily understanding every single word. In the way that if you listen to some French *Melodie* and you're not fluent in French, it'll come over in some degree and still carry weight and meaning and mean something to whoever's listening to it.

Emma Kirkby, London, UK, 15 February 2008.

EK It happened to be an important fact that I was so interested in words, so I had that textural engagement, as it were, which a few people did have with this repertoire before, but it just wasn't well known enough, really, and most people were looking for the beautiful sound and they wanted a voice that was the same from top to bottom with perfect legato and all those things. Well, I still find that the *text comes a poor second in most people's attitude to singing*. And most singing teachers, they may say things about diction, but too many of them are still suggesting that you go for the line and don't let the consonants get in the way, whereas, I was lucky to find Jessica Cash very early on, who said, 'let the consonants get in the way, they're really helpful.' And I just find, trying to vocalise without them, trying to sing those non-exercises all on 'ah', it's very difficult, much more tiring.

AMF And you never really use it.

EK No. It's like a very, very complex exercise which I suppose teaches you some kind of endurance. I think, if you do let consonants guide you, as it were, and you *observe the most efficient ways of speaking them and then singing in the same way, it just saves enormous amounts of energy and gives you a much cleaner sound*. So, I think those were the two strands, for me, one was the text and the other the sound of the instruments. I mean, other people, who knew much more than me, were already working out how to play recreated instruments, and that was a very exciting and beautiful sound.... Plus, of course, the music that engaged me quickest, I have to say, was polyphony, and the thought of the intertwining lines was just so exciting. I don't have much head for harmony, actually, it's not really my thing. I'm just not a 'vertical' person, I'm much more horizontal. And so, it just came naturally to me. But, then, with the medieval, in a way, the reason that it had the impact it did, with Hildegard, in particular, was just that she's so special, and no one had really done that before, so, I was so lucky to be there at the beginning of that. I think Sequencia was coming to it about the same time but, certainly, in England it was Christopher Page who produced all this stuff, and my response to that was to the *Latin texts*, I think, and to *the beautiful images in her sequences*.... You know, it was just a response to texts and imaging. Well, there's a kind of rhapsody in her stuff, isn't there?

A Had you heard about Hildegard before you were actually asked to do that?

EK No, I hadn't, not at all. All I knew about was Renaissance stuff, mostly, Byrd and Dowland and Morley, and the madrigals and the lute songs, really, that was the thing. I dabbled in various things as a student, as an amateur, in a group called The Oxford Early Music Group, and we did Dufay, Machaut, and co, and tried not to get lost, and to remember how many A's and B's we'd done in a rondo... I loved it, it was great fun. And a little bit of Monteverdi, I mean, all that sort of stuff. So, I had a little bit of an impression of those things. And I sang in the Schola Cantorum at Oxford, a very good choir that did polyphony like Taverner, Eton choir book stuff, you know, gorgeous music, and also provided the choir for Bach, Handel or Purcell in things like Bath Festival concerts.... We were free, as a student choir, and we were making a sound that already seemed cleaner and more acceptable to some of the directors than a choir that was made up of would-be opera singers.... I mean, this is back in the 70s, well, late 60s, actually, 69, 70. So, that was thrilling ... I just loved this stuff, and I couldn't get enough of it, but I didn't have the knowledge, really. I always relied on other people for the knowledge.... I think it's quite common with singers. I expect the current generation now at music college or university will really consciously study this repertoire.... Some of the graduate courses, they'll end up doing more research than I've ever done and it'll be interesting to see how it comes out.... But, the fact is, there are people who have spent all their days in the library, who have done the research, and I'm happy just to have my own reaction to the results of their labours, quite honestly, rather than going to the library and trying to find the same stuff myself, which has already been found by now. And I'm just a *vessel*, really.

AMF We talked earlier, before I started to record, about how you became the sort of early music voice that –

EK Yes, yes, and the danger of clones. Yes, – *I was very aware, when I started, that some people reacted favourably to what I was doing, because of what it wasn't. 'At last, a voice that does not wobble, a voice that is not mostly out of tune, a voice that doesn't obscure the words...'. They were all negatives to start with.*

A It's interesting you say that.

EK And I think some people just were so *relieved to get away from the complexity of the sound* that was the norm, somehow, since the war. I don't know just when things got so loud. If you look back earlier, you find some simpler sounds again, so, it's really quite recent, that whole, sort of involved, voluminous, well-fed effect. I am very happy to say that, to some extent, in the mainstream now, you really can sense that the early music movements had an impact even on the mainstream singers. I mean, you put on an opera and in the old days, you wouldn't even know what language it was in. But now you know that, and you can often hear the text. They're trying harder, I think, to get those things right now, for whatever reason.... There are lots of little pocket opera performances going around, which actually mean that people don't have to shout.... So, that all helps, as well. I think people's technique is much more subtle than it was. I'm sure there were always good teachers, but I do think there's some very good knowledge of singing technique nowadays.... It's tricky, you've always got to balance technical awareness and observation of what's going on with your natural response to things.... I'm waiting for the day when the average young singer, at music college, is not always expected to compete with the piano, I think the piano in every room has a very definite effect. It's an immensely successful, very fine instrument, but it's a sound world all on its own.... And especially if I'm in a room, in music college, which isn't much bigger than a piano, anyway, and I'm up against this instrument, I feel defeated, I feel there's nowhere to put my sound. And what a young person feels, I just don't know.... It's as though, as a speaker, you always had to use this tone of voice to say anything at all, otherwise you couldn't start. You know, I just find this necessity unfortunate, particularly for young voices. And I also think that, with young women's voices, certainly, their middle area isn't terribly strong, and the piano's is. So, therefore, sopranos they go for what's easy, and they think only about high notes, because they can hear those better. And I used to find that, with some of the voices that I ended up hearing in music college, certainly in the early years there, if you took the piano away and they sang on their own, the voice was kind of hollow, you know, as if they'd never really met the centre of it. My dream is to have lutes, well, guitars, at least, and lutes ... just other forms of accompaniment, as a norm, and it's not there, yet.... Because, of course, a piano, once you've invested in it, it's there, there's no further expense, really. And it's very handy to play. I spend a lot

of time coaching people in pieces for which they've got the wrong accompaniment. You know, the piano is trying to be an orchestra, or the piano is trying to be two wind obligato instruments and a string bass and an organ. And I don't know what we can do about it, because it's got such a hold on everyone. If people play incredibly sensitively, it's fine, but by the law of averages most pianists will be somewhere on the continuum from deeply sensitive to very crude.

AMF Have you ever been reading books about vocal sound?

EK I haven't read much ... it's been a bit random, my reading, I must say. Just odd things I've picked up really, and, obviously, the basics - Caccini, Tosi and so on. Also, books about the voice – modern books, some of them, Patsy Rodenburg, for instance, about approaches to singing and how to think about your voice. No, but mostly, I'm honestly just living on my wits really, and responding to what I see.... Little scraps of descriptions of voices will stick in the mind over the years, for instance, the word 'still' used as a compliment, to make something quiet, 'still', that was a nice thing. And 'shrill' was a nice thing, a shrill voice was something beautiful. So, I we can see, a lot of descriptions of singing are metaphorical, poetic almost, sometimes. And our use of language has changed which does make it harder.

AMF From when you started, the terminology of what has happened, has changed. I mean, like, authenticity, and Historically Informed Performance and wherever we are now.... Have you been changing at all, because the movement is changing, or have you just done your thing?

EK To be honest, I don't think I have very much really, no. I think I would have to admit that. I think, if the pieces are there, say, the Dowland or the Byrd consort songs, and the right instruments are there, then I find out what I can about the text and so on, and I've just responded to what was there and I've reacted – really dumbly as it were, just very instinctively.... *I've loved singing, I've worked with fantastic people, I've met amazing repertoire, and I get really freaked if people say, 'you're an expert, you're a specialist.'*

AMF No, but you are, though.

EK *I'm a specialist because I've lived with the music, but I'm not a fount of knowledge about it.* And I also do worry if people say, 'this is absolutely the only way to do it' or, 'this is the first time it's ever been done.' I'm always very loath to say it's the first for anything, because, I mean, the number of times you say, 'this is the first performance,' and then somebody says, 'no, no, we did it in Thames Ditton in 1926.'

AMF Don't you think, though, the reason why you are a specialist is because of the way you make music. It works for people and people want to hear it. That's what matters.

EK If anyone's implying that what you are hearing is the one and only way to do something, that really gets up my nose.... I think there's a desperate need for certainty in human nature, and I think we have to fight it. I mean, it's like fundamentalist religion, it's exactly the same thing, 'what's the right thing? I need to know the right thing. And if I've found it, I've got to reject everything else.'

AMF I was just thinking about the beginning of the Early Music movement, and where we are now. Now, it's possible to be very, very creative, because the music has been done in so many different ways. We also know that it's impossible to recreate a certain sound.

EK Yes, I think there's a certain freedom in that, it's true.... *The whole word 'authenticity' hung over us like a dead weight, in a way, because you were always worrying.* Well, you couldn't afford to worry, you just got on with it, but there were people on the sidelines saying, 'no, no, you haven't got it right yet', and so on and so on. Yes, that earnest phase, is – well, it will never go away, because people do love truth and people love to be scientific, and people who make a big study of something, if they find an electrifying fact then, obviously, it's quite nice to try and operate that, if you can.... And it's incredibly individual, people's reaction to voices, I think. That's fine, because, ultimately, it means more work for more people, anyway. If people have very strong attitudes for and against one singer or another then, as long as you've got enough people with opinions then there will be enough jobs for all the different singers. And that's great, that's fine.... One of the things I became aware of,

early on, was when it was sold as, 'look, folks, you have to listen to this, because it's right. You have to hear this, because everything else you've been hearing before, is wrong.'

AMF What was that?

EK It did happen, because people love that, crusading – as I say, it's like religious fundamentalism, there's something in human nature that says, if you have a wonderful idea – there's a certain character type, once it's got that wonderful idea, it will try and shove it down everybody else's throats and it will try and rule out all alternatives. It's got nothing to do with the idea itself, it's just a human foible, people want security and they want to be sure that they have the one true path. And that was around. It was like a bit of a heavyweight.... I never wanted it to be assumed that what I was doing was a protest in itself. I wasn't making statements, I was just singing. But I was sometimes set up thus 'well, of course, by doing that, you are stating that the previous performances were all wrong'. And I always said, 'no, I'm not'.... The first response [in the 1960s] was, add lots of instruments, let's make it as colourful as possible, the musical toy shop, it was called. And when it became clear that those instruments were just complete figments, and then you were back to a very simple effect of just voice, and you really had to get into the text and focus on that, it was a big shock for people.

AMF She [Jantina Noorman] had been going on for a bit, and then a voice like yours, I mean, that's a very, very different –

EK So different, yes, though we did sing together sometimes.

AMF How was that?

EK That was fine, yeah. Because, actually, Jantina had two sounds, she had her Bulgarian peasant [sings], that sound, and she had her sweet sound.... She was always a complete natural, I don't think she had singing lessons ... as far as I know. And she was just so down-to-earth and lovely, everybody was very fond of her. She was always, I think, an older soul than the rest of us, in a way. I was only in Reservata a

couple of times, and it was fun. But she was already a bit of a mother figure, somehow, just watching all these idiots around her. She was really sweet, a very, very nice woman – very Dutch, actually, she just got on with things.

AMF Do you think that straight voices – why did we come to like it?

EK Well, directness, I think.... Well, do you know many children that really like wobbly voices?

AMF No. When they hear us, 'oh, you sing opera' –

EK Yeah, they dislike it, usually. I think it's a sort of acquired taste, it's an adult taste, the vibrato voice, a bit like caviar, some people never get the taste for it. Having said that, of course, you still can get very beautiful voices that have a certain degree of vibrato in them. But if it starts too soon in a note, I think, personally, there's still the child in me that just finds that funny [sings]. It just makes me laugh.... And for me, always, *the crucial thing is just to get the onset right and to get straight into the note so that it's a clean vowel, and that comes from the consonant almost always, or, if there's no consonant, the vowel has also a very definite start, and then, as you lean into the note, then maybe some of the vibrato will come, as a sort of ornamenting of the note*, in a sense. And when Margi [Philpot] sang very, very straight, it was an extraordinary effect. I don't know if it's correct, I haven't a clue, because, actually, that kind of singing, to do that, requires a very definite effort, actually. If you sing it very loud, keeping it absolutely straight, to me, [that] was a feeling of restriction, so, I don't know the answer.

AMF My feeling towards why I sing with a fairly straight tone quality, is very much because of the tuning.

EK Yeah. Sure, and because of the dissonances. You can't enjoy any kind of suspension ... I mean, *if someone is holding a note, and the next one joins it, and they're both wobbling, then the chances of them being able to create that suspension are very small, they'd have to wobble at exactly the same speed, and why bother?* I think that's absolutely the crucial thing, it's how you get a clean start, and that comes

from an instrument - to my mind, it comes from a vowel that is the natural result of a good consonant. A good consonant is a closing and opening. It's a closing of the pipe, and it's squeezed close so that it bursts open, and you just get that lovely impact, and you can do what you want with the note from then on.

AMF Many people say that it's a speech-related sound, when you sing with a straight...

EK Yeah, it is, elevated speech, exactly.

AMF Do you think, though, when your voice and similar voices to your voice, 'oh yeah, that's an Early Music voice' - immediately we can label...

EK Well, there's a certain nakedness about it, isn't it?

AMF I'm just curious.... You made a sound that was natural to you, and you used your instrument in a way that felt good, and you used the consonants and you sang the music, you put your mind to go with the texts and that's what you did. And then, other people, musicologists and so on, they found justifications for why your sound was - right.

EK I don't know, did they? ... We can't know, we absolutely can't know if it sounded...

AMF Of course we can't, but it's what we, in modern time – it's what became fashionable to do.

EK There is an instinctive awareness. When things really fit together, you do sense it. So, if the instrument and the voice are really absolutely duetting, in a way that balances and all the dissonances are clear, there is a feeling of – vivacity about it. Yes, you still can't prove it, but you just get a feeling – you recognise it, something quite deep inside recognises that that partnership is real.

AMF Do you think that the HIP movement and authenticity movement have been

crucial for the Early Music movement in the way that it has been there to promote concerts and sell records?

EK You mean using that description, selling it on that basis? Buy this because it's good for you. Does it work? I don't know.

AMF No, but that you let people think that they've been given something that has a history to it.

EK Yeah, yeah. I suppose that's right. I would think that you're not going to get very far just selling it on that basis. I mean, if people don't like the sound of it, then it's not going to work. But, yes, I suppose it could be the calling card.

Katarina Livljanic and Benjamin Bagby, Paris, France, 15 March 2006.

AMF You started with musicology?

KL Yes if I speak of the higher education.... I went to music a school when I was a kid, and I sang in a women's choir when I was a teenager. We did a lot of contemporary ... music. Some composers even wrote some pieces for us.... I am happy that I did it, and I am sure it gave me lots of ideas in my work with the others [Dialogos] today, because I saw how you work with women's voices, even though we were very young.... I remember, for a long time I was imitating, vocally, one girl that was a 'big expert' in the choir and it actually took a very, very long time to get rid of that, because she had a lower voice than I did.

AMF You have quite a low voice.

KL I do but when I sing I am really a mezzo, I can sing higher, I can sing in a low register but where I feel more consistent vocally is a mezzo.... And then I went to study musicology because I was already very interested in medieval music.

AMF Why?

KL I come from a very interesting city. I am from Croatia, from the city of Zadar, which is a city which had an early music festival in the 60s and 70s. I went as a child, my mother would take me to concerts. I heard some concerts of medieval music when I was a child and I remember one concert particularly that really turned me on. It was Pro Cantione Antiqua from London. In the 70s they did 'The play of Daniel'.... Since then, it was what I wanted to do. So I went to musicology because I thought if I studied voice in Zagreb in Croatia it would have been a vocal training adapted to 19th century Italian opera mostly.

AMF So you didn't go to Conservatory to sing?

KL I did go to Conservatory but I started with musicology. I was very sure from the beginning that I wanted to sing medieval music. I studied notation, history and other disciplines.... But then I came here quite early after I finished my undergraduate studies, and I said 'now the time for singing medieval music really must start because I cannot wait much longer', because then I would get too old.

AMF How old were you then?

KL I was 25, and then at 26 I started with voice lessons again.... *You can specialise, that's great, but if you are a healthy voice you should be able to sing other repertoires, even if you one day say 'I don't like it, it is not a type of repertoire I want to sing in a concert'....* I experienced that ... early music, and even medieval music was somehow too separate, so I went for a while into medieval music training and then I said OK, I can still study medieval music concentrating on Gregorian chant, notation, counter point, all these disciplines, but for voice lessons, I decided to go to somebody who would be more generally oriented.

(Benjamin Bagby joins the conversation)

BB Most of my work is with men's voices but I was also participating in Barbara Thornton's work on Hildegard von Bingen.... She had a women's vocal ensemble called Vox Feminae for some years. But this was always an *ad hoc* ensemble, the members were changing over the years, there were some that stayed as long as 10 or 12 years but there were always some new members and some that left, so it was always turning over.... She never really had the chance to build up one ensemble that was always the same.... Such as ensembles like Anonymous 4, who had a long history of always the same voices singing together. In Barbara's case it was more of a project, it wasn't so much the ensemble, it was the repertoire.

KL I did my dissertation [PhD] with Marie Noël Colette and she taught me a lot.... So I had to do a very mainstream musicology work full time parallel to vocal training.... And that can be difficult. One does need a very deep theoretical knowledge to even create a programme, to find the sources, it's certainly very useful. *Sometimes it almost felt as if music was the second plan, as I was hearing musicians*

who could not escape from the musicological aspect and a certain 'rational' aspect in the medieval music, and it was very painful for me to realise that.... The problem with medieval music is that it lives for a relatively small audience, it's not like the mainstream, opera repertoire. And *the audience is also very much influenced by what you tell them*, and I think for a long time that people who had a very poor vocal or instrumental training were allowed in medieval music, even in a high, let's say, not high level, but high exposure. Records and everything.... Because it was supposed that was the type of voice you had to have for medieval music, and that is not true, the level was sometimes rather poor.

BB For classical music and baroque music there tended to be critics, journalists, music critics who knew a lot about music and general aesthetics, but whenever it was medieval music they always called a musicologist, who has the criteria for evaluating whether this concert or record was good or bad, so it was usually judged by someone who knew nothing about music because the journalists would say 'don't ask me, I know nothing about it'.... So *what happened in the 1980s and 1990s, when the critical voices were largely musicologists, was that their criteria for judging a good or correct performance were based on the degree to which the performance sounded like the manuscript (or in some cases, the transcription) 'looks'. Performative elements which were not found in the manuscript were judged to be 'make-believe' and therefore the performance was not considered to be serious. It is very visual. And it made performers, I think, very cautious....* Critical voices were actually extremely conservative about medieval music as opposed to say Baroque music or classic music, but that's changing now a bit.

KL Yes I think now is a period of change.

BB It was that way a long time and it nearly kind of orthodoxy in medieval music, which was brought about by the critics themselves and it had an effect on the way people performed sometimes, and it made them cautious.

KL Yes.

AMF Both of you are musicologists and were starting off as that, and then you are singing as well. Do you sometimes get frustrated about that your intuitive way of performing sometimes doesn't coincide with what you know 'musicologically'?

KL Absolutely. And also *I get frustrated because I feel that intuitively something should sound 'this way' and then I know I can never validate that in an article... because I have no way to measure it by scientific criteria...* Being in a situation of teaching medieval music you also have to be present as a voice who publishes. But I publish and release records. ... *If I am publishing an article about some repertoire it will somehow remain less concrete. If we can sing it, it is so much more real.*

KL We can now start speaking about the recordings made in the 60s, 70s also from a musicological point of view....

BB Ethnomusicology.

KL Now we can speak about the tendencies in the 60s.... For the recordings from the 70s we distinguish now the main different styles.

AMF What was your experience of early music before you started yourself: Recordings and concerts and readings?

KL My experience with the early music was that I listened to it a lot before I started doing it myself.

AMF Who did you listen to then?

KL To anything that I could find. I lived in Croatia and Yugoslavia was a country in which you can't get everything so easily.... I must say that when I arrived at the Conservatory when I was 19, my general awareness of medieval repertoires was actually rather good because I really heard a lot of music before studying and performing it.

AMF Do you sing any other repertoires other than medieval music at the moment?

KL Yes. I do.

AMF Do you use your voice differently according to what you sing? ...

KL Yes. It's not something that is always conscious, I think. *I think of the music itself, and how it is written and then the accompaniment and the situation. Are you singing alone or with others? Is it a cappella, or is it with instruments? It can give you a lot of information about the kind of voice to use and I think you just go in to it without really thinking.* I think so but it should be somebody else to say that.

BB It is also related to the texts.

