

RenChorNY presents

# Heinrich Finck's Christmas

MISSA "DE BEATA VIRGINE" (TRE VOCUM)

*With seasonal chant and Motets  
'Puer natus est' and 'Domus pudici pectoris'*

**JANUARY 7, 2023**

4:00 PM

St. Frances Cabrini Shrine  
701 Fort Washington Ave  
New York, NY



**JANUARY 14, 2023**

4:00 PM

The Lounge at  
Hudson View Gardens  
116 Pinehurst Ave  
New York, NY

RENCHORNY DR. RICHARD PORTERFIELD, DIRECTOR

*Founded as the Renaissance Chorus of New York in 1954*

*Returning to its 1961 repertoire and 1962 recording*

RENCHORNY PRESENTS

## HEINRICH FINCK'S CHRISTMAS

*A concert of sacred Christmas music*

Introit: *Puer natus est nobis* Heinrich Finck (c. 1445–1527) / Gregorian chant

Missa “*de beata virgine*” Finck

Kyrie

Gloria in excelsis

Credo

Sanctus & Benedictus

Agnus Dei

Hymn: *A solis ortus cardine* Gregorian chant; polyphonic setting by Finck

### THE RENAISSANCE CHORUS

Richard Porterfield, *Director*

#### SOPRANOS

Lee Ann Beauchamp  
Anne Berkhausen  
Valerie Ceriano  
Virginia Kaycoff  
Fran Morton  
Rowena Rosenbaum  
Elizabeth Thorne  
Jaylan Turkkán

#### ALTOS/TENORS

Stephen Bonime  
Emma  
Mark Fiedler  
Ezra Halleck  
Daniel Pincus  
Peter Randall  
Dorrie Rosen  
Dean Todd

#### BASSES

Mick Bowen  
Jonathan Miller  
Erik-Peter Mortensen  
Sigmund Rosen  
David Hugh Rosenbaum

## TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

**Puer natus est nobis** et filius datus est nobis:  
cuius imperium super humerum eius: et vocabitur  
nomen eius magni consilii Angelus. (*Isaiah 9:6*)

Cantate Domino canticum novum: quia mirabilia  
fecit. (*Psalms 98*)

Gloria Patri.

Puer natus est ...

Unto us a child is born, and unto us a son is  
given: whose authority is upon his shoulder:  
and his name shall be called the Angel of  
great counsel.

Sing to the Lord a new song: for he has  
worked marvels.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the  
Holy Spirit ...

Unto us a child is born ...

**Kyrie** eleison.

Christe Eleison.

Kyrie Eleison.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

**Gloria in excelsis** Deo et in terra pax  
hominibus bonae voluntatis. Laudamus te,  
benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te,  
gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam  
tuam, Domine Deus, Rex caelestis, Deus  
Pater omnipotens. Domine Fili unigenite,  
Jesu Christe, Domine Deus, Agnus Dei,  
Filius Patris.

Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis; qui  
tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem  
nostram. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,  
miserere nobis.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus,  
tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe, cum Sancto  
Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth  
peace to people of good will. We praise thee, we  
bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we  
give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord  
God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.  
O Lord Jesus Christ, only begotten Son, Lord  
God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.

Who takest away the sins of the world, have  
mercy on us; who takest away the sins of the  
world, receive our prayer. Who sittest at the  
right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

For thou alone art the Holy One, thou alone  
art the Lord, thou alone art the Most High,  
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory  
of God the Father. Amen.

**Credo** in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, factorem caeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et invisibilium. Et in unum Dominum Iesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum, et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula. Deum de Deo, Lumen de Lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero, genitum non factum, consubstantialem Patri; per quem omnia facta sunt. Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de caelis. Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine, et homo factus est.

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato, passus et sepultus est, et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas, et ascendit in caelum, sedet ad dexteram Patris. Et iterum venturus est cum gloria, iudicare vivos et mortuos, cuius regni non erit finis. Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem, qui ex Patre Filioque procedit. Qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur: qui locutus est per prophetas. Et unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum. Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

**Sanctus**, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua. Osanna in excelsis.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.  
Osanna in excelsis.

**Agnus Dei**, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through Him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

He was crucified, even for our sake, under Pontius Pilate; He suffered death and was buried, and He rose again on the third day, in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the Prophets. And I believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church, I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins, and I await the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts.  
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

**A solis ortus cardine,**  
Ad usque terrae limitem  
Christum canamus Principem,  
Natum Maria Virgine.

Beatus auctor saeculi  
Servile corpus induit,  
Ut carne carnem liberans  
Non perderet quod condidit.

Castae parentis viscera  
Caelestis intrat gratia;  
Venter puellae baiulat  
Secreta quae non noverat.

Domus pudici pectoris  
Templum repente fit Dei;  
Intacta nesciens virum  
Verbo concepit Filium.

