

Program No. 1

The secrets of number

The use of *cantus firmi* is one of the most popular composition techniques in the Renaissance period. Widely known pre-existing melodies – either popular songs, plainchants from liturgy or sometimes just abstract hexachord patterns – build the base to form a new composition in an augmented form (*cantus firmus*). The other voices form a playful and creative counterpoint around it. A very fascinating form of this can be found in the *Royal Manuscript 24.d.2*, better known as *Baldwine Manuscript*. Some pieces, which will be presented in our program, display an unusual number of proportion symbols – numbers and mensural signs – which determine the speed relation of the voices to each other, often resulting in complex proportions. Since the Middle Ages, Music as one of the *septem artes liberales* relied largely on the relation of numbers and their relation within the musical context. The challenge posed by the rhythmic intricacies of those pieces remains as attractive to musicians today as it apparently was in Baldwine's circles. Whether composed for didactic purposes or stemming from the fascination with the speculative combination of differently measured voices, the pieces can be seen as a late echo of the trend toward the „mystical-mathematical“.

Johannes Ciconia (~1370–1412)
Le ray au soleil

Elway Bevin (1554–1638)
Browning

Anonymus (ca. 1480) aus *Glogauer Liederbuch*
Die Katzenpfote

Johannes Ciconia (ca. 1370-1412)
Una Panthera

Christoher Tye (1505–1572)
Sit fast

Francisco de la Torre (ca. 1510)
Alta, La Spagna

Anonymus (ca. 1480)
La Spagna in re

Nathaniel Giles (1558–1633)
Salvator Mundi

Hayne van Ghizeghem (1445-1472)
De tous biens plaine

Alexander Agricola (1445-1506)
Des tous biens playne

Baccio Fiorentino (1474-1539)
De tous biens

Alexander Agricola (1445-1506)
Des tous biens plaine IV

Thomas Woodson (?-1605)
Upon ut, re, mi, fa

John Baldwine (1560–1615)
A Browninge of 3 voc.

Vincenzo Ruffo (1508-1587)
La Gamba