KL In medieval music we often sing in groups of three, four, five people or in small *a cappella* groups or with instruments, and when you sing with others, one has to simply control the vibrato ... so that you sing in tune. When you sing with two or three other people and if you all sing with a big vibrato you will never be able to be perfectly together in tune and the text will not be clearly understandable. When you sing alone with instruments, piano, you use a different kind of voice.... *It is like French, which is a language I speak very well around some people and very badly around some other people, and there is no way to know why....* I think it is like that with music, with some people you sing differently, with some instruments you sing differently.

AMF Are you aware of using a modern technique and to what extent were your singing lessons relevant for medieval music making?

KL I would also ask a question: what means 'a modern technique'? What do we know about old technique?

AMF Good point. I think I am referring to what is mostly being taught in conservatories today.

BB It is just one of many traditions. I'd say that Bobby McFerrin has a modern technique and he is a fantastic vocalist.

AMF Yes.

BB It is modern technique.

KL If we oppose 'modern' to 'old', is it the 'old' we are teaching now in conservatories in the department of early music, or is it something that we heard about from theoretical texts or chronicles about training in those times? I am afraid we don't know much about how people were trained in 13th century Paris, what was the vocal training?

AMF No exactly.

BB It is interesting, there's a total lack of knowledge of vocal methods, exercises...

KL But for the repertoire they sung, they needed very trained voices....

BB You see certain types of vocals movements with high priority.... Descending scales. And some of the pieces, such as organum, contain segments which are like exercises themselves.... A singer who is involved in singing the liturgy in a monastery or cathedral setting isn't really thinking about warming up the voice. In a way it is perpetually warmed up. Especially monastic singing - by the time the sun has come up you are beautifully warmed up.

KL In the most dark part of the night when you are waking up you actually sing the longest office.

BB It starts rather simple and becomes more complex. In a way, singing Matutinum was the best vocal warm up imaginable.

KL The responsories in Matutinum are vocally the most complex.

AMF That's interesting. I didn't know that.... And what about Barbara Thornton, did she study at a conservatory?

BB She was in the Amsterdam conservatory for several years and she even had a brief period of opera. She was in an opera studio in Zurich for one year. That was when she met Andrea Von Ramm, I think she was very stimulated by Andrea's intellectual interests.... She got very much swept up in that and then came to Basle and met all the other people who were there and at that time Basle really was the only place to go, and I think there was the feeling in those days that we were all kind of from a similar background and found ourselves in this Swiss city, there was a lot of foreigners, as there always has been. I think Andrea really influenced Barbara a lot.... But she was also singing new music with Andrea, who was interested in new music and she was always studying some other repertoires. She went through periods of being interested in 17th century monodies. She was friends with several composers who would come to her concerts and would, you know the phenomenon, would go to her concerts and say 'ooo, interesting sounds, can I write something for you?' so she had a little bit of that too. It was always on the side and she had a lot of intellectual interests also, she was always studying, had projects that were sometimes related to singing.

AMF How important is the medieval text today?

BB In a way it is more important than it was before because now we have new technologies for making it available to people who listen. For instance, if you sing a long, long chant which is quite dense and complicated and the audience may have a translation printed they may read over it a bit but they don't associate anything they are hearing with any specific word if they don't know the language that you are singing in. Now when we have video projection translation *you can coordinate things that you are actually singing with things the audience actually reads, and it increases the closeness of people to the actual text.* So ... the proximity has increased a lot - the technology for that has increased a lot. The importance - that always depends on the listeners I think.

KL But also I think it depends very much on the way a performer relates to it. In preparing the content of a programme, for me the text of the song is always very important.

BB It is also the case for the things I have been doing. The programme has a thematic idea that unifies. Of course the text is the reason you chose the piece not the melody. *So in a way the melodies are almost unimportant, they are not really the reason for singing.*

KL In preparing the content of a programme, for me the text of the song is always very important.... And also, you can make so many different things with the melody because of the text.... People say 'how great that there are subtitles' and others who say 'it is too much for me'.... It is becoming completely normal when you go to see an opera ... so if you perform the programme which is a story from the beginning to the end I find it easier. I must say after the concerts where we do subtitles I always hear more people who are happy with the subtitles than those that were unhappy.... You can always close your eyes.

BB *Maybe some day we will all have a device implanted in our brains and the signal will go to everybody's device and you can choose to turn it on.*

AMF What is your primary aim, are you recreating something from the past or re-contextualising the music in the 21st century?

KL *Why would I want to build Notre Dame Cathedral stone by stone looking the same? I am sure I can never do it the way they did it at the time. I always say the same thing: would I like it if I would hear how they sang it? Maybe I wouldn't like it. The musicological research is a great help, and it preserves us from not going too far from the sources, but we do have our own emotional and expressive dimensions in the music we perform and it is impossible to absolutely neglect them.*

BB It's a bit like the 19th century idea, we had these skeletons of dinosaurs – but what did they look like? We somehow recreated these animals but we have no way to know what they looked like.... We don't know what colour they were. Why are they always

green and grey? Maybe they were blue. It is the perceived idea of a dinosaur and it is a little bit like that with music as well. We do have the skeleton, it's true, we know something about the structure and we know the words but we don't necessarily know how they were pronounced.... And that's about it and all the rest is imagination based on some kind of prior experience, intuition, taste, and assumed ideas - the rest is sketched out.... Did the dinosaurs have hair or feathers, scales or?... We can't know it. So at that point it's informed intuition but it's also, it is informed in a reconstructive spirit.

AMF Yes.

BB It is not trying to just make anything that sounds good, but in a way it is good to have a lot of limits, there are limits from the manuscripts, metric sub-text maybe, there are all kinds of limitations and then within all of those kinds of limitations you can still be creative, that's what is really interesting.

KL *It is an attempt to speak the language of people from the Middle Ages but also a reflection of how it speaks to us.*

BB It is always a compromise.... I don't think you would ever use the word authentic... There is an authenticity that we do strive for.... Authenticity is that it is a human experience.

KL I think now that we live in a post-authentic world.

BB Post authentic music.

AMF How do you use primary sources?

KL I try to get from them as much information as possible. Not only taking the melody but getting the feeling of the manuscripts and to see in which situations it may have been used, by how many people, by which kind of people.... It's the most efficient way to learn how this music was sung. I try to use it with a lot of respect because also it is so incredible that we take a manuscript from someone who lived

many centuries of years ago and read it. It amazing that you can have the access to it. I must say I carry a very big emotion always to even open a manuscript. It is always a big lesson and a big inspiration.

AMF How important is the concert venue? Do you adjust your way of singing according to a specific acoustic?

KL Yes, yes that is very important. You come to sing in a new place, you start and after five minutes you start adjusting. It is very important, I am sure you will share this.

BB For instance, early chant. We have a romantic notion that chants are sung in a huge space but not all churches are big.... That also effects polyphony. And of course we all have to deal with concert halls especially in places like America, places like Australia.

KL Yes, it's tricky.

BB Yes, where the church can be carpeted or made of wood.

KL That does affect the way you sing. Sometimes you even ask yourself should we even perform it in a place like this, but then you cannot say no but you know that the audience will definitely not get the best of this music because it is not meant to be performed here.

AMF Have you ever felt that you have been criticised for singing medieval polyphonic music as a woman?

KL Not criticized, *but certainly reminded, that it was the world of men.*

AMF So how do you feel about that?

KL The thing I feel is the same thing like about authenticity, we cannot sound like the people in the 10th century.... And in medieval monasteries women were singing.

AMF I thought it was wonderful to hear the *Chant War* CD, where, I shouldn't say I was surprised about your sound, I really liked it and it was very different from what I had heard of you before, I was thinking, do you think you were influenced by the sound that you heard the men do?

KL I don't know. Did you feel like that? Maybe influenced by men.... I have also changed vocally.

AMF Do you think so? Yes because I was thinking, when I heard it first I was thinking 'is she doing this'. I couldn't really believe it.

KL What did you hear before?

AMF I have heard your CDs, your *Terra Adriatica* for example.

KL Is it long ago! ... Very few of the singers on the albums are the same.

AMF Yes. That was different.

KL *Terra Adriatica* was my record of young age.

AMF I think it is a lovely record.

KL It is. It has a 'youthful' quality about it.... Then there was *La Vision de Tondal*.

AMF Yes, that's a different sound again.

KL Completely. And between *Terra Adriatica* and *Tondal* I did change vocally, and also between *Tondal* and *Chant Wars*, yes.

AMF And also do you work with Alla Francesca?

KL I did once, I worked with Alla Francesca when I did *Terra Adriatica*, that was about the same time, I think it was one year apart.

AMF Do you recite a lot actually?

KL I do.

AMF Do you talk in concerts?

KL No. but for instance, in the programme *Vision of Tondal* there are some spoken parts, and in the new programme I also recite.

Brigitte Lesne, Paris, France, 16 March 2006.

AMF How did you, and why did you get in to medieval music?

BL In my school when I was really young ... I met some teachers who were interested in ... renaissance music. It was not at the beginning medieval. And also, I met a teacher of French literature and we worked with Tristan and Isolde and we did a 'spectacle' in the school ... and it was really a great experience for me.... I was 15. And, this teacher of French literature had some records of medieval music.... I heard Jean Belliard ... who sang medieval music in France, he is alive today. He is a countertenor. And he has a beautiful voice and I've never heard singing like that except my brother who was younger, but who also was singing as a counter tenor.... Hearing that type of music was a shock for me, and by curiosity I started searching.... I was playing piano at the time, and I looked for somebody, a group or something with that type of music. I met an Italian group two years later, from Milano. The name was Alia Musica.... We worked on Spanish repertory.... And it was really fantastic because I had a very natural voice, a child voice and I was with people interested in traditional music. And one of them knew liturgical music very well, and thinking about that I realized that it was really important to know liturgical music ... so I continued and studied Gregorian chant for a long time with Marie-Noël Colette who is a musicologist.

AMF Here in Paris. Was she at the University?

BL She teaches in École pratique des Hautes Études, which is a part of the Sorbonne ... and she was really my mentor.... She is passionate and it was a great chance [opportunity] to begin studying musicology with her.... I met Dominique Vellard from [Ensemble] Gilles Binchois and I sang and played the harp ... ten or twelve years. I left and began La Francesca and Discantus.

AMF You started both groups in 89.

BL I met Pierre Hamon and Emmanuel Bonnardot in Binchois ensemble.... We wanted to try things a little different, and we began with Italian repertory that we hadn't done with Binchois. We had lots of ideas and we wanted to try them.

AMF Did you go to a conservatory to study voice as well?

BL The voice, no.... I was studying piano ... and one time I went to meet a chant [voice] teacher and it was really hard, because I sang a Machaut piece and really she didn't understand that repertory. So it was a bad experience.... She sang only classic repertory and she had no curiosity for other...

AMF So only standard classical repertoire?

BL Yes, it was a bad experience. So I searched for particular teachers, and I met some very good teachers but not in a conservatory.... At that time the Conservatoire de Lyon didn't exist. Now in France you have only one place if you want to sing medieval music, it's Conservatoire National Supérieur de Lyon where you have a class for medieval, renaissance, baroque music, and chant music.... But in Paris you haven't. It's only in Lyon.

AMF Who is teaching in Lyon?

BL For singing you have Dominic Vellard who comes, I don't know four five times a year. And you have a teacher, Marie-Claude Vallin. She is a technique teacher. You can study also the palaeography, history of medieval music. It is really interesting.... At the time I wanted to study it didn't exist, so I went to Basel, Schola Cantorum as an external student for three years. During three years I went there three days a month, and I studied with Dominic Vellard who was teaching there and with ... Karen Smith who studied palaeography, notation, Notre Dame.... It was really interesting, but I think the best information I had was with the groups which I was singing in.

AMF So your feeling about a conservatory without a medieval department doesn't really welcome a 'medieval' way of singing?

BL It's fantastic if you can meet somebody with a classical technique who has a mind open to every kind of music, and there are not 'nombre tale', there are not a lot.

AMF When were you in Basel?

BL 83-86.

AMF You have started your own school here of course, the Centre.

BL At the ... beginning it was Dominic Vellard who began the centre with Marie-Noël Colette. And when he went to live in Bourgogne he left the centre. So with Emmanuel Bonnardot at first and Pierre Hamond we tried to go on with the Centre.

AMF How many students do you have?

BL 200.

AMF You can go to the conservatory in Lyon, but in Paris you can go here.

BL Yes, but here we don't have diplomas. It's not the same, and we prefer to stay like that because we have a lot of amateurs ... and some professionals or so, but it's not only professionals and we have not to follow formal progression. We chose a subject each year. We like this freedom.

AMF Before you started to sing medieval music, was what your experience from concerts and readings and recordings?

BL Nothing with medieval music. When I was really young, you mean, I heard Pink Floyd and Gong, and classical music, which I didn't like very much. I remember when I heard opera singers I thought it was really strange, I thought it was impossible to sing like that.... I played the piano.... I had the curiosity to know more about all that existed in the history of music.... It was a little 'mode' [fashionable] in the end of the 70s with John Renbourn, I don't know if you know this ... group, it was really influenced by medieval music, and I remember I liked this kind of music a lot.... The

first group I really heard and I think I have learned a lot from is Clemencic and Munrow, David Munrow ensemble. I really think they are *'fondeurs'* [*founders*] for the modern interpretation of medieval music.... They were really important.

AMF With your voice today, do you sing different kinds of repertoire or do you concentrate on medieval music?

BL I concentrate on medieval music, but I need to sing other repertoires. I need to sing Mozart regularly, because I think it's a little dangerous to only do medieval music.... I love Mozart, the Lieder, so it's a pleasure also, so it's my training.

AMF Do you use your voice in a different way when you sing Mozart?

BL I try to keep the same concentration of the sound, because I think after many years of singing it's normal that the voice goes a little more large ... with more vibrato, and you have always to think about that. What I try to keep is really the concentration of the sound and the 'finesse' in the sound, and I think with Mozart that is perfect. It's true, that singing Troubadour songs you are in another ... spirit, but I try to keep ... what I consider are the basis for singing.

AMF You use primary sources. How do you use it, and how does it influence your way of singing?... Do you sing from the manuscript or do you sing from a modern edition?

BL When it is possible I only like to read the facsimile, because it is a pleasure. And, *it's really hard try to find a way to transcribe the music in modern editions keeping all the information that you have in medieval notation.* So I really really prefer until Ecole Notre Dame to have the facsimile. But ... sometimes it's really hard ... so I do transcription ... I try to keep the same signs but in a modern 'portée' style. And singing with for example Discantus, they don't all read notation very well so I have to do transcription for them.... But if I take Troubadour songs or Trouvère songs I need to see first the manuscript. If I can I keep a photo copy of the facsimile, or if not I transcribe by myself the melody, with my system of notation. Because it's a danger that you miss some information with some modern edition. I think it's easier to have

the dynamic of the line reading the facsimile. For me it's important, and it's a pleasure also, because it's a curiosity too, the palaeography is a pleasure also for me.... It takes a very long time to transcribe it. I like that. It's good moments to have.... Today we miss good editions with medieval music.

AMF You know how you want it to sound and could you [publish your] modern editions?

BL We tried with the Centre, because we have transcribed so much music for a long time. I have a lot, but it's a question of money. The only thing, we have not found an editor interested in that - because it's not commercial, it's not interesting.

AMF I think it is very interesting.

BL It's interesting. It would be a way to make this music enter conservatories for example.... It would be a way for the teacher who doesn't know medieval music, and if we do something well and not too difficult to understand, it will be a way to get familiar with medieval music, and I think it would be really interesting, but nobody is convinced. But, we have the project.

AMF What is your aim when you perform medieval music? Are you trying to reconstruct the past, or are you making something modern?

BL I think it's both. My preoccupation is to be 'fidèle' to the only testimony we have. It's a written one, it's the only thing we have, so we have to respect the notation, but after you have to reconstruct everything.... *For a Trouvère song you have only one melody and the text and you know nothing. What about instruments, which kind of singing, what 'patois' you can put, you have to construct 'esthétique' I would say, with all that. And, bien sûr', you will sing for modern ... audiences ... so you have to have a good balance between being serious with the sources we have and the interest of a modern public....* It's important to be really 'respectueuse' with the sources we have.... *Fantasy is necessary sometimes, but sometimes there is too much fantasy, in regards with the original sources.* In profane music I think you can be more creative perhaps than in sacred music.... It's different between religious repertory and profane

repertory. *Religious repertory I think you must be very humble with this music, because it's religious music, it's church music, and ... we are not 'religious' people....* I can't appropriate the music the same as profane music. If I have a Troubadour/Trouvère song, it becomes my music, but with religious repertory it's different. With Gregorian chant for example *the notation is so precise, it's so well done, well written, so we are only a servant of the music*, I think. In songs it's another matter. I feel really myself singing the Troubadour or Trouvère song.... So, singing I can add a vibrato at the moment, because I feel it's important with the melody and with one word, an important one, I can have vocal freedom. And with religious music it's different. I don't know if it's clear.

AMF It is very clear, it's very interesting how you divide it.

BL But it's always the same voice.

AMF It is the same voice of course. But, when we talk about early music, most of the time in the religious music, we want to hear clear voices and almost no vibrato, and is that something you would teach your student, not to sing with much vibrato?

BL Yes, because I think *with too much vibrato it's not possible to do polyphony with a clear 'quinte' [fifth] and octave*, if you have vibrato and if you have a 'sensible' just before you can't hear the tension from the 'sensible' ... to the 'accord' finale, it is not possible.... And also for Gregorian chant, when you are following a 'strophe', if you know the palaeography, if you have vibrato it's impossible to do the 'strophe', you have to keep your voice really 'droit' [straight] and to add vibrato if you want.... I have some students for whom it's really difficult because they are used to that.

AMF When you sing polyphonic music with Discantus, is that something you think about ... singing without vibrato, or is that something that just happens because that is how you form the music? Do you talk about vocal quality?

BL With Discantus? Sure, because we are always trying different things.... Each year we go in the same direction but we try new things. For example with ornamentation of École Notre Dame it's really interesting. We have to study more about that but it's

interesting to read what the treatises say about the ornamentation - vibrato but as an ornament. So we try in the rehearsals, we like to try new things. But all the singers of Discantus know that ... I search for the result. But it's true that some of them sing also other repertoires, classical repertoires, so for them it's really a big change and they have really to sing without that, because for me it's really important.

AMF In the concerts ... and on the records you combine different voices together ... and then you have some chant, and then some other people are singing together. Have you found that everyone can sing together or?

BL I like to really construct a programme with all these elements because each singer I think has [a] really different kind of voice and I think the interesting thing is to ... combine different 'timbres' and to have low voices and really ... high voices.... When you have to construct a programme I think it's important also the contrasts and to have some surprises for the public, so I try to work with all the personalities of the singers.

AMF It has been quite constant. It's sort of almost the same singers.

BL Some of them are in the group from the beginning ... and some are new and some have babies.... Normally we are six, seven or eight but now we are twelve or thirteen singers.

AMF How important is ... the medieval text, and what does the text mean to you today?

BL As I said before, we are not living in a monastic 'ambiance', and I don't ask each singer if she is Catholic or Protestant, it's not our preoccupation, but I think we have to know about what we are singing, so each time it's important that everybody has a translation of what we are singing and knows at every each moment what she is saying because saying and singing is the same. For the construction of the programme it depends. Sometimes we have a theme, can be the Virgin.... For example, the first record we did was Las Huelgas. So we have prayers for the Christ we have prayers for the Virgin, for the Saints, so it's a mélange. But I think it's really important that,

because one question [we hear] very often, I am sure you have the same after a concert, do you - 'fêtez-vous partir de congrégation'? And, it's clear we are not religious, we are modern women, very modern women, but we are respecting all the repertory.

AMF If we like the music, if we like the sound of the music, we have no choice about the texts, we have to sing the text that comes with it.

BL But it's as an actor. *When you have a text you can project yourself in this text or not, but your business, your 'métier' is to be 'capable', to be able to do that.*

AMF So, how is it for you that your audience know what you're singing about?

BL It's really important. The pity is very often [that] there is not a translation for the public in the programme.... But for religious music, generally people can understand more or less I think, that we are singing about religious repertories, but for profane music, I think it would be really important ... for the public to have the translation. It's a problem because very often the promoters have not time or money to do a real programmes with translation. But I think it's a pity, because for a song if you don't know what the singer is talking about you miss a great part of the meaning.... We had a concert this weekend in Belgium and when the people have all the translation, you have (Lesne looking down) all the church and that's a problem. But a better thing I think is for the public to have the translation, they can read before the concerts, and after - no light - and after the concert they can read it another time. But during the concert I am not sure.... If they are reading they miss all the important things. So, it's a problem, it's true.

AMF Your pronunciation in Latin when you sing music from Spain, Italy or France, do you change your pronunciation?