Iesu, tibi sit gloria,  
Qui natus es de Virgine,  
Cum Patre et almo Spiritu,  
In sempiterna saecula. Amen.

—*Caelius Sedulius (5th century)*

From lands that see the sun arise,  
To earth's remotest boundaries,  
The virgin born today we sing,  
The Son of Mary, Christ the King.

Blest Author of this earthly frame,  
To take a servant's form He came,  
That liberating flesh by flesh,  
Whom He had made might live afresh.

In that chaste parent's holy womb,  
Celestial grace hath found its home:  
And she, as earthly bride unknown,  
Yet call that Offspring blest her own.

The mansion of the modest breast  
Becomes a shrine where God shall rest:  
The pure and undefiled one  
Conceived in her womb the Son.

All honor, laud, and glory be,  
O Jesu, virgin born, to Thee;  
All glory, as is ever meet,  
To the Father and to Paraclete. Amen.

—*John Mason Neale (19th century)*

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## NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

This afternoon the Renaissance Chorus of New York City presents a program of unaccompanied choral music by the German Renaissance composer Heinrich Finck (c. 1445–1527). The program is an act of historical reconstruction in two senses: first, in that it gives voice to music composed by Finck for use at services in Middle European courts of nobility around the turn of the sixteenth century; second, in that it revives repertoire which the ensemble performed and recorded in the twentieth century under the direction of its founder Harold Brown (1909–1979).

Finck, as a composer of sacred polyphony in the Renaissance, intended this music for practical use in Christian liturgy, that is, for services of worship, in a tradition whereby a specially-trained Choir represents the faithful gathered for the liturgical occasion (that is, the congregation), but also represents the larger unity of Christians past, present, and future (“the Communion of Saints”), their predecessors the Hebrew Prophets and Matriarchs and Patriarchs, Angels and Archangels, indeed all things created, united in eternal praise of God.

That the music has such high and solemn aims does not mean that it lacks wit or humor. Finck shares with his contemporaries Heinrich Isaac, Josquin des Prez, and Pierre de la Rue a playful sense of wonder at the possibilities inherent in the coordination of voices in harmony and their independence in counterpoint, a spirit of play that reminds me of his Austrian successor Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809).

Finck is especially adventurous in his treatment of rhythm. He likes to send one voice out on a spree of syncopation against more regular rhythmic motions in other voices, pushing at the boundaries of the meter until late in the phrase, confirming the regularity of musical measure only briefly at the cadence. This almost gymnastic approach to rhythm, which has precedent in works by the Franco-Flemish master Jean de Ockeghem (c. 1410–1497), suggests that Finck, like Ockeghem, was writing for highly-skilled vocalists, or that he had a luxurious amount of rehearsal time to spend with them; probably both.

In this tradition, furthermore, the polyphonic setting (that is, music composed of several independent voices coordinated and varied through harmony and counterpoint) exists alongside, and often quotes or paraphrases, the much older tradition of monophonic melody for Catholic liturgy known as Gregorian chant, out of which the polyphonic tradition began to emerge by the turn of the second millennium.

Finck's rhythmic virtuosity is especially pronounced in his setting for three voices of the Mass Ordinary (portions of prayer at Mass assigned to the Choir that remain the same from day to day, week to week), which is the five-movement centerpiece of our program. Its title, *Missa "de beata virgine"* (Mass "of the Blessed Virgin") comes from the Gregorian setting of the Ordinary traditionally sung on feasts of the Virgin Mary, the rising opening melody of which Finck quotes or paraphrases at the beginning of each movement. This association with the mother of Christ makes this particular Mass setting appropriate for Christmas celebrations, although it might also be used for other occasions associated with the same Saint, such as the Feast of the Annunciation on March 25. The utility of the same setting for different occasions throughout the year is a principal reason why composers of polyphony developed the tradition of setting the Mass Ordinary as a unified cycle, a tradition which was established in the fourteenth century and continues to this day.

Our first selection *Puer natus est nobis*, on the other hand, sets a text assigned by tradition to Christmas Day in particular, and to a particular function in the liturgy: the choir sings it at the approach to the altar of the Priest and other sacred ministers at the beginning of the principal Mass of Christmas Day. The text of this Introit (from the Latin rubric meaning "He goes in") is thus specific to this occasion and function, as is its Gregorian melodic setting: to the initiated, this melody sounds like Christmas! Following medieval tradition, Finck's setting weaves the chant melody into the polyphonic texture, beginning with its bold opening gesture of the rising perfect fifth on the initial word *Puer*. Finck echoes this opening gesture in all the voices as each enters one at a time: this technique of imitative entry is typical of the Renaissance, especially of the Franco-Flemish style that Finck and Isaac adapted to the German context. Another typical Renaissance technique Finck uses is the presentation of a Gregorian phrase in one slow-moving voice (*Cantus firmus*) as other voices spin faster imitative polyphony around it. Both of these techniques are apparent in Finck's *Puer natus est nobis*.

