The VMI Department of English and Fine Arts
and
The Timmins–Gentry Music Society
present

THE BALTIMORE CONSORT

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Cancionero!

Romances, Villancicos and Improvisations of Spain, circa 1500

Morena me Ilaman	Anonymous Sephardic
Avrix me galancia	Anonymous Sephardic
La Spagna	Anonymous, 15th c.
Recercada La Spagna	Diego Ortiz, *Trattado de Glosas*, 1553
Danza Alta	Francisco de la Torre, *Cancionero de Palacio*, ca. 1505
Qu'es de ti, desconsolado?	Juan del Encina (1468–1529)
Levanta, Pascual	Juan del Encina
Ora baila tú	Anonymous, *Cancionero de Palacio*
Calabaça, No sé, buen amor	Anonymous, *Cancionero de Palacio*
Tu madre cuando te parió	Anonymous Sephardic
Yo me soy la morenica	Anonymous, *Cancionero de Upsala*, 1556
Ríu, Ríu Chíu	Anonymous, *Cancionero de Upsala*

Intermission

La mañana de Sant Juan	Diego Pisador, *Libro de musica de vihuela*,1552
Morenica, dame un beso	Miguel de Fuenllana, *Libro de Música . . .Orphénica lyra*, 1554
Di, perra mora	Pedro Guerrero, *Cancionero Medinaceli*, ca. 1569
Sagaleja del Casar	Anonymous, *Cancionero de Palacio*
Cucú, Cucú, Cucucú	Anonymous, *Cancionero de Palacio*
Recercada primera	Diego Ortiz, *Trattado de Glosas*
Recercada segunda	Diego Ortiz, *Trattado de Glosas*
Una sañosa porfía	Juan del Encina
Ay, triste que vengo	Juan del Encina
Oy comamos y bebamos	Juan del Encina

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Lejeune Hall, VMI, January 25, 2006, 7:45 p.m.

Notes on the Program

For nearly eight centuries, Muslims and Christians lived together on the Iberian Peninsula through alternating periods of peace and conflict, until the final defeat of the Moors in 1492 at Granada. The culminating event of the *Reconquista* emboldened Christians to intensify their persecution of Spain's Jews (*Sephardim*), and in that one cataclysmic year, which we normally associate with Columbus' discovery of the New World, both Muslims and Jews were expelled from the region.

The *Sephardim* scattered across the Ottoman Empireand other parts of Europe, resettled south in North Africa and east in safe havens such as Amsterdam, Venice, and Ferrara where they preserved both their Judeo-Spanish language (*Ladino*) and a wealth of beautiful folk music. Our program opens with *Morena me Ilaman* and *Avrix mi galanica*, traditional songs collected in the Balkans and published by Isaac Levy in his *Chants Judeo–Espagnols* (1970–1973). Sephardic melodies have been subject to many generations of oral transmission; this is music that, according to Spanish scholar Ramón Menéndez, "lives in its variants."

Christian engagement with Moorish society is evident in the courtly poetry of the time. Tales of great battles (*La mañana de Sant Juan*), some told as if from a Moorish perspective (*Una sañosa porfía*), as well as love songs involving Moorish women (*Di, perra mora*,cited by several writers including Cervantes and Lope de Vega) are to be found in all the songbooks, or *cancioneros*, as well as the books of the vihuelists.

Further evidence of Moorish influence in Spain is seen in the instruments themselves. Percussion instruments such as the *riq* (Egyptian tambourine) and stringed instruments such as the *rehab* (rebec) came into Spanish courtly culture with the Moorish musicians and instrument makers. The predecessor of the lute (*oud* or *al'ud*) was introduced into Europe via Sicily and southern Spain (*al'Andalus*). Because of its Moorish origin, the role of the lute diminished in Christian Spain during the Middle Ages, but it became the prime instrument elsewhere during the Renaissance. Spaniards replaced it with the guitar-shaped *vihuela*,whose stringing, tuning and notation were identical with those of the lute.Lutenists and vihuelists undoubtedly played each other's music, and there are several examples of European lute pieces in the vihuela books. In tonight's program, Ronn McFarlane performs Fuenllana's vihuela setting of *Morenica, dame un beso*, a three-part villancico by Juan Vasquez, on the solo lute.