BL It's another problem. We did that [at] first ... - Italian pronunciation for all Italian repertory, and French pronunciation and Spanish pronunciation for the Latin because the difference are not so important. But the problem for example when we did ... a lot of manuscripts from Germany was that it was really something 'étranger' for us, so I

prefer my logic ... we are French and ... I try to keep our French pronunciation ... for Latin music, for all the repertory we do. It's a decision because we have so many things to study, and [a] philologist have not the same point of view anyway so it's really difficult. And it's the same for old French. I work with a specialist of pronunciation but we know perfectly that in the North of France, in the centre of France and the south of French, pronunciation was really, south we don't know, but for l'Andouille, between Cambrai and Sancé and Paris it's really different, it's another world.... But even [with] Notre Dame repertory you have motets that you can find notated in French manuscripts, in English manuscripts, in Germany, and the same piece, do you think it's possible that in each of these place, every places they sing the same, No, it's not true. So the only thing that I think is to be logical....

AMF How important is the concert venue for you ... and do you have to change your way of singing according to the acoustical space?

BL It depends between a very very big church and a very very little church with wood. It's true that you know that the sound would be very different, so you will change, but you won't change your technique, you will change only the volume I think, but not your way of singing.... We know nothing about how they were singing in the medieval time, we can know only that in the big monasteries ... they sung eight hours a day, and we can think that in a schola they had a very good level of singing, we can be sure. But reading some text we can also be sure that some of them ... were not good, and they had to work and so, but in the schola there were really good musicians.

AMF What do you think of women singing polyphonic religious music?

BL We have Las Huelgas manuscript. It's always a question. I think Las Huelgas *is* a perfect example of what was possible to find. I don't want to affirm that in every monastery there was a schola so good that they were able to sing polyphony, but I think there were some with good education. Las Huelgas was a monastery for really high society, and I think the women there were exceptional perhaps for this reasons, we have Las Huelgas manuscript today. But it's a possibility so I think it is 'légitime' that women today sing polyphony, medieval religious polyphony. And, I think the

result is really good.... It's true that people have in mind that religious repertory is for men ... but it's not true. We have all the testimony, all the monasteries with women in Europe, there were so many.

Jantina Noorman, Barnstaple, UK, 11 October 2006.

AMF How did you and why did you get into medieval music making?

JN Well, when I was 17 we immigrated to the United States. This was about three years after the war and I always enjoyed singing. I was in a group in Holland which was called the Singing Horseriders and we sang cowboy songs.

AMF Oh, right.

JN And, so, I always enjoyed singing but I never really thought of being able to take it up because I was in the Eastern part of Holland and the only music school was in Amsterdam and that was too far away. So, when we emigrated to the States, I discovered that a very well-known music school was part of the University of Illinois there and so, I immediately enrolled of course and began studying voice. As I never expected to be a performer I went into the educational vocal programme whereby you become a teacher of music – a peripatetic teacher or a regular teacher at schools in town teaching vocal music, classroom singing and that sort of thing. And one of my teachers was George Hunter who was a past student of Paul Hindemith at Yale and George had been a member of Paul Hindemith's group which performed Early Music at Yale. Paul Hindemith had started a group there and George was a member of that and so he wanted to start a group like that at the University of Illinois and he asked me ... 'would I sing, just for fun in some madrigal group?' So, he heard my voice and he had the idea of starting an Early Music group himself with three other people and so I was the singer in that group. That's how it all started. And he was very fond of medieval music especially of Machaut, Guillaume de Machaut, and it got to the point where he wanted to make a recording, which we did in New York. And we travelled the States extensively with concerts and we had broadcasts and so on but that was the only recording we did, Guillaume de Machaut. So that's really how it all started.... Paul Hindemith had a group of early music performers but it wasn't a professional group, it was just a 'Let's do this at Yale University.' So that's how George became interested in Early Music and wanted to do something himself.

AMF And what were the scores that you were reading from?

JN Oh, I never bothered about that. George always transcribed it because that was something that Paul did with the group too, you see. He not only performed, or practised it, but he also taught how to transcribe.... So whatever I sang was in modern notation.

AMF Has it always been like that?

JN Yeah. For me anyway. Not for them originally, not for George because he had to discover all the music and transcribe it. I never bothered about that.... I just enjoy singing it. And it was interesting because it was easy for me to adopt my, or adapt my voice to whatever instrument was accompanying, you see? Although I was never asked to change my voice. It was always a natural thing. When you sang with gambas you had a richer sound. When you sang with vielles or trumpets, you made a different sound but it was never a deliberate thing whereas with Musica Reservata which I joined in 1961, there Michael Morrow really wanted me to change my voice to a sort of Bulgarian style of folk singing and to put on a different timbre altogether.... I remember that we went to listen to a Bulgarian group of folk singers which came to London.

AMF Did you actually study with someone who had or was Bulgarian?

JN No.

AMF Did you just hear the sound?

JN And imitated it, yes, that's right.

AMF Extraordinary sound.

JN It was just, I've always been good at mimicking you know and ... it's just something natural. I mean, I found that my voice could do a lot of things that he asked for actually and he would say 'Can you do it this way? No, a little bit more that way, a little bit darker, a little bit', you know, lighter and so on and I was able to, so he

experimented with me really to find out what he wanted exactly. When he discovered ... what he wanted – ‘yes, sing it that way.’ And then another one, ‘sing it this way’, so that’s how it really evolved with Reservata.

AMF So, if we sort of stay on with the way you changed your voice according to what piece you sang with Reservata, how do you think the other singers you sang with the tenors and basses [matched your sound]? When you think about Musica Reservata, you think about your voice ... as the Musica Reservata sound, and then there are loads of other singers, but I wonder how do you think it was for them to try and...?

JN Yes, to try and do what [I was doing]... it was very difficult. It was very difficult.

AMF Yes, to match your sound as well because it’s...

JN Nigel Rogers, for instance, very fine singer, very musical but he found it very difficult to lose an inhibition in a sense and get that straight, same with Edgar Fleet was another one. John Whitworth was with the group before I was, he’s a counter-tenor, so counter-tenors were a little bit different. They seem to mould themselves better but singers like Edgar Fleet and Nigel Rogers *just found it very difficult because they’d been so ingrained in a certain way of singing.*

AMF How did you feel when you used your voice in so many different ways?

JN I didn’t mind at all. I enjoyed it. Yes, yes, I enjoyed it.

AMF: Did you have a good time on stage?

JN Oh, yes, I loved it, yes, I really loved it. I’ll never forget one performance we did in Vienna and we had a long piece about David and Absalom and ... how Absalom was slain and it all had to be done in this very edgy, straightforward type of voice and in Germany, when they like something they stand up and applaud, which they did, you see? And the applause wouldn’t stop and I had to repeat it. Well, we didn’t have an encore, so I had to repeat it so obviously, there was something angular about that, that sort of hit home because I think the thing about singing that way is that it makes it

strictly impersonal. It's a direct sound, you can't do much with it – you can't do louds and softs or innuendoes that you have in Schubert or other composers, you just have to have that straight hard line for one piece and that's it.

AMF Is that what we would call the Bulgarian, more towards the Bulgarian...

JN Yes, I suppose so, yes. Yes, yes.... To me, *the changing of the voice is thinking, really. It's a matter of thought, whether you sing very forward like that [sings] or whether you sing normal, like this [sings].... It's all done by, by placing it in different parts of the mouth really.* And the woman I studied with here, Margaret Ritchie, I learned more from her recordings, by imitating her than I did from any of the music teachers I had in the States at the university. I learned something from every one of them but from her, I somehow learned more from just imitating her, although she had not at all the type of voice that you use for medieval music, but it's her technique I'm talking about more than anything else. That's why I wanted to study with her, you see? And, I'm just so grateful that I had the opportunity to do so. Another person I admired very much was Alfred Deller.... And although he was a great liberty taker in his singing, I did enjoy him very much and it was through him actually that I was able to get hold of Margaret Ritchie in this country because he gave a concert in St Louis in the States and I travelled there with a member of Collegium Musicum, that's George's group, to hear him. I'd only heard recordings of him and I brought a recording of Machaut to give him, so we sat in the audience and out comes this bear of a man, he really is a huge bear, 6ft something or other, huge and broad-shouldered and everything else, with Dupré his lutenist, and then this voice comes out, this pure, feminine type voice, you know, counter-tenor voice comes out and I was absolutely amazed. So, I met him afterwards and I asked because I knew he'd done a lot of work with Margaret Ritchie, so it was through him that I got her address and got into contact with her. I gave him a copy of the Machaut and he was thrilled with that but funnily enough, in that first week, he was also one of the performers at the Summer School for Singers, and that's very interesting. So, after the concert was over, he was on the platform in the front there and David was with me and I went up to him and said to him 'do you remember me a few years back?' and he gave me a huge bear hug and a kiss on the cheek and David was absolutely flabbergasted. Oh, yes, of course he remembered and he was so pleased to see me, it was nice and we discovered that

Desmond Dupree lived in the same city. We lived in Bath actually so we did strike up an acquaintance with him too which was rather nice. It's funny how things slot into each other, you know, in your life, really, in ways you can't imagine.

AMF What was your experience of early music before you started yourself - recordings and concerts and readings and so on, but you've really answered that question already.

JN Yes, I didn't have any. All the experience I have was singing cowboy songs really. And then I came here to study with Margaret Ritchie in the Summer School for Singers and, Michael Morrow ... [and] John Beckett was giving a harpsichord recital there in that week, and Michael, they're very great friends they're both Irish, and they had recognised my name on one of the programmes and asked me out for lunch. And then they asked me if I'd be willing to sing with Musica Reservata, a group that they'd started a year ago. This was in 1960. And maybe it was a little bit longer, certainly one and a half years and I said 'I'm very sorry, I can't, I'm going back to the States' because they knew of George Hunter because of the record. They had heard the recording of the Machaut. Yes, so that's how the association came, you see. They associated my name with that record and so they wondered if I would join. I said 'I can't, I'm going back to the states, very sorry...' But then, um, of course four days later, I found myself engaged to the pianist, David Barker, who accompanied everybody during the Summer School for Singers in Oxford and so I was able to write them from the States that I could join them the next year. They were delighted of course.

AMF Yes, yes. Wonderful.

JN There we are.

AMF When you were studying with ... Margaret Ritchie ... what was her reaction to your different vocal abilities?

JN She didn't know about it, she didn't have any because all I was interested in was good technique. I said I'd heard a lot on her recordings and I'd like to know how she

did things like dropping the consonants and creating space and all that sort of thing, you see, and how to think about vowel formation, where the tongue should be placed ... how the lips should be formed and she taught me all those things and in a way that suited me perfectly. So, I learned a lot about diction, a lot about spacing the voice, because after all, I was studying classical music with her, you see.... She *taught me how to sing back in the throat and how to keep my tongue in a cup formation with the front of the tongue always touching the lower gums and the tongue shaping the vowels rather than your jaw. The jaw is always open as far as you could get it and always thinking a note one pitch higher than you were actually supposed to sing it so that you had this thought process going on all the time.* I had labelled myself as not being able to sing much above an E, because, you know, I never did sing much higher because I found it difficult. And she'd say things like 'how high can you hum?' Of course, I could hum much higher than that and she said 'well, that's as high as you can sing'.... So I lost that inhibition of, you know, the fright that faces you when you see a high G on the page, so I knew I could do it and so she developed all that confidence in me and that's what I was there for really. To get that more than anything else. She knew about my music singing in the States but that didn't affect our lessons or her teachings at all.... I mean when you sing high notes your mouth should have the same opening [sings] - it's not - [sings]. The tongue does it, you see, in the back of the throat but the tip of the tongue is always down and so that's something I learned to do and it made singing high notes much easier. She did, I recall now, she did say '*be sure it doesn't harm your voice to sing that way*', but I assured her it didn't because I always found that if I sang in the *Reservata* style, it strengthened my voice rather than harm it.... You can imagine why, because you use your vocal chords in a much more 'speaking' type of way. It's like a gymnastic type of exercise I suppose, which you perform, which really enhances it if anything, so I was never afraid of harming my voice. Because if you think of how much we talk, that never harms us and singing is really a way of talking. When people tell me 'I can't sing and I've never been able to' I say 'Well, you can talk, can't you?'

AMF The next question is on vocal sound and we've covered some of it ... do you sing or did you sing other repertoires than medieval music?

JN Yes, I sing Lieder and Chanson and English songs of course. I'm very fond of Purcell and ... Aaron Copeland, for instance, is one of my favourites, his folk songs. Monteverdi above all, love him. Yes.

AMF And you use your voice differently according to what music you sing then?

JN Yes, yes. What you heard just now, I would use that for Monteverdi and Purcell. For Schubert I would adopt a darker sound. Yes.

AMF Is it hard to go from one to another?

JN No. No, not at all. It depends a little bit on the acoustics.

AMF That's interesting that you say because one of my questions is how important is the concert venue and do you adjust your way of singing according to a specific acoustic?

JN Yes, and sometimes you can't you know? I was in the States once where I was conducting a master class for a week and they had an evening at the end of this, where is was an auditorium which had a very low ceiling and the seats were going up, and the person at the front said 'we have so and so in our midst', meaning me and he said 'We'd like you to come down and do some of your singing that you do with Reservata.' And I didn't want to do it but they really pestered me to do so, so I walked down and went to the front and as I say, the ceiling was low and it was a big place and I tried doing the Prisoner song and you know, I couldn't. It just didn't come out. It was a very strange feeling. It didn't get anywhere, it just dropped right in front of me.... So, acoustics are important but usually concert halls are well built and you get on all right. But that was a very strange experience. I've never had that anywhere else except for the fact that it felt easier in some places than in others. But that was extraordinary, an extraordinary experience.

AMF You can just switch between different vocal styles?

JN Yes.... *We did [different vocal styles] it in concerts all the time because we had a most varied repertoire, you see, so. Mind you, you always had a rest in between, not that that bothered me.*

AMF So that Bulgarian vocal style that Michael wanted you to try out - you went to listen to this concert in London and then, how did you develop that vocal quality - did you try it out yourself?

JN Yeah, I did a lot of trying out myself, yes.

AMF And then Michael listened to it?

JN Yes, he listened to it and he'd say 'it needs a little more edge, you know, try it again' until we got it.

AMF Had he been to Bulgaria?

JN Yes, yes, he had visited the Balkan States, so he knew what he wanted. He was very certain. He had it all pictured in his head and in his ears, really.... I suppose he had this sort of intuitive feeling. This is the way I want it and I'm sure that this is the way that they would sing it and so let's have a go.

AMF Did he talk about trying to achieve some kind of sound that might have been a possible sound in the medieval period or did he leave...?

JN Yes, I suppose in a sense the instruments played a great part with that too. If you sing with crumhorns, your voice is quite different. You have to, in order to match that, you'd have to be much more alert to get that sound than you would have with vielles, you see, so that plays a part in it too. Because, at that time, singers were not trained either.... I suppose a lot of it was either the monastery sound which was a very straightforward whitish sort of tone or you did the folk song type of country pop stuff and the village dancers tried to get that raucous element into it.... So I think he based it on perhaps paintings too. You know, you see some medieval paintings where the singers have a very strained face and they were obviously trying to create a very

strident type of sound and it's the general way of living in the medieval times I suppose that took place in his thought too.

AMF So when you sang sacred music it was a different vocal timbre?

JN Yes, it was, yes.

AMF But the vocal style that you have when you sing sacred music is still a vocal quality that has been, you can hear it's a trained voice.

JN Probably, yes. Well, pronunciation came in with it, and I had to think of the early French pronunciation too. Yes, I suppose so because when you're trained you automatically apply things like diction, for instance, which is to me a very important part for singing as such, in general, although maybe in Kalenda Maya you don't hear much diction because it's such a raucous song and they probably didn't bother much about it. I mean nowadays in pop music you often can't understand what they sing because they just haven't trained for diction at all. But yes, that's true.... My Dutch background, the Dutch language has something to do with that too as I, like you, still have an accent of some sort. And our vowels are certainly different from English vowels and especially from American vowels. It all plays a role and it's as you say, it's a matter of falling into something which you think is suitable and following that pattern.

AMF So did you have much input yourself in what sound you wanted or were you guided by Michael quite a lot?

JN Oh, no, I had input as far as that's concerned. We discussed things yes. And also, *I wouldn't sing everything. I remember once we were doing a recording in London and as a lot of these things are in foreign languages, especially Spanish and so on or Italian and I don't know enough about the language to know what's what, you see? And Michael had to explain what this song was about. As soon as I heard what it was, I discovered that it was a very bawdy and sexy song. 'Michael, I can't sing that, I'm sorry.' And I didn't, I couldn't. So, somebody else had to sing it. It's on there*

somewhere, John Whitworth. It was a very suggestive song and I just would not do it.... So, I refused to sing certain things if they were too bawdy or too suggestive.

AMF Oh, right. Why was that?

JN I think it's my whole outlook on life I suppose.

AMF Very good. We talked about the use of primary sources.... The editions for example that Michael or someone would write ... you would read from a modern edition?

JN Yes, he would transcribe it all. He was a man who was held in very high esteem when it came to transcriptions and discovering music and having his forward look about what it would sound like and which instrumental combination had to be used, which vocal. He was extraordinary in that respect and much sought after his advice, he always was. He had an enormous library in his house but he was very messy. How he found out where things were, I don't know. Everything was always in parts here and parts there but he always knew exactly where things were. Yes.

AMF Do you think *Musica Reservata*, that sort of idea, the concert you made ... was the aim to try and recreate something from the past or was it more to re-contextualize it in the present?

JN I think his aim *was to really let the world know that music is not all performed the same way*, you know. That there is a difference between early music and Lieder, for instance, whereas most people sing everything in the same way. And based on his observation and visits to the Balkan States, he knew there was something more to it than met the ears, so to speak, and he felt quite justified looking at the instruments that were played at that time and the voices not being trained and yet being welded together so to speak. He just felt that the world should know that there was this different way of looking at early music.

AMF There weren't very many groups at the same time that were performing early music, were there?

JN No, there weren't, no, no. We were really a pioneering group yes.

AMF And David Monrow of course.

JN Yes, he was with us too.... Even people like the Gothic Voices, this very straightforward beautiful blend of tone that they achieved.

AMF It also came out of the cathedral tradition.

JN Yes, that's true. Yes.... Because of course even the monks would all have very straight tones, wouldn't they? They weren't trained voices either.

AMF There's no way of knowing what a sound was in the medieval period...

JN No, you can't.

AMF How did you feel about ... critics? You know, some people really loved it and some people were more hesitant to that [your] sound. Talk more about that.

JN Well, on the whole, the critics were very good, yes. On the whole they were just the odd one who would condemn it but the very odd one really, but I loved captions like Fishwives Singing or Street Vendor or what have you. I mean, that's exactly of course in a sense, even now, if you hear someone selling newspapers in London on the street they have that strident sound, you see. And I think that's partly also what Michael bore in mind – the everyday living of people and how they expressed themselves.

AMF You were quite brave doing that though because not very many people would have dared to go out of something that was more conventional.

JN No, that's true. This is I think why I think the people who did sing with us found it difficult because they had an entirely different career besides Musica Reservata, you

see. Their career was either operatic or oratorio or what have you, and they always felt ill at ease, I think. And they were afraid it would hurt their voice but it just doesn't.... It's interesting when we had the Summer School for Singers, the second year of that, David and I were hosts there together and we'd done some Monteverdi and, I forget what it was, and we were walking back after the concert and this one student who was there was saying how, we were talking about early music and he said 'I was in Japan and I heard a record of somebody and it was fantastic early music, fantastic singer, you know, I've never heard anything like it' so I said 'What's her name?' And he said 'Jantina Noorman' [laughs].

AMF How long was Musica Reservata going on?

JN About 20 years altogether.

AMF And were you in it all the time?

JN Yeah. Most of it, yes, except for the very first year.

AMF How important is the medieval text in the modern day? In the modern day. How important is it for the audience for example to know what the song is about?

JN Well, we usually printed our programmes with a translation so that people knew what things were about.

AMF Right, and when you go to concerts today, do you like knowing what it's about or...? What's your view on it?

JN I think so. I think I would at least like to have a synopsis, you know, but ... I don't think too strongly about it as long as I know the composer and the title and the instrumentation and the singer, then that's all right by me, but I think a lot of people, even with modern works in a foreign language, they like to know what it's about, don't they?

AMF You don't mind a synopsis but you don't want...

JN I don't mind a synopsis but I wouldn't want the original text and people having to follow it or anything like that. If it's sung in the original text, I don't mind a translation but not one where people can follow what you sing, so to speak, because I think it detracts really. I'd rather just have the piece mentioned, the composer and the performers and leave it at that for myself but then, one mustn't forget that an audience is a very important part of performing. And, one must bear in mind the different concepts in people's minds and [that] people have different wishes and I think we ought to cater for those to a degree, anyway. I don't think you can educate people to say 'I don't mind just listening to it', because most people would like to know what a song is about and often when I, in the past, when I've sung say a group of Lieder songs, I may tell them what it's about and then leave it at that but it wouldn't be in the programme as such.

AMF Today, it's, there are so many messages all the time and there is so much information and sometimes you just...