Yet another typical feature of European sacred polyphony is the appearance of passages in which the original Gregorian melody remains untouched. The form of the Introit requires an opening sentence, the Antiphon (Here *Puer ... Angelus*). Then, a single verse of a Psalm is sung to a melodic formula, after which the Lesser Doxology (“Glory be to the Father...”) closes the Psalm, and then the Antiphon is repeated. Finck, in this setting, chooses to leave the Doxology untreated, so we sing it to the Gregorian melodic formula that agrees with the mode of the Antiphon.

At Mass, the opening words of the Gloria and of the Credo are assigned not to the Choir, but to the Priest at the altar, so Finck follows tradition in leaving these untouched as well. He wasn’t being lazy, he was participating in a tradition!

Our final selection, the Hymn *A solis ortus cardine*, is appointed for Christmas morning at Lauds, an early-morning service of prayer which is separate from Mass. Finck follows Renaissance tradition by providing a setting that weaves the Gregorian melody into a polyphonic texture, here again with a series of imitative entries for each phrase of the chant. The performance practice for such settings is to alternate verses of chant and polyphony, ending with the simple chanted Amen.

—Richard Porterfield

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## ABOUT RENCHORNYC

In the early 1950s, a group of choristers was recruited by their beloved Music and Art High School music theory teacher, Harold Brown, to sing Renaissance music as an after school activity. The passion with which this music was received launched the beginning of the Renaissance Chorus of New York. Through performance and recordings, Renaissance music became known and loved by an ever wider audience. Whereas once this music had been relegated to the margins of academia and conservatories, it is now well established in academic departments of music, summer festivals, concert series, and so on. Its arrival on the shores of North America to take a rightful place in the lexicon of musical genres is, in large part, due to the tireless efforts of Harold Brown, violist, composer, choral director, teacher—to his striking arrangements of the music itself and his passionate choral direction.

To contribute via PayPal, or to learn more about RenChorNY and the Renaissance Chorus Association of New York, visit our website: [www.RenaissanceChorus.org](http://www.RenaissanceChorus.org). Thanks to our loyal (and new) audience, and the many alumni and friends of this long-running group. We are ever grateful to Harold Brown and the legacy he began in founding the Renaissance Chorus Association of New York in 1960 as a non-profit organization. We continue to honor his work and thank his family for their support.

—Sigmund Rosen

## ABOUT HEINRICH FINCK

Heinrich Finck (born 1444 or 1445 in Bamberg?, died 1527 in Vienna)—German bandmaster and composer. From around 1460 he was a singer of the royal band in Kraków (Cracow, capital of Poland); from 1482 in Leipzig, 1489-1491 again in Kraków. From 1498 to 1501 he was a singer, and then a cantor at the court of Aleksander Jagiellończyk (Polish prince Alexander Jagiellon) in Vilnius, and then after his coronation as The King of Poland in the court orchestra in Kraków until 1505.

It was period of The Polish-Lithuanian Union—union of the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, creating a common state of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1385-1795).

From 1510 to 1514 he was Kapellmeister in Stuttgart, from 1519? in Salzburg, and in 1527 he became Kapellmeister of the Archduke and later Emperor Ferdinand I Habsburg in Vienna. He was probably the teacher of Sebastian of Felsztyn.

(Sebastian of Felsztyn, also Felsztyn, Felstiniensis (born between 1480 and 1490 in Felsztyn, died after 1543 in Sanok)—Polish composer and music theorist of the Renaissance period.)

—*Krzysztof Pabiś, provider of Finck Chronology*

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to all who have participated in rehearsals and these performances, also to John Hetland for our performing editions, to Peter Randall for score videos, and to Aileen Hengeveld for design and layout of poster and program. Additional thanks to Jose Pagan, Evelyne Luest, Gail Wein, Julia Attaway and the Sisters of St. Frances X. Cabrini Shrine, John Bradley, Marilan Lund, Krzysztof Pabiś, Gotham Early Music Scene (GEMS), Vocal Area Network, the New York Choral Consortium, ‘The Patch’ for reporting our events, and Eventbrite for ticketing. Thanks to all who contributed to make this project possible.

To support this project, visit <https://gofund.me/0b41a470>; to contribute via PayPal, or to learn more about RenChorNY and the Renaissance Chorus Association of New York, visit our website: [www.RenaissanceChorus.org](http://www.RenaissanceChorus.org).

Officers of RenChorNY: Sigmund Rosen, president; John Hetland, vice president; Dorrie Rosen, treasurer; Ruth Horowitz, secretary, and Darrell Lauer.