



Concert Programs List 2023-2024

Programs for Women's Voices (in alphabetical order)

These programs feature our core trio of women's voices, with instrumental accompaniment of Gothic harp, psalter, and symphonia.

Florence

A festival of songs celebrating Florentine musical traditions from the *trecento* to the High Renaissance.

The musical landscape of Renaissance Florence reveals a splendid symbiosis of contrasting elements: sacred and secular, foreign and native, highborn and humble. These elements nurtured the development of an unusually vibrant cultural climate within the relatively small confines of a magnificent Italian city. Eya traces these coexisting elements within the cultural and social fabric of Florence from the *trecento* (late 14th century) through the High Renaissance (late 16th century). *Florence* explores the varied forms of vocal music that define this rich cultural moment, including the quintessential *lauda* (sacred songs in Italian), the highest art of polyphony of the Franco-Flemish Burgundian school (DuFay, Isaac, Agricola) revered by the Florentines, and uniquely stunning works by native Francesco de Layolle. This program was originally conceived for the exhibition "Della Robbia: Sculpting with Color in Renaissance Florence" exhibition at the National Gallery of Art.

Heartform

Unexpected blends of poetry and music sing of sacred desire for the Divine Beloved.

Inspired by the exquisite 15th-century *Chansonnier Cordiforme* ("Heart-shaped Songbook"), Eya sifts through a fantastic array of music and poetry that speaks of longing, sensuality, and union with the Beloved. *Heartform* knits the sacred and secular into one theme of sacred desire. In this inventive and luminous program, Eya layers the delicately-crafted works of the *Chansonnier Cordiforme*, featuring French and Italian motets of the early Renaissance, folded within the poetic lines of Rumi, John Donne, Richard Rolle, the Song of Songs, Shakespeare, Peter Gabriel, and more. Featuring a ravishing musical commission by Baltimore-based composer Douglas Buchanan, and music of Hildegard von Bingen, Francis Poulenc, Richard Einhorn, and Gregorian chant.

The Jesse Tree

Ancient prophecy illuminated in the sublime chant and polyphony of medieval Europe.

Isaiah's biblical prophecy of the birth of Christ, retold each year during the Advent season, is filled with wonder and promise: *et egredietur virga de radice Jesse et flos de radice eius ascendet* ("a shoot shall come out from the root of Jesse and a flower shall grow out of his roots," Isaiah 11:1). The symbol of the "Jesse tree," as representing the genealogical and spiritual lineage of Jesus, lit the medieval imagination. Stained glass windows and illuminated manuscripts spread throughout the European continent testify to the prominence of this image within the visual arts. In medieval music, countless works examine this theme. Eya explores these mystical interpretations of Isaiah's prophecy in a program ranging from the monasteries of 13th-century England, to the visionary songs of Hildegard von Bingen, to the grand splendor of Notre Dame Cathedral. *The Jesse Tree* is a sublime array of chant and polyphony for Advent.

Natus est rex

A feast of medieval musical styles celebrating an intimate and heartcentered Christmas.

An audience favorite, *Natus est Rex* (“A King is Born”) is a sublime musical journey exploring the mystery, wonder, and joy of the Nativity. Join us as we explore a wealth of gorgeous repertoire from England, Italy, France, and Spain woven into a magical audience experience.

Pilgrimage

An archetypal journey of the soul through the music of medieval pilgrims.

Eya follows the humming routes of the *camino de Santiago*, and the path towards the rocky mountaintop monastery of Montserrat with music of medieval Spain drawn from the Codex Calixtinus, Las Huelgas Codex, and the Llibre Vermell. Interspersed throughout the program are the love songs of Hildegard von Bingen devoted to St. Ursula and the 11,000 virgins, martyred along their spiritual pilgrimage.

Stella Serena: Celestial Hymns to the Virgin

Shimmering chant and polyphony venerating the Virgin Mary as a star.

During the Middle Ages, the cult of Mary was flourishing throughout the entirety of Europe. Veneration of the Virgin Mother became an intrinsic aspect of everyday life. Mary was a link between heaven and earth, an intercessor between humanity and God. She was often compared to a star in the night sky, an omnipresent guide and guardian. Eya explores the process of Mary as an archetypal link of the human spirit to the celestial realm. *Stella Serena* includes music of medieval England, France, and Spain of the 12th through the 14th centuries, in songs forged with love for this blessed Lady, venerated as a guiding star.

Programs for Women’s Voices featuring Instrumental Accompaniment

Brigid

Numinous and rare medieval Irish chant in honor of Saint Brigid of Kildare.

Patron saint of poets, artists, smiths, and those who work the land, Saint Brigid of Kildare was a 5th-century holy woman of Ireland. She is widely known for her compassion, generosity, and great miracles of healing, and her symbol is that of the eternal flame. *Brigid’s* centerpiece is a rare body of plainchant from the matins service for the feast of Saint Brigid (Feb 1), unique to only two manuscripts from 15th-century Ireland. Eya has crafted a “contemporary matins” program, blending these exquisite Irish chants with ancient and contemporary blessings, poems, miracle stories, and traditional song in honor and praise of Brigid. Accompanied on the *clàrsach* (wire-strung harp), this singular program deepens our relationship with Brigid who reminds us to forge our own inner flame. PERSONNEL: Three women’s voices with wire-strung harp accompanist (4 total).

The Three Marys

Liturgical drama of Resurrection witnessed through the eyes of medieval women.

Eya recreates *Les Trois Maries*, an early 14th-century liturgical drama for Easter, originally performed at the Benedictine convent at Origny-Ste.-Benoîte, a small village in northern France. The drama illuminates the physical and emotional journey of the grieving three Marys as they make their way to Jesus’ tomb on Easter morning. Composed in plainchant, *Les Trois Maries* is one of the most sensitively-wrought examples of liturgical drama from the medieval period. Accompanied on historical instruments, scenes from the original drama are interwoven with medieval polyphony from the *Messe de Tournai*, the Montpellier Codex, and the Bamberg Codex, in addition to *trouvère* song and instrumental improvisation, punctuating the dramatic arc of the story until its joyous finale. PERSONNEL: Three women’s voices, one male voice, and one medieval instrumental accompanist (5 total).