JN It can be overdone. Yes, yes. I mean, when I go to a play, we often go to Barnstaple to a concert or a play, but I would far rather just follow the play, not read up ahead of time what it's all about. Yes. But then, others are not that way, you see? They like to read through the programme. But if you have a programme like that, again, you have a choice and I don't bother reading it but David does, for instance.

AMF Did you talk loads about tuning in Musica Reservata?

JN Oh, yes, very much so, yes. Yes, it was highly important.

AMF What do you think of women singing music that was written for men?

JN [laughs] Yes, that's a difficult one, isn't it? Because a lot of medieval music is sung, is really for men more than women. I think I've overcome the ... objection to it really, because in a sense, women at that time were not regarded as important, as important as men, probably. I mean, you still have it in the Middle Eastern countries where women are sort of the minor person in a family and don't have the right to do

this, that or the other, so my attitude is '*why shouldn't I sing a song that's written for a man? Why should I be deprived?*'. When I started the Lieder cycle of Schubert, what is that first one called? I can't think of it, but it's a song about a man travelling along and it has beautiful songs in it and they're gorgeous songs and they suit my voice beautifully and I thought 'I can sing those [Winterreise] I don't mind. I'll just pretend to be a female traveller or what have you. No, I've lost the objection to that. I think we should be allowed to sing male songs especially nowadays - women behave worse than men sometimes as far as general behaviour is concerned. They're just as strident as men can be.

Johanna Maria Rose, New York, USA, 3 April 2006.

JMR First I went to Manhattan School of Music and I got a degree in voice. I did mainly standard repertoire, art song. I didn't really do opera.... Mostly I sang Schubert, Brahms ... and Mozart, the standard rep. At Manhattan School they didn't really have any early music when I went. I don't know what it is like now.... There was a group that did 16th century, and even Baroque music was considered early music. So we did Bach cantatas and we did 16th century madrigals but we really *didn't get into the repertoire in any serious way*.... Before I went to Manhattan School I had also studied acting. I had taken a whole acting course ... in Greenwich Village, so after Manhattan School I actually decided I wanted to go back toward acting, so I studied acting again.... There was never any question for me that I wanted to do something in the performing arts.... I had always played the recorder since the age of 11 and I was good at it!... I started taking lessons with LaNoue Davenport, who was part of an American group called Music For A While ... and LaNoue said to me 'Oh, why don't you come to this programme at Sarah Lawrence College where my ensemble is the core faculty?' So I said, 'Okay, that sounds like a good idea'. I went there and *everybody was really, really into medieval and renaissance music there.... Recorder and wind instruments was actually my Major there, but then they found out that I could sing and suddenly everyone wanted me to sing. So, I loved it!*

AMF How old were you then?

JMR I didn't actually go to Manhattan School until 1973.

AMF So, you did four years in vocal studies at Manhattan School of Music, but before that you had been doing acting and recorder.

JMR Yes, but I had also taken voice lessons.

AMF So, it was really when you played the recorder that you got into medieval music, and then you started to sing it as well?

JMR Yes.

AMF Right, so you didn't have to face any critics from vocal teachers at Manhattan School of Music about your medieval music making?

JMR No, I would have to say that the opera department is very, very separate and then there were the rest of us who were basically singing song literature, Lieder or whatever. Oddly enough, when I was a child I wanted to be an opera singer and the woman I am studying with now says 'if you had had proper training your voice is absolutely suited to Bellini, Donizetti and Mozart'.... I didn't have a good experience with my teacher at Manhattan School, so I got a little discouraged there - because it was very focussed on opera and it was focussed on huge voices and I don't have a deep huge voice, I have a light voice, basically Coloratura, even though I speak like a tenor.

AMF What I heard is that you met Susan and Marsha in...

JMR Pomerium Musices. Alexander Blachly, the director, was my notation professor at Sarah Lawrence College.... We studied notation and we had a chant class.... We were allowed to use the NY University Library so that was fantastic. It was a great library to work with, and ... then we had a lot of ensembles and private instruction.... Even the chant class was very practical and we sang a lot of chants from original notation. We transcribed a lot of stuff. In the collegium we sang from early notation. So I actually had a lot of experience using it, studying it but also actually singing from it, which was valuable.... I met Marsha at the Amherst Early Music Festival, so I had known her for several years. I knew her actually before she moved to New York.... She was still in Philadelphia at the time, and when she moved to New York I was one of the few people that she knew in New York, so we became friendly and we just wanted to sing together, and then it all happened at the same time when Susan Gjenvick came up with her [similar] idea.... And then ... we really needed an alto ... and we immediately thought of Susan [Hellauer] because, not only was she an alto but she obviously had this great background in medieval music, so we asked her.... And then Ruth joined. When Susan Gjenvick decided to leave, we basically knew the pool of people in the city who we thought would be possible and we actually had a few

people to come and sing with us.... We sang with Ruth, I think we had several rehearsals with her and she seemed to blend very well.

AMF She has a fantastic voice.

JMR She has a wonderful voice. I had sung with her actually.... We had the same Church job for a while and we sang together a lot and, we all were friends.... She just loved it and in fact after ... one of the rehearsals that we did with her we all went to have Chinese food and she said 'please let me be in this group'. She said 'It's really touching me and I really want to do it'.... You know the other people that we had tried to sing with they were excellent singers. No one could fault anything. They were great, they could blend and they were people who had sung in Pomerium, and we had all sung with them many times. Ruth had that heart thing. She just loved it.... That was one of the really crucial points for us because it ended up being four people who loved the material, who loved the idea who really wanted to do it.... So because of that we have always felt that even though Susan Gjenvick was the actual original fourth member of the group, that Ruth really can be considered a founding member because she came in so early and the group really hadn't gone anywhere until she came, so ... she is the fourth founding member.

AMF Do you sing other repertoire other than medieval music and do you use your voice differently according to what music you sing?

JMR That has gone up and down in my life. When I first started singing medieval music I was really not aware of having to make adjustments. It felt very natural to me.... When I used to sing at St. Michael's Church we did a wide range of music and I would say, yes, I definitely sang with more vibrato, more sort of looser technique, and I actually sang a lot of repertoire.... I don't actually think that in Anonymous 4 that we ever sang with no vibrato, but it was definitely less. Now I have been studying with a teacher who is a real bel-canto teacher and I'm finding that it's a very different technique. My natural vibrato is really starting to come out more. When I sing that way I feel a lot more relaxed.... I noticed that when I was a lot younger, when I first started with the group I had no problems with *floating really light and high*.... Now I feel like that is more difficult for me.... The repertoire that I am just studying ...

except for what we are doing with Anonymous 4, I have been working on Mozart and Bach and Handel and stuff like that, and really, it is a very different feel.... I don't know about the others but *I have always felt kind of a dichotomy between my voice when I vocalise and warm up and my voice when I am singing with Anonymous 4....* But I wasn't really aware of that. I remember one time, in one concert somewhere, I don't remember where, this woman came up to me after the concert and she said 'you must be really having to hold your voice back', and I said 'I don't feel that I am holding it back'. But now as I am studying I think that maybe I was. So, I am actually in a process of finding out what my voice is really all about. *Thinking about all of the history of my singing I don't think I really ever tapped into what my voice really is. It is kind of strange because I have had this very long career of singing a certain type of music a certain way and I actually don't really know what my voice is really suited for.*

AMF That is really amazing, being one of the singers who have really made it and not sort of really knowing what your voice is, I mean, it's exciting.... Did you talk loads about blending in the group?

JMR We did because ... our voices are very different ... particularly when Ruth was in the group. I felt that we had four really distinct colours and ... at first we didn't really talk about it that much, we just sang, and sang and sang. I think, just from singing together and from listening we started to somehow blend. We did talk about colours, we talked about shifting colours if someone was sort of sticking out or particularly when two people were singing together which was much more difficult, then we would talk about trying to get each person go a little bit towards the other person's colour, or maybe sometimes we would have one person go towards the other person's colour to help the blend. We also talked a lot about vowels and modifying vowels. Trying to figure out if we were all saying the vowels so that it was coming out the same, because, everyone forms them slightly differently.... It also depended on, for example for the higher voices, we would be singing a vowel a certain way, but for Susan, because she has a lot lower voice she ... would have to modify vowels and pitch.... Marsha and I were the ones who would do the research on early pronunciations and then we would come in and then one of us would actually coach

on how to pronounce it and then there would have to be the lead from pronouncing it spoken to pronouncing it sung.

AMF How important is the medieval text today?

JMR We always thought it was important enough to include both the text and the translation in every programme. So, I think it's pretty important, particularly because if we are trying to present a programme that is basically a repertoire or an idea in a context, then we really need the connections between the texts to be there for the audience, and also, I think it's really, really important for people to understand or begin to understand the medieval mythology which is so different. I mean it's often times it's universal but, but it's also being really coloured by what was going on at the time and one of the things that was going on which I think we've always tried to get across is the incredible intertwining of secular and sacred.... It's really difficult for us as contemporary people to imagine not being able to separate religion from your secular life.... The 13th century Motets from manuscripts like Montpellier and Bamberg where you have really secular texts being layered in with sacred texts and sort of filters together. You see texts about the Virgin Mary along with a text about the young girl in the forest and her chevalier on a horse ... and if you really see all these texts together you realise that they couldn't, they cannot separate them and they personalised the figures of Christianity to such an extent that they actually became like a family.... They would see Mary not just as the mother of Christ but they would see Mary as their own mother, and then there's the whole really fascinating connection with the pagan Gods and Goddesses.... The earth mother, or the pagan earth mother becoming Mary and also representing the earth and the mother of us all.... It's compelling and it's a really good, it's deep stuff and I think we can relate to it even without necessarily having someone to explain it in a liner note or the programme note, but it helps. I think it really does help to have someone who has thought about all of this, to speak about it in a programme note and then the listener gets to start making connections and then when they look at the texts, if they look at the texts, maybe they'll start to see some things like that, and I just find endlessly fascinating, so yes, I do think the texts are incredibly informing.

AMF How important is the venue?

JMR Venue, well everybody likes to sing in a church because it's easier.... But ... it's not always sacred music that we are performing.

AMF Sometimes I find that, especially here in America, churches can be worse than halls.

JMR Absolutely because there are certain churches in this country that were made only for speaking.... They were not made for singing and a good concert hall can be a lot easier to sing in. It really depends on the church.... We've sung in places that were glorious and wonderful and we've sung in places that ... were too loud and we've sung in places that were so dead.... I think the funniest one was, I think it was in Mallorca, and it was a screening room, a film screening room which had acoustic tile on the walls, and the ceiling was about maybe a foot above our heads and we had to sing Hildegard. We got in there and we just about panicked.... What I remember about that concert is, basically, suffering through and saying 'we have to do this'. Generally in a really difficult acoustic like that, where there's not enough, it's too dead, we would stand very close together, sometimes like in a 'V' so we could hear each other ... and what we would do would be to extend cadences much longer than normal, so that it would give you the illusion of having a reverberation. Because that way, it helped us and it also helped the music.... We would just take extra breaths and we'd just hold the cadences much, much longer.

AMF When you hear music from the medieval period inside your head, how does it sound?

EA Are you talking about medieval music as I think it sounded back there, or as I have heard it performed today?

AMF My next question sounds, so does that correspond with the sound that any of today's singers make?

EA So, your first question is, how do I think medieval music should sound according to my historical understanding. That's an impossible question to answer, because we just don't know. When I think of plainchant I usually am thinking of monks singing it, because that would be about 90 percent of the people who would have been singing plainchant in the middle ages. There were convents but not nearly as many convents as there were cathedrals and churches and monasteries. And, I think when I hear that in my head, I am hearing mostly people who were not trained in music, who certainly were not trained in the *belcanto* style of performance, and whose job it is to worship and honour God. And, so they're not thinking about nailing a particular pitch or creating a musical melodic line ... they actually probably think a lot about whether or not they are getting the text right, because that is what is really important for the liturgy that they are singing. I am quite sure that most of them are not thinking about trying to sing in tune with the guy next to him, and I think there was probably a lot of out tune singing from our perspective by the monks singing plainchant. So if I can combine this answer with your second question I think that what modern performers of medieval music and particularly if I stay with plainchant for a while, I think what modern performers try to do is [to] sing according to the kind of aesthetic that they've been taught, which is you sing in tune, nobody sticks out, everybody is doing exactly the same things, changing the same syllable at the same time, pronouncing the vowels with exactly the same kind of quality, blending.... I don't think those were the concerns medieval singers would have had, at least of plainchant, and the monks they learn how to sing, but they weren't learning how to *sing*, they were learning how to sing the liturgy. So surely it's the liturgy that they were focused on, not the singing

itself. They were taught that they had to do it correctly but what they were doing correctly was not creating the right kind of voice quality or the right kind of performance, because they weren't performing. Or, if they were performing at all, they would have conceived it as performing for God..... The job of the monk is to serve God and worship God, and that God is the recipient of praise and worship in the context of the liturgy. So those were the things that would have been on the minds of a monk. And when they started singing polyphony,... organum and motes ... that means it suddenly becomes a whole lot more complicated because the counterpoint and the rhythms had to be more or less together, and there's plenty of discussion in the medieval treatises about exact measurements of intervals like fifths and fourths.... They were quantifying those in very precise mathematical ways and so they knew, they were quite aware of what makes a perfect fifth, what we might call a Pythagorean fifth, three to two relationship.... There is a sense in which they were probably aware of those things but as soon as you through thirds in to the mix (there are all kind of different thirds that singers ... or instrumentalist can create). High, wide thirds, narrow thirds, and not just ... the difference between a major third and a minor third, but there were different kinds of minor thirds and different kinds of major thirds, and some of the theorists, there is a fourteenth century theorist Marretto Da Padova who talks about different sizes of intervals all called a third, and some are appropriate in some situations and others in other situations.... I know that there are singers of medieval music now a days who do try to do that, make really high thirds in cadences and that sort of thing, but that is in the room of theory, and again I am not sure that the singers themselves would have really been intellectualizing it in that way. They would have just been singing, they would have wanted their music to be together and they would have wanted it to be in tune. But what in tune would have meant to a singer, I don't know, because I don't know that the singers would have been reading Marretto Da Padova.... A singer in the middle ages is not going to be singing from score but singing watching his ... or her own part go by.... There were a few manuscripts in the 13th century like the Notre Dame Organum, they are in score, but by the 14th century almost everything was in parts, so you are only reading your own part. So whether or not the G that you are singing is against somebody else's C, or somebody else's D or somebody else's E, you would not know when the note came along so how are you supposed to know until you actually get there whether you are supposed to be singing a high third?... When I sing medieval music I do work really

hard to try and make it be in tune ... and that is the prevailing aesthetic these days for performers of medieval music.... Groups like Sequencia and the Hilliard Ensemble and some of the earlier groups post New York Pro Musica ... sort of established that as an aesthetic. The intervals have to be pure and perfect. And the process of making the intervals pure and perfect that does create a certain kind of voice quality.... When I have worked with younger singers I never tell them 'don't sing with vibrato', because that immediately makes them try to do something to their voice, to not get vibrato in their voice, whereas if I say, sing a perfect fifth there then I make them hold the notes until they no longer hear any beats and then 'boing' it falls into place ... the room vibrates.... When they hit that interval they know that they are singing something pure, and they hear it as being pure, but the only way it has become pure is that they are no longer singing with any vibrato. Because, as soon as you use some vibrato there, it goes out of tune.... Their voice quality is adapting to the demands of the counterpoint that is the intonation that you create when you're making counterpoint with the other singer. So, there is a lot of factors that go in to it but I think this aesthetic that's now been established in the last ... 30 years or so, especially in Britain and the United States ... the professional ensembles that have produced a lot of CDs, that aesthetic ... that's what medieval music is to modern listeners now. One of the things I'd really like to know ... is how they rehearsed.... I am sure they didn't rehearse it the way we rehearse it.... I can't imagine that they really fussed with making that fifth be perfectly in tune. I don't know that they had that much time for rehearsal anyway, because at least for the sacred music, again, they were doing it for a particular purpose and for a piece of polyphony by Perotin ... say *Viderunt Omnes*, which is the gradual for Christmas, they only sang it once a year, that's it, Christmas So they had to have rehearsed it somehow and yet we are talking earlier today about memory, and one of Anna Maria Busse Berger's contentions about that is that pieces like ... that very piece really were created more spontaneously than were the very belaboured compositional act worked out by a single person in a private cell getting all counterpoint right and all the parts to line up properly. Eventually that had to have happened because we have the manuscripts that record it and it is written down that way in the manuscripts.... As these pieces were being created ... most of the monks holding the tenor line and ... one singer ... decorated it somehow. Was that singer really worried about intonation? I doubt it.

AMF Or vocal quality?

EA I think those two things are closely linked: vocal quality and intonation, at least in my own experience. When I have rehearsed with other people, and these people that I sing with are really good singers and they can change their vowel quality, work on the vowel quality ... - you can easily hear on union singing when you have got all vowel qualities working in the right way, and then when you get counterpoint ... two or more lines going on at the same time that gets harder to hear, but again a perfect fifth is going to be a lot easier to make perfect if everybody singing á instead of à... Intonation and voice quality are inseparable in a lot of ways, but again, that is a modern aesthetic, I think it is, I am not sure it is a medieval aesthetic.... There are some medieval theorists that I know about that kind of talk a little bit about vocal quality, but [for] most of them, it is not their focus.

AMF What does the medieval text mean to us performers today, how important is the medieval text today?

EA It really depends a lot on what genre we are talking about and what language we are talking about. Because for sacred music the medieval aesthetic of what the text was, was that the text was central and that the music is just a way of conveying that text and making that text more beautiful and making that text more worshipful.... If the text was somehow obscured by the music that was not worshipful. *There is plenty of melismatic music which is ... a bunch of notes, but that is also part of the worship experience, but in that case you had no texts so it is not really relevant to [the] question [of what medieval sacred texts mean for us today]. Just singing long melismas, that is just pure ... mystical non cognitive kind of worship....* If it is a Troubadour song or if it is an Ars Subtilior, or late fourteenth early fifteenth century, very complicated polyphony, or if it is a Trecento madrigal or if it is a ballade by Machaut, each one of those genres normally has a particular style and structure. But it also has a social context. If you take the Ars Subtilior, really complicated stuff which I love singing ... I am not even sure any of that music even had an audience. I am not sure there were listeners to those pieces. I think those people were performing those things just for their own amusement, and if they had one or two listeners out in the hall way 'fine' but that's not why they were performing it, I think they were just

having fun. Whereas the troubadour song ... a completely different genre, purely monophonic music, solo music not just monophonic, but solo that was entertainment, the social context of that piece would have been to please a Patron.... And in that case the Patron is not going to be nearly as interested in the melody as ... whether or not he likes the text. And of course in that sense for the medieval Troubadour entertaining the Patron with an interesting text was what it was all about.... I think the text was absolutely central.... I think most singers of medieval music are pretty keen on making sure that they understand what the text is, but of course that's really hard these days, not only because it is medieval languages but any one singer who has to sing in old Occitan, old French, middle French, middle high German, Latin, Italian, Galician Portuguese ... seven or eight or nine different languages. No singer in the middle ages would have had to sing in more than two languages. Latin and his vernacular, possibly three.... There were, especially in the fourteenth century ... there were musicians who were ... born in Italy but they ended up working in France, so they would compose French chansons.... No more than about three languages, but the thing about them, they may have known three languages, but they *knew* languages. Now a day, does a singer of medieval music really know the languages they are singing? I can't even say that about myself and ... I am a scholar in medieval French and medieval old Occitan. But when I sing them I ... have to have worked with a translation. I more or less know the languages, I know French the best, and I know Latin pretty well, but ... there's plenty of places where I am not completely sure unless I have had a translation of what I am singing. That's an insurmountable barrier I think to a modern singer. I don't think there is ever going to be a solution to that other than study ... and make sure you know what you are singing even if you don't know the language itself.

AMF And from an audience point of view, for the sacred music, when they sit and listen to a full programme of pieces ... do we need to inform them about every word?

EA Do you [trio] give translations? ... Are there translations in the programmes?

AMF We do actually, but our CDs don't have translations.... We so take the music out of its context and perform it today to a modern audience.... I sometimes also feel

as an audience, when you go to a concert that translations can channel the listening in a way that restricts you from being creative and just experience what you hear.

EA I know exactly what you are saying, and that is a dilemma. I do always provide translations in programmes.

AMF You almost have to, being a scholar.