Even the "tablature" notation for lute and vihuela derives from the Moors. Using numbers and/or letters to indicate fingerings, it is a graphic representation of the strings on the fingerboard. According to Douglas Alton Smith (*A History of the Lute from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, 2002), such notation was known as early as the ninth century in *al'Andalus*. It may have been invented by a court musician and *oud* player named Abu-'l-Hasan (also known as Ziryab), a black slave who reportedly fled to freedom from Baghdad.

The bulk of secular and non-liturgical Spanish vocal music from the Renaissance can be found in a handful of manuscripts called *cancioneros*. The *Cancionera de Palacio*, the palace songbook from the court of Ferdinand and Isabella, is a monmumental collection of nearly five hundred three- and four-part pieces. It is extraordinary for its large and diverse repertory; salacious villancicos (*Cucú, cucú, cucú* and *Calabaça*)
appear alongside non-liturgical religious pieces and heroic romances. The seven published books of vihuela music (1536–1576) are the other prime source, and they provide concordant settings to many works in the *cancioneros.*

The repertory preserved in all the *cancioneros* is of two principal genres: romance and villancico. The romance is the Spanish corollary to the English ballad: a strophic, narrative poem consisting of lines of eight syllables. The villancico is a lighter, dance-like form that coordinates rhyme scheme and textual refrain with the musical refrain. On occasion, composers used the contrast between the romance and the villancico by writing them as a pair (*Qu'es de ti, desconsolado* and *Levanta Pascual*). The result,called *deshecha,* yielded a potent, reflexive form, in which the narrative established by the text of the romance was expanded or commented upon and the emotional tone was enhanced.

Juan del Encina was a master of these forms, and his *Cancionero* (Salamanca, 1496) was the first Spanish publication devoted entirely to the works of a single author. Encina's *Cancienero* contains not only the verses to his romances and villancicos but also his short pastoral plays (*Eglogas*). The musical settings of these romances and villancicos, sixty-two compositions in all, are found in the *Cancionero de Palacio*. Encina's representation in this songbook is three times as great as that of any other composer.

Diego Ortiz was director of the Spanish viceroy's choir in Naples, and his *Trattado de glosas*, a treatise on improvisation, was published in Rome. The music of the *cancionero* of the Duke of Calabria (Ferdinand of Aragon, who was exiled in Valencia) was published in Venice in 1556 under the title *Villancicos de diversos autores.* It is now known as the *Cancionero de Uppsala*, after the library in Sweden where it is housed. These publications mirror the close relationship between Spain and Italy that developed through the Spanish popes and the Aragonese court at Naples.

Improvisation pervaded the instrumental practice of Renaissance Spain—indeed, of all Europe. In addition to embellishing cadences, performers routinely expanded upon, or "glossed," pre-existing tunes, using them as repeating *tenors* (foundation melodies) for ornamental improvisation. In tonight's program,we present two distinct genres of improvisation: the 15th-century *basse dance,* in which a single, lengthy bass line lies beneath a newly spun-out melody, and 16th-century pieces based on repeating chord progressions, not unlike the modern twelve-bar blues. Ortiz's *recercada prima* and *recercada segunda* are based, respectively, on the minor mode *passamezzo antico* and the major mode *passamezzo moderno.* Both his basse dance *La Spagna* and De la Torre's *Danza alta* are settings of an old tune called, variously, *La Spagna, Re di Spagna, La baixa de Castilla, SpanischesTanz,* etc., which was so popular that over two hundred pieces, including an entire mass by Heinrich Isaac, employed it as their foundation.

We end tonight's program with Juan del Encina's popular *Oy comamos y bebamos*, written as a *deshecha* finale to his carnival play, *Egloga representada la mesma noche de antruejo o carnestollendas*.Its message is "live for the moment"—a sentiment which, we hope, will inspire spontaneity in our performance.

—Mark Cudek

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Mary Anne Ballard: treble, tenor, and bass viols
Mark Cudek: guitars, recorder, crumhorn, bass viol, and percussion
José Lemos: countertenor
Larry Lipkis: tenor and bass viols, recorders, crumhorn
Ron McFarlane: lute
Mindy Rosenfeld: flutes, recorders, crumhorn

Next concert:

Victor Santiago Asuncion, piano
Lejeune Hall, VMI
March 8, 2006

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