EA Yeah, I could not.... I have done plenty of concerts where people have specifically said they appreciated having the translations. But, on the other hand I also notice at every concert I have ever done, there are people out there, you make eye contact ... with a few people, and there are always people who never take one single look at the programme, they are just focusing on what they are seeing and hearing on the stage.... Those are the ones that you really love singing to.... I always talk to the audience a little bit about the pieces that we are doing.... You asked specifically about Marian songs.... Some of it is liturgical, some of it does have an identifiable place in the liturgy, the feast of the Virgin, the Feast of the Assumption and so forth.... Some of the pieces on texts to the Virgin are not taken from the liturgy, but appear to be, at least the way scholars understand them ... external just devotional songs.... Because it is either liturgical or devotional, especially Marian texts are much more deeply personal than a lot of the other kinds of sacred liturgical texts that there are, let's say the text of the Gloria, 'Gloria in Excelsis Deo et in terra pax', well, that is worshipful, ... it's God directed and you can see the monks being clear about what they are doing, but the worship of the Virgin Mary in the middle ages was a very deeply personal kind of thing. The Rosary, that's a devotional act that is private and intense, more so I think, than most of the texts in the general liturgy.... *You could make a case that it is less important that the audience know what every single word is that you are singing of in Ave Maris Stella, Hail to the star of the sea ... than it is that they understand at least something of the ... social contexts.* This is just devotional intense personal music. There are other people who could make a case on the other side.... I do think though that still for me it is important that the singers know what they are singing, if for no other reason than that makes it more deeply personal for the singer. Otherwise it is just pure music with a *bunch of nonsense syllables.*

AMF What do you think about women singing music written for men ... and to what extent do you think women sang polyphony?

EA I think women did sing polyphony from at least the 13th century, but obviously not in a public church, they just didn't, they were not allowed to.... There is plenty of evidence that there were educated women who could read music and could sing polyphony and did sing polyphony.... Do you know Christopher Page's work? ... In lots of his writings he sites all kinds of texts referring to women singing motets.... In the convents, we know for certain that [in] this convent in Spain, Las Huelgas ... there is one very important and well known manuscript that has polyphony in it, and much of the polyphony in that manuscript appears to have been composed for that institution. So, sure they sang it. We know that they did. I don't know of any evidence that suggest that men and women would have sung polyphony together until maybe even the 16th century. I don't know of any evidence that says they did, I don't know of any evidence ... that forbade them from doing it, but I think it is more likely that they just didn't just because they just didn't and not that it was sinful or something but just was a part of the aesthetic.... The fact that there is no evidence one way or the other means only that there is no evidence one way or the other, so you can't prove anything from no evidence.... We have paintings from the fifteenth century from the Low Countries, the Netherlands, France, that have men and women in a little garden setting ... but again all secular.

AMF 13th century conductus from England and France and so on, if women sing that now, do we have a problem there, or?

EA No, I have no problem with that what so ever.... Just the existence of the Huelgas manuscript means that at least they were doing that kind of thing. But of course that was a convent and the polyphony that was produced for Notre Dame Cathedral and Paris did get exported to other parts of Europe.... It shows up in Germany ... England, Scotland, Spain, Italy.... We still have not nailed down exactly where that music would have been performed.... We find the music in manuscripts that were produced in those geographical regions but that doesn't necessarily prove were, what church or what monastery or what convent, possibly what institution what social

setting they were sung in.... I guess I think that the chances that women did sing it somewhere are just as good as they didn't.

AMF Even if we didn't have any evidence that women actually had sung polyphonic music, would it be a problem to sing it today...?

EA *As far as I am concerned, anything goes.*

AMF Have you been consulted by singers and instrumentalists about sound/notation/historical justifications?

EA Not much, not very much at all.... I've talked a little bit with Susan Hellauer ... when they were here in town a few years ago, we had a little chat, but not much at all. So what we are doing right now is I think as I can recall the most extensive talk I've ever had with somebody who is actually doing tours and making CDs.... I've known Paul Hillier ... and Bob Eisenstein of the Folger Consort ... for some time, but neither one of them was consulting me about performing medieval music. They ... do their own thing, and they are both very smart educated people and I think most performers of medieval music now a days are, and most of them that I have come across want to do their own research. They want to read and they want to learn stuff and find out what they can on their own, and I think that's great....

AMF What is the role of the musicologist relative to the performer? Are musicologists and performers communicating?

EA I think we are communicating more than we used to. I think that there are a fair number of musicologists who do have pretty close working relationships with one ensemble or performer.... There is plenty of that out there. I just haven't been in that loop.... There are lots of musicologists who are performers like I am, wanting to keep their foot in that door. But there are plenty of others who are not and have not been.... I think that it is a two way street, that *the musicologists learn a lot from the performers who are actually trying to make things work*, as much as the performer may learn from the musicologist..... Many years ago I heard performers say, 'Oh, musicologists they ... are often in their own little world and publishing their own little

things ... publishing their own editions, but I can make my own edition and I don't need a musicologist'.... Or, 'I am a musician and I know how to do what I do and no musicologist is going to come in here and tell me ... that I have to do it in a certain way, or that I have to create a certain kind of vocal quality, because that is what they think the treatises say that I have to do.' It is kind of an antagonism which probably may have been justified in some ways, if there were some ways in which performers thought that musicologists were being too dogmatic or too fixed in their view of the way things were. And there was a shift ... you can read about this whole business of authenticity, which I call the 'A' word, nobody want to use that word any more. But, it use to be that authenticity was the thing.... You had to be performing on historical instruments. That term makes no sense.... What is an historical instrument? Do you mean the instrument itself is old, or what do you mean by that, historical instrument?... The way of presenting that has shifted over time, so now people are talking about ... historically informed or historically aware, or even there are lot of people who just don't even want to say that. I am just performing medieval music but ... I am performing it in my own fashion, which is ok.

AMF And what about the notation.... The musicologists who are doing editions of manuscripts, are they surrogate composers?

EA They are adding a layer of interpretation, sure.... The research I am working on right now with 13th century mensural notation does not really impinge directly on performance at this point, it could lead to that, but what I am really working with is how, it really has more to do with the scribes of the manuscript and how they determined what kinds of symbols to create on the page in order to convey what they thought was the rhythm of the music that they were hearing in their heads.... When an editor makes editions, like I made editions of songs by women Trouveres in that book, of course it is an interpretation, and unfortunately almost every modern performer that I know of is to a greater or lesser extent locked in to the written score. They learn the music from the written score, and they try to make their performance sound like what the written score tells them it should sound like.... There are some performers of medieval music who do try to read only from the medieval manuscripts. But then the medieval manuscripts were created by scribes who themselves were adding a layer of interpretation to the music, so when I edit a piece of medieval music from the pages of

a medieval manuscripts created by a medieval scribe, I am already at the very least two steps away from the real music. One step being eight hundred years old.... So, then unfortunately when a performer then opens an edition of music that I created, then that musician is already at minimum three steps away. Because then the performer brings her own perception on what those symbols on that piece of paper in the modern book say.... The performer has got her own perceptions and views, a performer makes up her mind about tempo, a performer makes up her mind about pitch, a performer makes up her mind about phrasing.

AMF Is that something that you also have made up ... when you have been writing your edition?

EA Some of it, not all of it.... I do not put in tempo indications.... A singer is not going to sing anything without phrasing ... and no edition of medieval music is going to tell you how to phrase.... There might be little breath marks, or a bar line at the end of a phrase.... Even if the text has its own built in phrasing, the syntax of the text, the singer is still going to do it her own way.

Interview with Susan Boynton, New York, 4th of April 2006.

AMF When you hear medieval music inside your head, what does it sound like?

SB Vocal music, or instrumental music, or anything?

AMF Vocal music. How does it sound?

SB I guess maybe it sounds very purely in tune if it is polyphony, with pure fifths and pure octaves.... I often hear it the way I hear recordings, in other words, I hear in my head a sound like Anonymous 4, or I hear a sounds like the Hilliard Ensemble or I hear a sound like the Orlando Consort. In other words, I hear a sound which is the timbre of a certain ensemble that I've heard.... Or I hear chant, a single voice, but I think it's very much probably shaped by recorded sound when I hear it.

AMF My next question was, if that correspond with a sound that any of today's singers make?

SB Yes it does.... I must add to that. Sometimes I hear much more boys voices, I imagine things being sung by boy sopranos, and one of the problems with the chant recordings is - very very few use boy singers.... There are English choirs with boys, Cathedral choirs, but chant choirs tend not to use boy singers except for Schola Hungarica uses some female and also sometimes boys, and of course, there would have been, in *pretty much every context, except the female convent*, there would have been child or boy singers, young voices. So I do actually in my mind add that on quite often, or imagine how that would sound.

AMF So in monasteries in the medieval period there were boys?

SB Yes, except for the reformed orders like Cistercians, they didn't have any child oblates, adult novices only, but no children. But all Benedictines always had child oblates.... One of the main things I have worked on is childhood, music and childhood, and the role of the oblates.... You don't have it among the Dominicans or the Franciscans not those orders which are based on adult conversion, but ... the

Benedictines, which remained a huge number of people, always had child oblates. The later middle ages fewer, but I think still some, and up to about eleven hundred they had a lot, it was a very significant part of the community.... I have been working on that for about ten years, that topic of children and.... the role of child singers. That would have been a different timbre, and I think unfortunately lots of people now don't know of that in historical research so they don't use boy singers.

AMF Also it would be hard for a professional group to have boys on tour.

SB It's also a sound I think that some people don't like.... Probably a considerable amount was being sung in octaves. And of course there are writers of the Middle Ages, there is a theorist, and I can't remember which theorist who actually says an octave is the sound of boys and men singing together. In other words, there was a lot of singing in octaves. Sometimes the boys' choir would sing separately, sometimes they would sing with the male choir, it depends, but that would be an important part of the sound, so when I say what I hear in my head, I should say that's one type of thing I hear in my head. The other type would be all based on the recorded ensembles that I've heard.

AMF What do you think of women singing music written for men?

SB That doesn't bother me at all. No, I think it is fine.... We can't return to the way it really sounded anyway. I think probably medieval music did sound extremely different and that's why I said that I hear in my mind the recorded ensembles, because I think it sounded probably so different that we can hardly imagine how different. The tuning being very different and also the quality of the voices being probably very very different. I think even a folk singer today or other kinds of local traditions today can't probably even approximate what the sound of the voice of the liturgical choir was like. Not only because they were all amateurs, for the most part not necessarily that trained, but because of the different aesthetic at the time.... There are so many ways in which it's different now, the way people sing and the speed in which people sing and the sense of rhythm that people have, I think it is so different that I find that if women sing music written for men there is just one more difference. There are already so many differences. We don't know, for instance, if we listen to

Troubadour/Trouvère song whether it was accompanied or not. There are lots of debates about instrumental accompaniment and the role of that, and of course these songs would be different depending on who performed them and when they performed them and what kinds of performers they were, what context it was, and so probably there's a lot of flexibility in the way these things would sound anyway, as they do now. In terms of secular song, there are lots of literary references to women performing songs that are in theory in the man's voice, the male voice.... As far as chant, in theory ... any member of a religious order was singing chant, so the chant itself is not of course written specifically for male or female. Polyphony, you could make the argument that it might have been written more for the male voice if it's written for a particular environment, but in circumstances in which they had boys singing the top voice, then the untrained female voice today is close to the early music boy's voice. And then you have circumstances such as Las Huelgas codex, which is a codex owned by, made for a convent of nuns, but it's not necessarily that all the music in that codex is intended to be sung by women either, so I think it's a complicated question. But even if you know absolutely that it's written specifically for men's voices it still does not matter if women perform it.

AMF We assume or think that it's untrained voices...

SB Not all of them.

AMF If you sing ... all these services per day and also rehearse you have to have some kind of stamina in your voice that allows you to ... sing five hours a day. And also waking up in the middle of the night and be able to sing a service....

SB I agree that's training, what I meant by untrained voice was ... people who do not have voice lessons, to sing in this particular style, because of course all that is training. In fact this article I wrote called 'Training for the liturgy as a form of monastic education', shows that they are constantly trained, but what I mean by the untrained voice is that today there is a distinction between the plain tone that you would sing for chant and the tone for other repertoires.... The way I would sing (I sing chant every Sunday) - the way I sing is not the way that a professional singer sings, not only because the amount of time that is spent singing but because the

professional singer have been trained to sing in a certain way. That's what I mean. They are trained to have a certain kind of vocal production so the vocal production of a person who has not undergone that specific kind of pedagogy is the untrained voice.... For instance people who are (say) folk singers who can be extremely accomplished singers, but they would not have studied singing per se, and that is what I would call an untrained voice.

AMF Who doesn't have a conservatory classical [training]?

SB Right, a certain kind of vocal pedagogy. You can have other kinds of pedagogy, but in traditions where you learn orally, it is not the same necessarily as having a western style vocal pedagogy.

AMF Have you been consulted by singers and instrumentalist about sound, notation and historical justification?

SB What I do notice is that they tend to ask historical questions mainly about pronunciation ... of medieval languages. About notation, not as much, because the people that I've been consulted by tend to be singing from modern editions.... I've worked a little bit with Susan Hellauer, so in that case yes, she was consulting me for one of their programmes about the notation ... whereas most of the people who consult me are using actual modern editions and they mainly want to know about the tempo and the pronunciation of the text. Most of the people who have consulted me, who I am in touch with, mainly because they are younger ... they are not quite professional singers, but they're not as historically informed, even as they should be, so they don't know necessarily even basic things about the larger context of, say a piece, what genre it is and how other pieces relate to it.

AMF Have they consulted you about sound?

SB Not really, because they usually have established their sound.... They usually have enough of the sense, I am not talking about Susan Hellauer because of course she wouldn't consult me about sound I don't think, but basically the other ones who consulted me have sometimes asked a little bit about vibrato or lack of vibrato.... I am

not a vocal coach so I actually wouldn't want to start talking about their sound because I would not know what to say ... in terms of sound and vocal production.... to express it accurately.... I have the experience of singing chant every week for years ... and have a little bit of insight, but for polyphony I haven't done historical research on things like the sound of polyphony, and which also changes from place to place, and also once you have three female voices and they've had to make adjustments like transpositions and so on, then of course historically it would be very hard to relate that to the sound of three male voices.

AMF The sound that groups make today who do medieval music, if we think of how it sounded twenty years ago, and also forty years ago, it has changed quite a lot, and is that something that has to do with fashion?

SB The main difference that people usually identify is the fact that many many years ago there were a lot of instruments, people singing with a lot of instruments.... The tone colour was very bright, there was a lot of louder ... volume in those recordings partly perhaps because of the instruments. I would say in terms of vocal performance to me the main change has been the trend towards a greater amount of *a cappella* singing, which I personally prefer, because I think when you can't make the case for instruments that it's annoying to hear them. I find it annoying frankly to hear vocal polyphony with a lot of instruments, especially the ecclesiastical polyphony when there is really no justification for performing it that way.... That's really intruding on the timbre of the voice to have instruments either doubling or what ever, so I think that's a big trend.... In terms of secular polyphony there is a bit of that trend. Gothic Voices played a very important role in that. I should have mentioned them earlier because I do have a lot of their recordings and so when I hear medieval music in my mind I am probably hearing Gothic Voices a good part of the time, as I've been using their recordings to teach for many many years too, which means I've been hearing them a lot because I play them in the classroom and we discuss them. So, Christopher Page did a lot of work writing about, sort of in favour of *a cappella* performances, of quite a few types of music that had not always been performed a cappella, like late 14th century ... song generally. That's been very influential in terms of a change, but I do notice there were a lot of younger groups like the Dufay Collective, and those types of groups [they] tend to come up now with a lot more of the vocal and

instrumental, and that is fine. But, I always thought that just the way it has been described by people who have written about the whole phenomenon is that in the early music movement in the beginning, there was this sense of kind of wanting to explore different instruments and show off the possibilities of these reconstructed instruments and that really is a separate phenomenon for me from the music.... So much of medieval instrumental music is not written down ... it is improvised music, so you can't really get to it as easily as you can with vocal music.... I think it is partly fashion, but it is also partly about the role of instruments in the early music movement generally, their role, their importance.... This is something Daniel Leech-Wilkinson wrote about in his book, I think it has partly been the influence of certain very prominent people like Christopher Page and Paul Hillier who have made it more common and kind of more, almost more conventional for a certain amount of music to be performed *a cappella*, and even that is in itself a fashion. I don't know if it's necessarily more historically informed. For certain music it is pretty clear they were *a cappella* but for other things there is still this debate about how it was performed.

AMF Also, Hilliard uses a counter tenor on the top ... and Gothic Voices Margaret Philpot or Catherine King ... and none of that is historically justified either.

SB I think in the Middle Ages ... for high parts they would have used a high voice whether it was a high tenor ... that would have corresponded to an alto.... There seems to be something like falsettists singing the top parts of songs.... I am not really trying to make arguments about people being more authentic or less authentic, and I am not really interested in that debate.... If we went back now and observed actual singing in the middle ages we would probably not like it as much as we think we should ... we would find it almost shocking probably.... We do have something in manuscripts but of course medieval music has to be always reconstructed and it is always a living tradition of some kind.... You can't get back to an authentic truth so there is really no point trying.... I don't like when people take, what would seem to be pretty straight forward, and then do something that's the opposite.... For instance if a piece is written in a notation that is not mensural at all and then they sing it only in a mensural, highly mensural interpretation ... I think things like that are kind of tiresome because there is really no need to do that. Like for example drones, instrumental drones. I mean when drones are added.... Most of the CD's that I own of

early music I use for teaching, and so something like a drone for me is almost automatically useless, because how do I make the connection between that and what is preserved from the middle ages? I can't really make that connection.

AMF Christopher Page ... who was so firm on the *a cappella* tradition, or wanted to perform it *a cappella*, and then on the biggest hit record the Hildegard...

SB *Feather on the breath of God*. They use drones. That was insane, I have no idea [why], but that was also 25 years ago.... It is very annoying I think.

AMF How important is the medieval text today? ... Polyphonic sacred music, for us, for the audience?

SB Very important. Most musicologists, most of their research they do in medieval music is actually related to the text.... It is mainly about the text and the music often then is secondary to the research, so I think the text is extremely important. There are different ways to contextualize it. When I work with the trio Eos, these young singers, what we're trying to do is that I will speak a little bit about their programme so that the audience gets a sense of the context. I think sometimes texts, like sacred music texts ... people do not necessarily know how to fit them in to something else, try to understand them in historical context, so it's good to frame it. So if they are doing something of the cult of Virgin Mary then you can talk a little about how these texts bring out common themes, things that are not familiar to people now, but which would have been in the middle ages very familiar because they're very common themes.... I think the text should be very pronounced and well presented and studied, translated.... I think people should have the translation because some of these themes are still very pervasive.... There has been a lot of transhistorical study of Virgin Mary, because so much of the cult is still very important today, in the New World in Latin America in different places, so *there is not really a barrier between us and that time*.... If you are talking about sacred Latin pieces the singers would have understood on some level what the text meant. The singers at least have to know it, and if you give the audience the text then you're giving the audience *a little bit more insight in to what knowledge the singers have*. It is ... like a film. *Obviously the speakers, the actors have to know the language, and if you have subtitles then people*

can ignore the subtitles and not look at them but at least they're being given the access to the meaning that the actors themselves know of the text. So, to me the translation is essential. But also more than the translation there has to be education.... I have noticed that people really like concerts when [there are] not just programme notes, but when somebody actually talks to them about the music and talks to them about what it represents and why the pieces are related to each other and why they were chosen. I think that people once they get a little bit of context then they really enjoy it even more. They might enjoy it without the context but there have been so many reactions from people when we've done things, or when I have done things, where they have appreciated getting certain kinds of contextualisation, but you have to know how to do it, in other words, it has to be done in a certain way. And also *I think part of education is choosing programmes, in other words, texts that are matched in certain ways, that are related to one another in certain ways... It is not that it is not a music based set of criteria for choosing a programme, nor that the music is not important, but that the text is equally important.* And sometimes you think about the text first. So for instance, anything to do with the liturgy, the text is a primary consideration because the liturgical repertoire even though it represents all of these musical genres the text is the basis of the way in which it is fit in with the church year. So, if you're looking at the theme of the annunciation or something like that, text is a primary consideration.... There is a lot of evidence that in the Middle Ages people spent a lot of time learning these texts, memorising the songs, and also trying to figure out, understanding what they meant and discussing the text. I think that you don't want to lose that sense of the importance of the meaning of the text in modern performance. But what you do with it that would of course depend a lot on the person and the context.... Not everybody will approach it the same way of course.

AMF What is the role of a musicologist relative to the performer? Is it a surrogate composer? Are musicologists and performers communicating?

SB Ideally or in practice? ... For the most part there is *really no dialogue at all.* In other words, there are a few people, like Christopher Page who is by the way not a musicologist at all but who does research on medieval music and performs it. There are a few people like that.

AMF He doesn't perform either.

SB No it's true ... he is involved in music performance but he has never been a musicologist, he has never pretended to be a musicologist, he is a literary scholar ... who is actively studying the history of music and also involved in performance, but there are very few people like that. So much so that when there is a collaboration that is successful between performers and musicologists then the American Musicological Society give a prize for that, it's called the Greenberg prize.... I wouldn't say the musicologist is a surrogate composer because my sense is that people who are performing early music are going and getting their material from printed sources often with very little context or very little time spent on thinking about the context and then they are performing the music.... I would be very open to it.... I think that is probably the main reason that the role of musicologist is pretty unimportant right now for early music singers, because it just takes a lot of time to work with people. Singers have a lot of material available to them, they have a lot of editions that are published, they can go to the library and they can buy music and they don't necessarily need a person to do that work for them because the music is published, whereas many years ago I think a lot of music was not published, and so somebody, either a singer or some scholar would have to transcribe from the manuscript.... Often you would see in recordings or programmes that the editions were made by a musicologist, and I think that is getting less and less necessary.... I think singers are becoming less dependent on musicologists.... There is also more material on the internet.... Access to things is easier in general. I do think though that musicologists will continue to play a role, because we can go out and find unknown music, we can bring out new pieces of music that are not known because we do the research to find it, and I think that is a way in which a musicologist ... can be really important for early music as we can discover more music for people to perform. And another thing is, *I always feel very different from a performer, not because I have any negative kind of stereotypes of performers, but in the research that I do, I can stay very speculative, and for instance I can say 'well, it could have been this way, or it could have been that way, or maybe it was this other way', and I can leave it open. I don't have to make a decision. Because when you perform you have to get up there and make a decision.... Once you make that decision, you could be wrong ... somebody might not agree with it,*

somebody might not like it, but you have to do something.... I like being able to say: 'well, I am not so sure how it really was'.

AMF But you would argue your case when you write?

SB I have to argue it, but ... I never have to say only one way is right, because for the medieval period we really will never know which way was right.... I like to live in the footnote.... When I sing chant, which does not have obviously written rhythm, and there are so many things that you have to figure out, when I sing chant I experience how extremely important the role of instinct is, and how very important the personal approach to the music is in singing chant, and how it has to be very subjective. In other words, the way I phrase chant, I don't use the Solesmes method, I am really not interested in things like that, because I don't think the Solesmes method has any real claim to being correct.... I think the way to sing chant is to sing it regularly and to sing with other people, and to find a way in which you feel the music together, and that the chant would come out of repeated singing.... It's a very non-verbal way of learning how to do it.... That to me is not musicological, that is something that you learn as a performer, that is an experience that you have, and it's very hard to translate that for me in to scholarship. What it does tell me is a historical insight that I think is extremely important which is - all the evidence says that they learnt the stuff aurally - they learnt it by imitating other people. And that is exactly the best way to learn it now. It makes perfect sense, it is absolutely natural.

AMF I think it is also important to think ... that a *non* historically informed performance does not necessarily mean a *non* informed performer.

SB Right, and also it does not mean a bad performance.... What I think musicologists can offer is maybe even a wider range of interpretations. In other words, when I hear certain pieces being done the same way in different recordings, because people just don't know how to do them in terms of rhythm or in terms of phrasing or something like that.... If one could consult with a scholar who could talk a little bit about various possibilities I think more possibilities would come to light.

AMF Do you think there are musicologists out there who think that it would be better if the music were not being performed?

SB I think there are people who have thoughts like that. I must say Notre Dame polyphony is another thing where I get really impatient with a lot of recordings. I get really really annoyed, but then some of them I like a lot. But that is an area where there really is benefit to be gained from musicologists and singers talking together.... Nicky Losseff can talk about this, she is a real expert on that. People have all different opinions about how this stuff sounded, and I think there should be experimentation.... The earlier repertoire ... there are so many possibilities for performance and I think it would be great just to hear more.... Part of the problem is that that music is very improvisationally based and so the editions of the music, for example Mark Everist, who was Nicky Losseff's adviser, did an edition of some of the music in the Notre Dame repertoire, but he often does not assign rhythms, because a lot of that music you can't really tell what the rhythm would have been, you can have educated guesses.

Anna Maria Busse Berger, San Francisco, 29 November 2007.

AMBB Most of the important ideas in my book, they were already, sort of, in place in the first year, but it took me ten, fifteen years to read all the secondary literature and to do all the research, because it was a huge project. So, that's what I then did. Now, at the end of this first year, I read my first paper, where I argued that Notre Dame polyphony is really orally transmitted, and so I read it at three different places. First, in Italy, in the University of Rome and at Cremona. Huge success. Italians love oral transmission because there was this wonderful Italian scholar, Nino Pirotta, who had written great articles.... They loved it, both in Rome and Cremona. And Rome had a wonderful discussion afterwards. Then I read it in Germany, they almost murdered me. I have never been attacked like this. It was in Freiburg and they did not believe a word of it, and you know there was a guy, actually, who wrote the most important book and fundamental book on counterpoint, Klaus-Jürgen Sachs, a very good scholar, he was very disturbed, I think he didn't even understand the main part of my paper, even though my nephew, who is a medical school student, understood it immediately and corrected him, I mean, it was unbelievable. And then I read it in the American Musicological Society in Montreal, and I had a respondent who was actually a very distinguished scholar of medieval music, Jeremy Yudkin, who has transcribed a few of the medieval treatises. And he gave such an awful response to my paper, that arrived two or three days before the conference, I was so upset when it came, at first I thought, 'what am I going to do?' But then I started to write a response. And the audience – the room was absolutely packed, and I think the mood was very much against him and very, very supportive of me, but it was very dramatic. And I think, from that moment on, the project had the attention of the audience. And Richard [Taruskin] was immediately – he wasn't at that conference, he couldn't come there, but he called me the day after the conference and said, 'I heard you had a big quarrel with Yudkin, I want to have all the papers'. And he was very interested in the project from that first day. Not only that, he told me later that the whole project – because we talked a lot about these ... literacy issues, and he was just writing his big music history, and I think he got the idea of orality and literacy for his music history project, and he openly says so, from my memory project.... And so when, for example, Mary Carruthers had a lecture at Berkeley, he came there with me and I think he started to read all the same literature as me, it became the framework for his

project, too, because, I mean, it makes perfect sense in his music history. So, that's how it happened. But it was lots of hard work. And I have to say, now, when I think back, I think, maybe after my year in Paris, I got a Guggenheim Grant, and after that year we spent in Paris my dissertation adviser, Lewis Lockwood, who's a Renaissance scholar and a Beethoven scholar, he was there, of course, at the Montreal thing.... And, you know, I was not originally a medievalist, I started out in the Renaissance. So, I think he was a little apprehensive that I was going to do my homework in medieval studies. And he told me, 'Anna Maria', he called me the next morning and said, 'you should read everything by Friedrich Ludwig and Jacques Handschin', because he was worried they would attack me. And he always had these good answers.... And then, after the year in Paris, I sort of knew I had a book. But, at first, I thought I only had an article.... And then people liked the idea more and I got a lot of grants and awards for the book and so on, so, that was very nice, yeah.... But, of course, Edward Roesner already had similar ideas with Notre Dame polyphony, so, he was already saying it's just composed of different chunks, and I cite him very much, because he really did an excellent job of showing that very clearly. He's not as combative as me, he never said, you know, Leonin and Perotin probably didn't write these pieces, but, I think, if you would have taken what he wrote in his publication seriously, that would have been the conclusion.... And also, Craig Wright had something along those lines already, too, but he also didn't draw this conclusion.

AMF During your project, and from when you started it, have you been consulted by performers about medieval performers?

AMBB Well, let me think. I've had long discussions with Paul Hillier which was very useful.... I have this idea that isorhythm was invented because you needed a structure to memorise the music. And I think he was very enthusiastic also about that idea, that it gets easier to perform the piece because it is all in original notation and takes up only two folios, so, that was very helpful. I don't think I have talked with performers, no, I don't think so. It's a pity, isn't it?

AMF Well, no, it's –

AMBB I should have.

AMF It is a pity. I'm not sure why that is, but it's exactly the same with almost all musicologists.

AMBB They don't talk with performers?

AMF No, and musicologists don't – I mean, performers don't seek musicologists except for when they want someone to justify their work. And I think that's a bit naughty.

AMBB I was a performer myself, but since I abandoned it, I have hardly had any performances, especially not in early music performance.

AMF When you think about medieval music inside your head, what does it sound like?

AMBB I think – I don't even have a preconceived notion, I let myself be surprised by what they are coming up with. I mean, I can imagine and hear the consonants and then what is in between, I let them have a lot of freedom, and I think it is fine if they sort of improvise in-between.... I was now thinking about polyphony, it might be different –

AMF If you have a piece in front of you and look at it, and if you get the sense of how that sounds in your head, what's your preference of sound? Do you relate it to different groups that you've heard? Or how would you do it yourself?

AMBB I mean, I hear some vocal groups, and I hear a very free melisma, something like that, yeah. No, I don't think I associate it with one particular group, absolutely not. No, I think I just hear the intervals and then something there. I don't have strong ideas. It's the same when I hear Brahms or something like that, I don't have only one idea of how it should sound.... American scholars, I always feel, have this wonderful – when you look at American undergraduates, they have probably much less solid background in languages and literatures than European undergraduates. But American kids have this feeling that anything is possible because they are full of enthusiasm.

So, for example, my daughter, Susanna, did her senior thesis on Kant.... Nobody in Germany would allow an undergraduate to write a senior thesis on Kant.... And the same with amateurs, I think if you get amateurs playing, they let their imagination ring, and it makes perfect sense.... Did you hear this particular recording which Heinrich Bessler organized in the 1920s of Magnus Liber organum? It is so different, it sounds like Carmina Burana. This is how – it's a fantastic recording, I always play it to my students - Orff must have heard it and thought that this is how medieval music sounded.

AMF Which one is it?

AMBB It's a 1920s recording, the first recording ever made of the Magnus Liber, Perotin, it's Viderunt I think. It's absolutely incredible, because you listen to it, it's with a big orchestra, huge choir, it sounds like Carmina Burana.

AMF The female voice issue in the medieval period, do you have any ideas about it?

AMBB You know, I have to tell you honestly, I have never thought much about it. I've just heard performances of The Anonymous 4 ... near Bressanone, where we have, every three years, a conference on 14th century music, and it was one of the best concerts I have heard in my life. *And I couldn't care less whether it was sung by men or women, I think these women were better than most of the men.* That was all there was about it.

AMF In the beginning, you know, that was the first question we were asked, what do you feel about singing music that was originally only written for men?

AMBB You know, Anna Maria, when I think about it, these convents, these improvisational techniques of singing polyphony could have been easily taught to these nuns and they could easily have performed something like Notre Dame polyphony. There is simply no reason whatsoever, why they shouldn't have done it just as much as the men, in the convents whatever. I just don't believe that they didn't do it. Oh, and one more thing, once you look, you know, I don't know if you have looked at the kind of research which has been done on 16th and 17th convents in Italy,

where people have now started to investigate the music, I mean, it is amazing what kind of very good music has been done there.

AMF And also thinking about how easy – just a drone, for example, if you have it, why wouldn't you just start to follow and actually have a –

AMBB A second melody around it, absolutely, or a parallel octaves, parallel fifths, you know, all of these simple organum techniques which everybody had learned very quickly, kids could learn them, why shouldn't they have done that?

AMF How important is the medieval text today, in performance.

AMBB Honestly, I haven't thought much about it.

AMF If you would go to a concert yourself ... would it improve your listening experience of the music, if you could follow the translation into English?

AMBB It depends on the repertoire. I think, again, it is very important, if you would have chant, for example, you could be sure that they would have memorised it, also the text, so, they would know what is meant. So, I think, yes, for chant, definitely, it would be an important element. I think, similarly, for a Notre Dame polyphony, these early polyphonies, I think, again, definitely they would have memorised it, but even if, let's say, you hear Notre Dame Clausula and it has just the syllable 'do' from 'dominus' or something like that.... I think they would probably know what part of text it has been taken, and would know the text by heart. And the motets with many different texts, I suspect they would have many different levels of understanding.... No, I think text is very important. I think it's also mnemonic, it helps you memorise it, don't you feel that it helps you memorise the music?

AMF I mean, it helps me memorise, but it's more the sound of it that sort of makes me memorise.

AMBB But you didn't have this training of all these kids who had this training in the Middle Ages, you see, they would have known this from early childhood on.... I

come from a very Lutheran household where every day was started with the Bible verse and we sung lots of chorales every day, so, I know every chorale by heart, and it is very much engraved in my memory. So, I suspect, they might have had better memories for this stuff, yeah. So, I think, for them, it wouldn't only be the sound but also the meaning. Because, you learn Latin by memorising the Psalter and then you would go on to memorise all these Biblical texts.

AMF But the medieval texts ... what they meant in the medieval period - when a modern audience read that text today, that's a very different thing.

AMBB Absolutely, it's a very important point, yes. And, you know, we have heard – we know *hundreds of other pieces of literature* in between, which might make reference to this particular visit and texts, so, we might hear it in a new light and it might give a totally different meaning. It's the same thing with Shakespeare, who we listen to and *recognise authoritarian or dictatorships in there which Shakespeare might not have known about*. Yeah, I think that's very important.... Again, it's against authenticity, because we cannot listen to the texts as they have listened to them in the Middle Ages.

AMF No, because we can't take away what we know, and we can't take away the music we have heard either.

AMBB Exactly, the allusions and citations of melodies or something....

AMF It's hopeless to understand how the understanding of the music was at that time it was written.

AMBB Absolutely.

AMF And that's something we have been criticised for, very, very much, that we have never, in our CDs, provided a translation into English.... Do we want to channel the listening to a certain text ... – I mean, we are creative with the material as performers, and why shouldn't we allow listeners to be creative in their own minds?

AMMB What a good argument. It's the same if you have it performed by instruments instead of by voices, then it can be a very nice new idea, too, it's exactly the same thing, yeah. No, I think one can defend it. But, on the other hand, my scholarly soul would rather have the text there.

Ross Duffin, Cleveland, USA, 15 November 2006.

AMF Now, so you were on a panel up in Seattle...

RD With Daniel Leech-Wilkinson and others, talking about performance of late medieval music.... It was in 2004 in Seattle, and I made the comment that performer who tried to do late medieval repertoire with instruments were guaranteed to get a bad review in *Gramophone* and *Early Music*, because of Daniel's position (with *Early Music*) and David Fallows' position (with *Gramophone*). David was in the audience. And I said that it had diminished the number of performances and the number of performers that were willing to do the repertoire, because they knew they would get a bad review. And Daniel simply leaned forward in his chair and said '*He's right.*' ... And Christopher Page has mentioned, in his writings that, OK, you can do it with instruments, so it's all gone away, in a way. Although I sense that Daniel, from his 'Invention of medieval music' [*The Modern Invention of Medieval Music*] still thinks that the all-voice view has much more merit historically than that with instruments. It's just a matter of how you interpret the evidence. All of us look at the same little pieces of evidence, and draw up conclusions about it. The funny thing about David Fallow's view, though, is that he came here to the Cleveland Art Museum to give the keynote talk when they presented a Burgundian exhibit a couple of years ago, and I volunteered to do live musical examples for his lecture. So he asked for certain pieces, and we started working on them here in advance of his visit. *And then something came up about a four-voice version of a piece versus the three-voice version, and I said 'no, it's fine, we can have that part played on harp'. He said 'on, you mean you're not doing it with all voices?' I had immediately assumed that we would use a combination of voices and instruments and he had immediately assumed that we would do it with all voices. We both started from our prejudiced stance on how it should be done. So we laughed about that....* England has had such a fine tradition of vocal training that they could do convincing performances with all voices with absolutely no problem at all. And that was part of the success of it, I think, that the performances were so beautiful, and people would say this about Christopher Page's group, Gothic Voices, when they first started. They would say 'oh, gosh, this is surprisingly beautiful'. That was one of its great credentials.... I think it's useful for students to see how people looking at the same evidence can come to very different

conclusions and hold those conclusions with such passion. It really is striking. I think it's possible to produce convincing performances in a number of different ways.

AMF Of course.

RD A few summers ago at the Amherst Festival, we were talking about proportion – medieval proportions. It was a panel with me and David Fallows and Alex Blachly who had his dissertation in proportion in the 15th century. And Alex was saying 'no, that you can't do a two to one proportion at *cut circle* in *Virgine Bella* because it makes nonsense of the music'. And I said 'that's just not right, you can sell any performance, you just have to be committed to the decision that you've made and do it'. So I just took three singers that were there and we did it, and David Fallows said 'well, you changed my mind, I really thought that it was impossible, and I realise now that, honestly, with good performers you can make anything convincing'.... And I think really that's behind a lot of medieval music performance, because we know so little about the details of how it was performed. And maybe the most important thing, then, is for the performers to be convinced by what they're doing, and to present the music in a convincing way.... *It's not that there is so much evidence for the use of instruments, it's just that there is some, and that with the small amount of evidence that survives I just don't think it can be ignored.*

AMF And also when there is so little evidence you can allow yourself of course, as the performer, to use, in a way, the lack of evidence to be creative, and then all different possibilities should be welcomed, because the lack of information actually can be a resource.

RD I think that's true. The other side requires, as I call it, positive evidence, so the positivists require absolute, definite evidence for something before they will allow themselves to use it, and there's just not enough evidence to be able to exclude so many things that that excludes.

AMF Well, that brings along a question about what is a good performance? Is that something that might be built on historical evidence, or is it something that actually touches people's soul?

RD Well, in modern terms, it's something that touches people's soul, that's all it is. For those of us that care about the historical aspects, I think we care about them because it sometimes makes the music sound better. I've done a lot of work on, for example, historical pronunciation, historical pronunciation of Latin. I wrote an article in 1985 about it that drew attention to a lot of 16th century sources that people hadn't really been citing. And I don't advocate historical pronunciation because it's antiquarian, I do it because I think that it contributes to the sound of the music. If you do a French piece with French Latin it changes the whole sound. And so I think people are eager to find historical information when it can inform performance.... But as I say it still has to be convincing in performance to work. *You can't hear someone do a bad performance and say, 'but we used all these historical criteria, how can you criticise us?' That's just not a good enough reason in itself.*

AMF So what's your feeling of women singing music written for men?

RD It never struck me as unusual. Certainly women have always had the opportunity to sing. Whether it's in convents or whatever, there were always women singing, right from the time of Hildegard, obviously, they were singing. And virtuosic stuff, I mean Hildegard is just amazingly virtuosic. And if the nuns were singing that they could do anything as far as I'm concerned. And I assume that as polyphony became available they would participate in that too. I also know that there are references to women minstrels, touring women minstrels in the 15th century, so why would anyone object to it? The problem with it of course is that when you have a group then you try to find things to do, and it's just like Anonymous 4, they were always trying to find something new to do, and sometimes it put them into repertoires that maybe women didn't do that often, but it never really bothered me that much.

AMF If the music would have been there for them in their libraries ... they probably would have had a go at it.

RD Absolutely, yeah.

AMF ... I've been rambling on about [the positive sides of omitting texts and

translations in [programmes].

RD Well I think I recognise everything that you say as being valid. At the same time I think it makes your performance into almost an instrumental performance, and *invites listeners to appreciate it in the abstract*, in the same way that they would appreciate an instrumental performance of the music.

AMF That's a very interesting point.

RD Because it takes the text out of it, except as it becomes colours in the sound of what they're hearing, the text no longer has meaning. And what's interesting about that, though I'm sure it's just wonderfully successful - I've heard your recordings and I know they're beautiful - is that it seems *in some ways to go against the whole concept of medieval singing*, where music is simply a vehicle for the text. No honestly, they only composed music to get across these texts that had meaning to them in one way or another. And so that's what vocal music was: texts that were set to notes.

AMF The thing is, if you like the sound of medieval music then you're stuck with the texts, you have no choice really...

RD No, and I understand what you're saying, and in fact one thing that I don't think you mentioned, is that it can be an advantage in that it allows the listener to concentrate more on the performance, and not on the programme and so on. When we had Ben Bagby here in 2000 doing Beowulf...

AMF Yeah, that's amazing.

RD Yeah, and it was the second time he'd done it. Jon Aaron who is his agent (and who is from Cleveland, so I've known him a long time) wanted to come and put television monitors on the side of the stage, and do the subtitles all the way down the side of the hall. And I said 'no, I don't want to do it. I'm going to have someone come out and speak about the story so the audience knows what the story is with Beowulf, and what's happening, and so on. And then I want them to concentrate on Ben's performance, because that's really all you need, to get the essence of it. And to have

people looking at monitors, so that they are reading the text as he's singing it, going by, is missing the performance, because you have to watch him to get the full part of the drama'. So that part of what you're saying, I think, is that it gives a tremendous advantage to what you do ... that people aren't buried in their programmes - they're actually listening to and watching you, which for a performer is a really important thing, and which a lot of vocal music performers now don't enjoy because people are reading the translations. So I see it both ways....

RD Let me ask you a question. You have been listening to all these different performers down through the last century and how they sing medieval music. Did you find that you changed your singing style at all when you started singing medieval music as opposed to the things you had been doing?

AMF When you are in a conservatory system, or a Hochschule ... or all these places where you focus ... on solo performance ... I find it very restrictive. During my whole education, even if I was allowed to sing whatever I wanted or whatever I brought to my teacher – he was wonderfully good actually, and has supported me all the way – when I came with the medieval stuff ... I could never get any help from him with interpretation of anything that was earlier than Bach, because no-one knew what that was about. And I suppose the conservatories are very, very quick with labelling their students into a certain kind of vocal category.

RD You're a Lied singer, you're an opera singer, you're an oratorio singer.

AMF Yeah, but also, just not oratorio – but Handel, or not just an opera singer – but you're a Mozart sobrette soprano. This is even when you're very, very young – they really try to get you focussed on a particular repertoire...

RD So you resisted that, or did you?

AMF Well, actually, I did learn some different things.... I did some Puccini, I did some Mozart, I did all sort of things, and contemporary music and so on. And, I think most of the time - it is not like that now - but ensemble singing was something that the vocal teachers would not encourage you to do, because when you did ensemble

singing that would make you less aware of your own singing technique and so on. So it was not something that was being encouraged. And also, medieval music or renaissance music was the repertoire for the students who did not succeed as opera singers. But, I don't think that's the case now. I mean, that's the same thing as folk music really. I mean, ten years ago, you were not cool if you were doing folk music, but now you're the coolest person in the college if you're good at playing the fiddle. So, it's very much a fashion I suppose. And then, the whole Lied tradition is, I mean, who can survive only doing Lied concerts now? So, I think the system is changing.

RD But part of the reaction against medieval and renaissance music among mainstream vocal teachers and so on is that they say you have to sing with 'straight tone' - that's the term they use - meaning you have to take out all the vibrato, and I don't really think I've ever known any singer that takes away all the vibrato. I think that successful singers of early music sing with less vibrato, but it's not something really constricting, it just feels like a natural... almost an extension of speaking, in a way.... I think having known Andrea von Ramm and also Barbara Thornton - they were both so devoted to their repertoires that they didn't want to do anything else. But they both also said that 'good vocal technique is good vocal technique'. I heard Barbara say that precisely, and Andrea talk about 'very solid technique'. They just believed that good singing was good singing, and it should be easy. It should be a musical production, and not strained, and so those are the things that I tell my students. I don't teach voice here. But I've sung a range of things from medieval to baroque, some contemporary even, and believe that in singing medieval music you don't have to choose a voice production that is going to be opposite to what you would do in other repertoires. There's got to be something that feels natural somehow.

AMF So when you hear medieval music inside your head, what does it sound like?

RD Well, that's an interesting question. I guess it depends on the repertoire. I certainly have those Hilliard Ensemble recordings, Lionel Power and so on, in my mind for that repertoire. The Dunstable that they did.

AMF I love their Old Hall manuscripts recordings.

RD Old Hall, yes, very beautiful. Yeah, gorgeous. But ironically when I think of secular music I think more of Studio, Tom Bickley's group with Andrea, and just because I was so impressed by it when I first heard them. I got to hear the group live maybe three or four times before they disbanded. And then, as I said, I got to know Andrea. She was a visiting professor for a semester here in 1988, and she taught courses in French-German contrafacta, and with the students she reconstructed a performing version of *The Roman de la Rose*. I didn't think of that as something you'd perform, but they created a performing version of it, and she had a great time. She said she'd never felt so appreciated - she was really treated like someone who really knew something.

AMF Well she should.

RD She should but she never was, she was always in Tom's shadow ... and then I think she moved to Freiburg or something, and then back to Munich eventually, but she was always just really on the periphery of things, never really fully appreciated for her various specialised knowledge and her tremendous performing gifts. So we made a fuss over her which she appreciated. Actually I put a website of those unknown things by Andrea, including an interview I did with her, and things like that.

AMF Fabulous, so is it up running?

RD Yeah. [<http://music.case.edu/duffin/andrea/>]

AMF Oh, that's great. Wonderful.

RD So it has some of her own compositions, including a breathing sonata that is unbelievable, it's just her breathing. And a kind of manifesto that she does to the background of a Mozart piano sonata - where she has written it and delivers it so that it coincides with the periodicity of the Mozart. Some really unusual things. Andrea had an Estonian friend here in Cleveland, Uille Laido, who was also a singer, and who had some tapes - private tapes - as well, so I just decided that we'd put up this website with these things that were never issued commercially, and that revealed so much of her character. So you might learn some interesting things about her.

AMF You've been in the medieval music world for quite a long time, how do you think that the performances have changed according to how the musicology has changed? I mean we know that we talked about the *a cappella* heresy and Christopher Page and...

RD Well, that's interesting. I think that historical pronunciation and proportion, the mensural system and so on, that they have informed more recent performances in a way that was not possible with the earlier ones. But gosh, in terms of, well that's a really interesting question.

AMF Are performers and musicologists communicating?

RD Oh well that, I remember being at the AMS meeting in New York in, it must have been around 1979 or 1978 or something like that, and *somebody was doing a performance of 'Robin et Marion' and a musicologist I know went up to them and said 'well, this is very interesting what you're doing. Have you read any of the stuff that Henrik van der Werf has been writing about Trouvère song?' and they said 'oh no, we don't read any of that stuff, it's just musicology'.* So that was, to me, an indication that there wasn't a lot of communication between performers and musicologists at that time. I think performers now are much more inclined to do it, I mean, here are you meeting with Anne Stone and so on, to try to find out more about what they're doing. So there's no longer the sense that the performers are on their own. But you know the Studio, they did a lot of work, because there weren't a lot of musicologists that were working in performance practice in those days. So they really had to generate a lot of things on their own, and what they couldn't find out about they did according to their own convictions. So I don't think that there's been a trend in terms of the quality of the performances or anything, particularly, but I do think that performers are better informed now about musicological things. They have to be, because people are going to ask about it.

AMF It's funny thought, because I don't think performers of Romantic music are very informed about the musicology that follows, but it's something that comes with the style you perform.

RD Yeah. I think most mainstream musicians consider that their performing tradition - that card trumps everything else. Even if it can be demonstrated that what they're doing is so completely different from the people that they claim as their musical ancestors.

AMF Have you been collaborating or contacted by performers about historical justification and music, about sound?

RD Occasionally. I consulted with Anonymous 4 when they were doing a joint project with Lionheart on Ockeghem. I also have a former student who leads a group in Boston and has asked if she could list me in her programmes as a music consultant. So she calls me up and asks me about repertoire, and about even things like *ficta* choices and things like that. So it happens.

AMF that's very, very good to know.

RD And I think that musicologists are probably thrilled to have performers come to them to ask them about the music that they care about.

AMF So how did you get into medieval music?

RD Well, I was interested, I guess, from the time I was pretty young. My mother bought New York Pro Musica recordings, so I guess from the time I was maybe ten years old or something I had heard them. And when I went to university, I thought I was going to be a music teacher, and I was just doing regular music. But I got more and more interested in music history during my undergraduate years, and then actually ended up specialising in that. As I got farther and farther into that, medieval music was just part of it. One of my professors as an undergraduate was Gordon Greene, who edited the Chantilly Codex for *Polyphonic Music of the 14th Century*. So he was very involved in doing those transcriptions at the time I was there, and so I had my attention drawn to the repertoire. And then when I went to graduate school out at Stanford, my advisor was a chant specialist, Bill Mahrt - he wrote the chant chapter in the *Medieval Guide*. He's directed a choir doing the liturgy since 1966 - I mean

actually singing mass every Sunday, and singing vespers and compline on many Sundays as well. There are not very many academics who have that kind of claim to experience the chant. He can look at a piece of polyphony and say 'oh, it's based on the such and such chant', because it's second nature to him to know all the chants. I wasn't personally drawn to chant in the same way (although I did sing with his chant choir many Sundays just for fun), but I found another one of Bill's passions - 15th century music - and that became my special love, so that was how I started.

AMF The last thing, if you have any ideas you want to talk about, the vocal quality of vocal medieval music, if you have any thoughts on that.

RD I don't know, it's so tied to individuals and their own voices, it's hard to say.

AMF Or if we wanted to recreate a certain sound, what's the sound that might be like, do you have a sense from the treatises?

RD I think that it's hard to get a sense of the sound from the treatises.... I have wondered if the consistent sound that the instruments make might influence the vocal timbre. The vielle has a reedy sound, the braypin harp has a reedy sound. I've been one who has tried to persuade people to bring back the douçaine as a soft double reed. And I think if a voice is making music with a combination of instruments like that, and it has a reedy quality to it, maybe that's a kind of model for the voice to match, I don't know. You could argue that it should be a contrast, but it does seem that, especially the harp is so striking - the braypin harp, which was so widespread, has a sound that's so unexpected and unlike a modern harp: a reedy, buzzing sound. It's just something I've wondered. So to keep a kind of reedy quality if we're going to be singing with instruments like that. But other than that I think a lot has to do with just the individual.

Anne Stone, New York, USA, 5 April 2006.

AMF When you hear music from the medieval period inside in your head what does it sound like?

AS What an interesting question! I must admit that it tends to sound like British vocal performances, typically all sung ... and ... rather strict.... Actually it depends on the song, doesn't it? I'm thinking about Polyphony ... straight tone, no vibrato, British male singers.

AMF Male singers?

AS I think so, yeah.

AMF That sound, does that correspond with [the sound] in the medieval period?

AS No, absolutely not. I have no illusions about that at all.

AMF What do you think of women singing music written for men?

AS I certainly don't have any ideological problem with it, or intellectual problem with it. I, why not. I don't. It seems to me the only possible reason why anybody could object to that is *if they were after some kind of false notion of authenticity* in a way. But since the notion of authenticity doesn't really interest me, I don't care.... In my opinion, for example Anonymous 4, which is a group I love ... they have an exquisite sound. Beautifully blended, their intonation is impeccable. I love their style, I love their interpretation of religious music.... But, no I have no problem with, with the idea of women singing medieval music at all.

AMF To what extent do you think women's sang polyphonic music?

AS I imagine that in convents they improvised polyphony just like men did, and there is no reason to think that they didn't, if you see what I mean. Did it somehow pass from a kind of everyday, you know sort of oral tradition, into something that from our

point of view is more refined? Are there are lots of manuscripts that are lost, or was it merely that?... Everyone, probably across Europe for a very long time improvised when singing chants ... as a daily occurrence in church and I'm sure that included men and women. Then the step from having that just be what you did to writing it down and sort of crafting it and somehow turning it into a composition that was actually preserved, that's my only question. I don't know whether women did that or the degree to which they did.... You had to learn all kinds of things. You had to have an educational system to write that I honestly just don't know whether women did.... So ... short answer, I'm sure they performed there [in the convent] all the time. The question is *did they write it down?* Did they have that education to write it down?

AMF It is interesting, with this question about the memorisation of the medieval music and what actually happened, and [also] how much of the music [that might have] changed from when it was first performed and written down.

AS If you wrote it down.... Presumably most of it wasn't.... Well that brings up another question. To what degree, when you're performing from written sources of medieval music, should we perform it as written? Or, you know, should we be taking liberties with it? In other words, what does the writing actually represent? Well, I guess that is another question. That is a different dissertation.

AMF It is interesting.

AS Yeah!

AMF Have you been consulted by singers and instrumentalists about sound, interpretation, justification, historical appropriateness or ...

AS No, I haven't.... I have been asked for repertoire suggestions.... But no, I have never, no one has ever asked me about appropriateness, authenticity, any of that you know, any of that kind of stuff. It is not really what I work on. As I said it is not something that really interests me that much. I, of course, I think it's a lost cause... I mean Richard Taruskin I think said this best, you know it's, this whole quest for

authenticity, is a very, very modern quest. It says much more about who we are than who they were, so.

AMF I think also it seems like that the medieval music making has become – it is so much about fashion, or what we are trying to do, what works today. So much happen when Christopher Page...

AS Is that really true? My impression of this, and you have a better sense of this than I, is that, that was true in England absolutely.... But anyway, my impression, and this impression is partially formed by conversations I've had with Pedro Memelsdorff, I don't know if you know him. He directs a group called Mala Punica, they specialise in late 14th century repertory, which is my period. So he is a very good friend. But he also plays with, or used to play with Jordi [Savall] and he is a huge advocate of instruments, like the more the merrier.... He teaches in Barcelona now. There is a new conservatory which has an early music programme. He is a recorder player principally.... When I first met him about 10 years ago we had a lot of discussions about this, about the whole Christopher Page thing and he said that from his perspective as an Italy based recorder player, who also has a group in which he mixes voices and instruments, and he only does mostly 14th century ... his perception is that it was really like - he stopped getting concerts in England, but everywhere else, in France, everybody was there.... I am not really plugged into sort of Continental Europe and their fashions, but definitely in the States and in England it had a big impact. But I do sort of wonder, how much an impact it had on other places.... But also, I mean, most recently Page has started using very discreetly, instruments again. Like he had a recording from the late 90s that featured a Vielle and he had a Vielle accompany him. So... [Emma Kirkby] was a singer against whom all the singers were judged. At least in the late 80s early 90s. Beautiful, I love her voice. That brings up other performance issues about vibrato. I don't know how you conceive about vibrato.... Emma Kirkby's voice is practically vibrato free.

AMF The vibrato issue is an interesting one.

AS I have certainly spoken to singers who are unaccustomed to, who don't sing a lot of early music and heard them say to me 'Oh, *the hardest thing about it was singing*

without vibrato'. You know like 'I did a gig where we sang a Renaissance Mass, and the hardest thing was singing without vibrato'. So it probably depends on whom you talk to. I'm sure that is precisely it, you are tuning, and ensemble singing of that precise nature presumably will cause you naturally to sing without vibrato, but in situations where you are singing more of a sort of solo, soloistic kind of a thing ... let's say, lute songs or you know that repertory, it is not at all clear to me why ... you couldn't sing with vibrato.

AMF What is the role of the musicologist related to the performer? Surrogate composer? Are musicologists and performers communicating?

AS I am not sure I have anything intelligent to say about this, and I am trying to figure out why?... I certainly don't think that musicologists should have an active role, I mean in your sub-question about that surrogate composer, no. If anybody is a surrogate composer it is the performer.

AMF I am also thinking of editions for example, that performers use.

AS Well, as somebody who works a lot with original notation and editions ... I would say that it would be very wise of performers not to rely on modern editions or at the very least to use them with great care. But I do see that ... the burden of that is on the performer. I think musicologists make editions for, generally speaking, not for performance reasons. You know most of the editions certainly with medieval music are much more about sort of, archival and scholarly purposes. Not only do they have no indication about certain performance suggestions of whatever, but they are full of mistakes. I mean they really are ... inconsequential both in terms of scholarship and in terms of performance but they impede access to the written documents that represents whatever it represents with respect to the original performance. And, so, maybe what I actually think is that musicologists *get in the way of performance*, I don't know.... I guess if I were performing medieval music right now and I knew as much as I know now about how unreliable editions are, you know, I would work with facsimiles, I would sit there with a facsimile and its modern edition.... Maybe I would make my own transcription actually, but I would make sure that when as I was learning the piece I had in my mind's eye the facsimile and not the edition so that I would use the

edition to help me decipher things, because you know there are a lot of complicated things and the people who make the editions work incredibly hard to decipher problems and so forth, so they are useful from that way, but they can't stand alone in my opinion. So, I would say musicologists who have studied notation can teach performers a lot about how to have direct access to the original materials, and I think that's a very valuable enterprise. Absolutely! But, I don't think that musicologists have any more information about how the music actually sounded than performers and I think, I believe very much in the, shall we say, the informed intuition of the performer, you know, over the scholarly contemplation of the musicologist. So, yeah I guess I think the performer should run the show and you know, tap the musicologist's knowledge when he or she feels appropriate but not rely on them in any way. So basically musicologists are just useless!

AMF Absolutely not!

AS No, But ... *I do get the impression that there was a long period where musicologists were making decrees about how performance should be....* I hope that we are all a little bit more enlightened about what performance is, that, performance really is performance! It is, you know, it's something that is taking place here and now for modern listeners and, you know, the role of informed, you know the notion of informed performance and ... historically informed is now what they talk about rather than authentic. I don't know exactly.

AMF Post historically informed?

AS Even post historically, I agree.... I think we are much more in a period where we are acknowledging the modernity of all modern performance and I think that is fine.... The point of a performance is to move the audience in some sense and a part of their being moved is the fiction that they heard something that is very old. That's fine! ... I remember years ago my mother and I went to hear Ben Bagby do his *Beowulf* thing and this is probably 15 years ago now. In Boston. He did it, and at that time I must say he didn't, he did no explanatory. No, no, nothing about his methodology. He just sat there and strung on his instrument, whatever it was. Maybe it was his harp and sang this incomprehensible thing and was very moving because he

is an incredible performer and afterwards my mother said to me 'I had no idea that, that Beowulf was sung like that' and she assumed that he had performed notes that were actually written down somewhere.... So, umm, so what! ... I said 'Oh mom, you know, he just made all that up.' But you know she loved it, she ate it up! So that's, you know, that's fine!

AMF How important is the medieval text today?

AS You mean the verbal text? The words. How important are the words?

AMF For the audience? What does it mean to them?

AS Oh, that's a good question isn't ... Well, I think it really depends on the genre I think maybe, doesn't it? ... As a person who is very interested in words myself, words are incredibly important. But, let's compare a performance of a mass set in the early 14th century and a troubadour song. The mass setting is going to be polyphonic and the audience is going to be principally, I think, listening to the ensemble, the blend, the polyphony, whatever, and the words of the 'Kyrie' well you know, there aren't that many words and you know what they are anyway. You know, a secular song is all about the words and every song is different and if the performer does a good job the words are going to entirely dictate his or her performance, right. So there is going to have to be a certain amount of acting, conjecture, whatever! ... So, even if the audience doesn't understand the words, they should be looking at their translation and listening to the inflections in the singer's voice and making a connection, it seems to mean between the words and the emotional content of the singing.

AMF Texts about Virgin Mary?

AS Well, you know, the problem at this point is that I have to tell you I am a completely secular person I am just, my research is in the secular.

AMF Then it's even more interesting to ask you about it.

AS For me personally it is interesting that there are so many different genres that all praise the Virgin Mary, but the individual nuance of each word ... I have never thought about it. I have never once asked myself about it. So for me, religion is kind of vague. You know I see a religious text and I, I immediately kind of tune out.... So for me [listening to] a recording [of] troubadour songs or Machaut songs, I am looking at the text very carefully. Again, I think this is a very personal thing and ... a different person, somebody who works on religious music or especially somebody who, I think is religious themselves would have a completely different answer.... In the sequences and the hymns, and motets based on Marian subjects I am sure there is an enormous amount of subtlety there, but since I am not part of that culture I don't tune into it. But essentially I think the texts are very important in general. You know, my basic position is that the texts are so important.... It is possible that it's part of the performer's job also to persuade me as somebody who doesn't think that much about religious text to persuade me of the importance of the texts also through their performance. You know, if somebody sang a very, very persuasive performance of a religious text, I would be encouraged to hear it, or to contemplate the text in a new way. I imagine that is the ideal that religious composers were seeking. I mean, that is what they would say anyway.... Channelling the mind of the hearer towards contemplation of the Divine ... that is what the text of religious music is supposed to do. It has never done it for me, you know, but that is just me!

AMF Supertitles?

AS The texts? *It would have to have more than a translation.* You would have to have a kind of ex – Jesus, you *would have to have a translation* where every word was you know, had *a little asterisk with a long explanation.... There is word play ...* or there is vocabulary, the sacred texts are full of inter-textual meaning and you know what I mean. I imagine that the original audience of course, had access [to] and brought their own educated minds to bear on the texts. You know, just literally motet texts that are full of anecdote, the secular ones are full of quotations of secular songs and I, in my limited knowledge of the sacred stuff, *sacred texts are full of inter-textual references, biblical references or psalms* or whatever, *that would be lost on a modern audience....* So if you really, really want to understand the text and understand the text to some degree from the point of view that the composer understood it you would

have to have a book with the translation, there would have to be a book of commentary about each work, so that is a little impractical. *Especially for the super titles you know, they can get to be very long!*

AMF I think so. Put those in the programme.

AS Exactly! You would have to have a whole extra programme book of just footnotes, which would be funny.

Anne Bagnall Yardley, New Jersey, USA, 28 November 2005.

AMF When you hear mediaeval music in your head, what does it sound like?

ABY That's a really good question.... I've had two experiences that probably effect to some degree.... Actually one was this summer that just sort of confirmed my suspicion.... The other while I was writing my dissertation, so it would have been the Summer of 1974.... I was down in Buckfastleigh which is where Syon Abbey is now, and I was doing research on their manuscripts that they have there but they didn't have any guest accommodation so I was staying in a pub in Buckfastleigh. And I went to the monastery that had been built in the 20th century. One evening I went in to this wonderful older monk who showed me around and was fairly pictorial in his understanding.... He looked at the candle and started talking about the symbolism of bees and wax and all this kind of stuff ... and then they started to sing and it *was atrocious*. I mean, when I tell you *it sounded bad*... And I'd been doing all my work, and *I had this wonderful*, you know, I don't think I realised I had it *in my ear*, but *when they started to sing I said*... 'oh... *I guess it wasn't always pretty!*' ... So, I kind of have carried that, you know, in my mind as an awareness.... If we're music performers today, actually it probably comes more from the romanticising of the past, but then there's always a little romanticising of the past.... And, of course, in many cases, and in particular in all of the nunneries that I've looked at, there were fewer than twelve nuns singing in a choir and you can figure that at any given time some of them were off, you know, seeing to dinner or some other part of their chores and you can tell that from the visitation records. It was probably really quite thin and everything. And then this Summer we were in Spain, in Leon, and we drove over to a nearby town that had several medieval churches, but we actually ended up driving out of it into this tiny village that ... has a medieval nunnery, a 12th century church, and it happened just as the Benedictine nuns were about to sing the Vespers, and there I was, gone to heaven, beautiful 12th century round arches... Well, there was an older nun that sat at the little organ and played ... and she *and one side of the choir in particular didn't agree*... Now there were some absolutely beautiful transcendent moments and then there were these moments when you were like ... *[laughter]* ... *what's going on here? What is somebody trying to do?* I certainly, I suppose I hear chant both in men's and women's voices to some extent and I kind of carry both of these sounds

around in my head cause I worked at hearing it. For 25 years I played with an early music group and

AMF Which one?

ABY Descriptive if not imaginatively titled, 'The Early Music Players of New Jersey', one located here, and, we were four or five women at different times, and mostly instrumentalists with one lead singer, but there were other things we all sang on, and I also had the experience of singing a variety of both secular and sacred things with them, so I hear the women sound from that too.

AMF And what about the polyphonic music?

ABY I am definitely convinced that some women sang polyphony.... There are, you know, enough tantalising bits of evidence, I mean the Huelgas would be the biggest one for some sort of article.... I think the hardest thing about working with medieval music is pressing on to learn more and at the same time recognising there is just a whole lot of things we're never going to know. But that's also one of the attractions because then you can use your imagination to kind of guess.

AMF Yes, that's how I use to say, you know, that I use the lack of evidence to be creative.

ABY One of the analogies I sometimes use is maybe really bad, but I've used it when teaching performance of medieval music.... I don't know if ... this is certainly a very American thing, you know the salad bar? You've got all these different things that can be there, and I sort of say, look, what we have written down is the lettuce, it's you know, like, you would've not expected [to] go to a salad bar and not have at least lettuce to make your salad out of. That's probably the notes that we have written down. And there's a lot of decisions you can make, and you know, some of them might be tomatoes or mushrooms or sprouts or whatever, but there's also things that absolutely shouldn't be there at the salad bar. So should I be seeing ice cream in the middle of the salad bar, that would be what playing a piano with this would be like. I kind of try to say there's a range of things that fit within reasonable expectations that

could have happened in the middle ages, and there are some things that clearly are totally anachronistic that wouldn't have happened that wouldn't be part of it that you would immediately recognise as 'no'.

AMF No, because things were not there.

ABY Yes, that's right.

AMF It's an interesting thing, thinking about a salad.... What I feel tough when I read writings from the medieval period, if I would want to ... try and come close to what would be a possible sound, for example, on the vocal sound, I feel like what I don't have is the lettuce. I feel I have loads of chickpeas and stuff.... Because so many times in writing, I feel that what is the normality, and what was the norm of something, that's something we don't write about....

ABY Yes, that's so hard because... I mean, I think there are people who say 'some amount of vibrato was a natural thing in the human voice' and therefore we can toss it backwards and say there must have been some of this straight tone stuff.... I've spent enough of my time in Anglican music circles listening to boy sopranos and things like that, that I probably do carry some of that sound around in my ears. I don't intellectually think that's how early music needs to be performed, but it's probably a sound that I do still carry.

AMF The sound that you hear when you have been studying these old writings ... how does that correspond with like for example say Anonymous 4?

ABY I love the sound of Anonymous 4. Sure, It's also exquisitely in tune and I think we're fooling ourselves if we think that in the Middle Ages it mostly sounded that good. But in terms of vocal sound, yeah that's probably the kind of sound I carry around.... The fun and the creativity that you can have with the music because of the unanswered performance aspects of it is I think maybe a kind of pleasure that people get from jazz or something, because there is room for improvisation there is room for all kinds of discussions around how you gonna colour things and what instruments you might use where and all the rest of it, and that is one of the great pleasures of it I

think.

AMF That's an interesting thing being both a performer and a musicologist at the same time, because then you can justify the group's work...

ABY I get to write all the programme notes...

AMF What do you think of women singing music written for men?

ABY I don't have any problem with it. Partly, I think in the medieval period I don't actually think they had a concept, this is written for men and this is written for women that strongly.

AMF It was just the way it was?

ABY It was just the way it was.

AMF Good point.

ABY I guess... I can sum up all my work in my dissertation by saying: They did it *just like the men, only higher*. It was all relative pitched anyway, so I think the expectation was you performed it with the forces that you had available. Probably, as you get in to 15th century music, and you begin to move to the place where you begin to get real treble parts in four part music.... The other thing is, if you get a group of women together you actually, or almost certainly have a woman who can sing at least as low as a C below a middle C. There are plenty of women who have kind of low ranges but we don't encourage that in our vocal training and everything. I mean, nobody picks out a young woman and says: I think you'd make a great tenor.... We only kind of value women for going up high.... There are some very specific assumptions that come along with classical music vocal training that probably are not particularly useful for people who want to do earlier music.... Sometimes I guess I think the music tells you somewhat about whether you are right or not in the style. And that is why I think the straighter tone works better with the medieval because you hear the fifths and the fourths in tune.... I haven't really read anybody's stuff about medieval

music that gets in to analysis of it that I find musically satisfying. I mean sometimes there are some interesting things. Think of Margot Fassler things on Hildegard that shows how it is related to another chant... To have that kind of knowledge of the chant repertoire that you can hear 'Oh that's this chant that has its outlines here' and everything.

AMF The historical appropriateness versus modern sexual equality?

ABY I think it is always a mistake to pretend that even such a towering figure as Hildegard is a feminist, because that's an anachronistic term. Hildegard was a very worldly woman, and people were doing what they did within their cultural context and it was a cultural context that is just so totally different. So, I am very wary of making claims. I think people read too much into things sometimes.... On the other hand ... if there is only one nunnery in the world that sang polyphony you can just pretend it was their music that you're doing, right?... Is it a misappropriation for all women's groups to do this music? No, I don't see that as being an issue.... I don't think there is anything in the nature of the repertoire that would say we looked at this as men's music or we looked at this as women's music.... They made lots of gender distinctions but I don't see that as being one of them.... Do you have people out there who think you shouldn't be singing certain things?

AMF I hope not... When I was reading your chapter in the...

ABY *Women Making Music*

AMF I was thinking ... you used performance of medieval, performers of the chant and the performers of the liturgy. Then I was thinking that a word like performance? I wonder ... it's twenty years ago since you wrote that isn't it?

ABY Yes it is, but actually, interestingly I'm calling my book *Performing Piety*.... I do actually have a running discussion with the worship course I run. For eleven years we had preaching and music and liturgy in it, and so I've spent a lot of time ... talking with them [students] about whether that was performance or not. I think we have kind of co-opted the word performance ... to mean something that is an act and that it's

real and so therefore no preacher wants to think of what they're doing as a performance, but it is a performance in the sense it's something that is public that's happening in front of a group of people that involves your interpretation of it. And, I see any sort of public thing like that as being a performance in a sense. I mean it is a performance with a particular liturgical religious intent.

AMF By performing medieval music today ... we take it out of its original context and put it in to something totally different, in front of an audience which is a different thing from the audience that we have in the service.

ABY Yes, there is definitely a very different kind of a performance.... That would be the kind of distinction that I would make, but it is, yes, it's a performance in a different sense.... When we were in Paris a couple of years ago we heard a group ... do a concert in the Chapel Royal.... It was stunning, I mean having walked in there as a tourist and then come back for the concert. It does at least put you back ... when you're able to do those performances in buildings that date from the right time period, which of course in this country we can't.... But it does have a special resonance ... I can at least ... transport myself back aurally as well as visually.

AMF The Latin text today means something different to us now than it did in the medieval period.

ABY When it comes to secular music, I am very actually a big proponent of finding ways to do things to make sure the language is really getting across ... and with my early music group ... one of the people was very good at languages, very good at being able to make a singing translation.... People are understanding the words and getting the story.... Or we would read the translation.... I think a reading of the translation or a translation in the programme is the more appropriate thing to go along with a religious thing. Because I think in the first place most of the people listening to that music at the time would not have been able to give you word for word translation. Most of the nuns who sang it couldn't have and many of the monks couldn't have.... I suspect they just thought Latin with the music and of course the sound of the Latin is so the sound of the music.... To me that's the biggest difficulty of doing translations in song is that you change the sound of the music because the vowels and everything

are different in every language and they really contribute.... I am aware that even with the secular music, if you make the choice to sing in English so that people understand the words as you're singing them the way they would have with the vernacular then, you are changing the sound of the music to some extent, and I don't think you want to do that with the chant....

AMF Yeah, but maybe some people want to come to the concert, listen to the music and not think about Virgin Mary, and that is OK as well.

ABY Absolutely.

AMF Because you don't need to, there are so many ... messages in our world today, and we don't need yet another one, we must allow people just to feel what they want to feel.

ABY And to lose themselves in the music. It's an interesting thing about visuals and the sort of hyper active world, that is always expecting, I mean, we can't just have songs today, we have videos of them.... One of my colleagues pointed out to me that these things all have videos and it never occurred [to me] to think of what the theological message of the video is versus just the text of what you're hearing.

AMF Have you been consulted by singers and instrumentalists about sound, notation, historical justifications?

ABY I haven't a lot. I've been active with my own group and they definitely consulted me... No, I can't say I have been actually.

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

concerts

trio mediæval

A Worcester Ladymass

Chapter House, York Minster

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Wednesday 4 February, 7.30pm

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trio mediæval

Anna Maria Friman
Linn Andrea Fuglseth
Torunn Østrem Ossum

A Worcester Ladymass

Reconstructed from the Worcester Fragments by Dr Nicky Losseff

Salve sancta parens

**KYRIE
GLORIA**

Munda Maria

Quem Trina Polluit

Benedicta / Virgo dei genitrix

CREDO (2008)

Gavin Bryars (b. 1943)

Felix namque

Inviolata integra mater

De supernis sedibus

Dulciflua tua memoria

SANCTUS

AGNUS DEI

Beata viscera

Alma Dei genitrix

Beata viscera

Benedicamus domino (2008)

Bryars

Ave Regina Gloriosa (2003)

Bryars

When the Normans arrived in Britain, some time before 1066, they did not find much uniformity in the organization of any of the cathedrals. Some were served by monks who lived under the rule of St Benedict, some by monks who lived under different rules. Used to organizing cathedral life through a chapter – where church servants were priests, not monks, and lived in the world, not as cloistered beings – the Normans set about reorganizing government at most of the institutions of the newly-conquered land. Nine escaped... and one of these was the ancient foundation of Worcester. Here, life for the 50-odd monks continued under Benedictine rule – much as it always had, one imagines. Up at dawn for Matins, the first part of the daily Office, where the entire Book of Psalms was sung each week; manual tasks, done with prayerful attention; contemplation of God, all day, through song, study, prayer and work.

Music, of course, featured regularly throughout the day, as it did in all religious communities of both men and women in the middle ages. At Worcester, as elsewhere, the liturgy was articulated through sacred Latin monody – a single line of music that was sometimes melismatic and designed to be sung by more virtuosic musicians, and at other times syllabic and sung by all present. But the evidence of the surviving manuscripts shows that more complex polyphonic music was also important to these secluded individuals, giving life to the otherwise ‘plain’ song of the liturgy, which varied little from year to year at the cathedral. We can’t say whether music was more important than at other comparable institutions, because such a minute amount of English music survives altogether. Ironically, only the books that had been set aside to be dismembered and used as scrap parchment now come down to us: the polyphonic books that were still in daily use would have been too popish to survive Henry VIII’s systematic destruction in the 1530s. Luckily, at Worcester, an unusual number of single leaves and binding fragments have survived, re-used in other codices to provide flyleaves or spine stiffenings. This way, we have been left more than 100 songs, in many different musical styles: polyphony to adorn the movements of the Mass; the freely-composed, intricately-interweaving voices of motets; the stricter, declamatory tones of the conductus. All in all, it testifies to a thriving musical community. The songs range from the simplest settings of the early 13th century to those current a century later. We can reconstruct the remains of three large, anthologies of polyphony, and there is also a host of other free-standing fragments.

We have called this concert a ‘Lady Mass’ – a votive Mass to the Virgin Mary. Such masses were frequent; but actually, much of the music you will hear is associated with one particular feast of the church year: that of the Assumption

of the Blessed Virgin, celebrated on August 15th. England as a whole was so devoted to the Virgin that she was called the 'Garden of Mary' in the middle ages. At Worcester, things were particularly intense, since the cathedral was dedicated to 'Our Lady'. Thus, there is a disproportionate amount of music associated with Marian feasts, and of these, the Assumption was the most lavish. It is sheer luck that in addition to the polyphony a 13th-century Gradual from Worcester also survives – the book that contains the plainchants for the masses of the entire church year. This is what has enabled the reconstruction of a Mass for the Assumption with some accuracy. However, you will also hear some items that had no association with any particular feasts. These are sung here in place of the readings that would have featured in a real mass of the time.

Medieval masses were a mixture of items that varied according to the particular day – 'Proper' items – and those that didn't – the 'Ordinary' of the Mass (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus dei). Composers in England liked to set both types in polyphony. Here, you will hear examples from the entire chronological range of the Worcester Fragments, plus some pieces from other locations that are in the very similar, peculiarly English style that marked out our 'insular' repertoires from those of the Continent: a preponderance of major thirds, sections of 'rounds' inside the pieces, parallel triads. Writers spoke of this English style in terms of 'sweetness': the cleric and author Gerald of Wales (1146-1223) noted English singers 'coming together with the enchanting sweetness of B flat', and in the later middle ages, Johannes Tinctoris said that English songs exhaled 'such sweetness that they are to be considered most suitable even for the immortal gods.' The style was particularly associated with the 'westcuntre' (west country) by 13th-century monk of Bury St Edmunds – the provenance of the Worcester Fragments.

Would three women have sung this type of music in the thirteenth century? Yes, though perhaps not the pieces performed here. Many musical manuscripts survive from nunneries to testify to the fact that women disobeyed St Paul's injunction to women to keep silent in Church. Mostly, women seem to have sung plainchant alone – girls didn't generally have access to the same level of musical training as boys – but there are also a few documents which show that in some places, women sang complex polyphony (in Las Huelgas in Spain, for example). In any case, we may think we know something about how music was sung in the middle ages, but we will never know what it sounded like: all modern performances create a modern sound world, after all.

Nicky Losseff

A performer's note

The presentation of medieval music today differs dramatically from its original context. We re-contextualize the music: none of the music was composed to be a part of a concert programme or indeed for the kind of audience that we perform for. One of the crucial matters for contemporary female singers wishing to perform medieval music is that we cannot in any way be historically authentic (however much we might wish to be), partly because of the historical marginalization of women by the church. The music presented in this particular programme would most likely have been sung by male voices in the middle ages, which means we create a sound for which there is very little historical evidence. We know, however, that nuns had the same liturgical agenda as their male counterparts and that they sang monophonic pieces in their convents. We might never get to know to what extent women sang polyphonic music, or how much polyphonic music was available to women, but there are manuscripts from sixteen convents in Europe which contain two- and/or three-part pieces, which suggests that women probably sang polyphony if it was accessible to them.

Today we assume that the women and men who sang and listened to sacred vocal music in its original context were connected to religious establishments and convinced of their Christian religious lifestyle. Unlike our medieval forebears, modern medieval music performers and their audience are not necessarily religious. Today anyone can sing the music, whether they are religious or not and there are probably as many individual perspectives on spirituality as there are performers. Likewise, the listeners of today are free to make up their own minds about how they relate to and connect with spirituality.

It is impossible to know what this music would have sounded like in the middle ages, and therefore impossible to re-create a medieval vocal sound. We have no recordings or precise descriptions regarding sound or singing techniques being used, and we can only refer to small amounts of written instructions for singers (which were mostly built on complaints about the sound and singing the medieval writer had recently experienced) rather than constructive advice. The most problematic issue when interpreting a medieval source (apart from the fact that most of us have to have the medieval Latin translated to us) is that the norm (what was obvious at the time) is to us unknown. There is of course a huge amount of medieval iconography, but deriving a sound from a picture can be even harder than from a text. And, if we succeeded it would of course be impossible for us to know...

There is a lot of guesswork in medieval music performances. The members of the trio feel that performing medieval music today gives us the freedom to let our imagination and ideas flow, as though we are creating contemporary music. We have chosen to use the lack of original information to inform our performance in the present. The trio also likes to present contemporary music alongside medieval music, and we did not despair when we found out that there was no Credo to be found in the Worcester manuscripts. Instead, we immediately saw the possibility of including a contemporary Credo, and asked Gavin Bryars to compose the piece. Unlike *Ave Regina Gloriosa*, the *Benedicamus Domino* was also written by Bryars specifically for this programme. The former, also called *Lauda 7*, was composed for the trio in 2003. Gavin Bryars has used 13th century Italian *Lauda* texts (to date there are 37 of them), extrapolating on the anonymous monophonic originals, sometimes adding lines and textures but retaining the ancient outlines.

We live in a world which has gradually become more or less dependent on constant information. For this particular programme, in this venue, we have chosen to provide our audience with a minimum of textual information, and instead present a sonic (and visual) experience where the music is free to speak for itself. There are many reasons for this decision. Firstly, the literal translation might do little justice to the original text. It is hard to know how much (if anything) of the original meaning is relevant or amenable to communication in the new context: the medieval listeners' appreciation of the Latin texts was inevitably very different from that of the present audience. It is inevitably the case that we incorporate our modern reflections into the medieval texts whether we want to or not. Secondly, there is a danger that the texts and translations channel the listening and restrict the listeners' own creativity.

Recent musicology suggests that much medieval sacred music was probably memorized and sung from memory in the middle ages. This information slightly surprised me, and since most modern performers of medieval music have not re-created this aspect in their modern performances it occurred to me that the way in which the trio performs the material might be much more original (in terms of history) than what we previously thought. The trio has always presented programmes, or parts of programmes, by heart, since we have found it increases the communication between the three of us, as well as between us and our audience.

Tonight, every listener will appreciate the music and its context differently, bringing their own individual expectations to the occasion. We will all experience English medieval and contemporary music, but perhaps the most obvious thing which we all have in common is that we are alive, here and now in the present.

Anna Maria Friman

trio mediæval

Anna Maria Friman Linn Andrea Fuglseth Torunn Østrem Ossum

Founded in Oslo in 1997, Trio Mediæval has developed three distinct strands of repertoire: polyphonic medieval music from England and France, contemporary works and Norwegian medieval ballads and songs. The group's initial phase was inspired by intense periods of work at the Hilliard Summer Festival in England and Germany, and subsequently with Linda Hirst and John Potter.

Trio Mediæval has given concerts and radio broadcasts throughout Europe, the USA, and Canada, in venues such as the Wiener Konzerthaus, Girona Cathedral, Speyer Dom, Canterbury Cathedral, Kremlin Museum, Wigmore Hall, Kennedy Centre and Carnegie Hall. Celebrating their 10-year anniversary in summer 2007 with a residency at the Bergen International Festival, the ensemble was featured in five different concerts where they performed joint concerts with other artists, including Tord Gustavsen Trio, the Hilliard Ensemble, Birger Mistereggen and Arve Henriksen/Terje Isungset. In the season 2007/08, the trio made its debut in Asia, where they performed two concerts at the Hong Kong Arts Festival.

Their four albums on ECM Records feature performances of a diverse repertoire. The first release, *Words of the Angel*, immediately charted on Billboard's Top 10 Bestsellers list. So did their second CD *Soir, dit-elle* (2004), featuring Leonel Power's 'Missa Alma Redemptoris Mater' along side works by Gavin Bryars, Andrew Smith and Ivan Moody. The trio's third recording, *Stella Maris* (2005), presents 12th and 13th-century music from England and France as well as 'Missa Lumen de Lumine' written for the trio by the Korean composer Sungji Hong. After having received enthusiastic reviews right after its release in 2007, their last CD *Folk Songs* containing Norwegian folk songs and medieval ballads, together with the percussionist Birger Mistereggen, has been nominated for a Grammy award as 'best chamber music performance'. The awards ceremony will be held on 8 February 2009 in Los Angeles.

2009 started off with joint concerts with Tord Gustavsen Trio in Germany, and in the next few months the trio will perform in the USA, Mexico, UK, Norway, Luxemburg, Germany, Belgium, Ireland and the Orkney Islands.