

Historical Anthology  The Bach Guild

# LAS CANTIGAS DE SANTA MARIA

Songs and Instrumental Music  
From the Court of Alfonso X

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THE WAVERLY CONSORT

Jan DeGaetani, *mezzo soprano*

Constantine Cassolas, *tenor*

Nicholas Kepros, *troubador*

Michael Jaffee, *director*

 VANGUARD  
CLASSICS



# Las Cantigas de Santa Maria

1	Benedicamus, "Verbum patris" (Ensemble)	3:13
2	Prologue to Las Cantigas de Santa Maria (Troubador)	2:35
3	Prologue to Las Cantigas de Santa Maria (Constantine Cassolas, Ensemble [recorder, vielle, psaltery, handbells])	2:35
4	Cantiga 1, The First Song of Praise to Holy Mary (Ensemble)	1:52
5	Cantiga 158, A Miracle of Holy Mary (Troubador, Jan DeGaetani, Ensemble [chimes])	2:17
6	Cantiga 318, A Miracle of Holy Mary (Troubador)	1:17
7	Cantiga 318, A Miracle of Holy Mary (Ensemble [shawm, Moorish guitar, rauschpfeife, vielle, percussion])	1:17
8	Pilgrim Song: Stella splendens in monte (Troubador)	1:43
9	Pilgrim Song: Stella splendens in monte (Jan DeGaetani, Ensemble [psalteries])	1:43
10	Cantiga 8, A Miracle of Holy Mary (Troubador)	1:27
11	Cantiga 8, A Miracle of Holy Mary (Ensemble [vielle, voices, instruments])	1:27
12	Cantiga 117, A Miracle of Holy Mary (Troubador, Ensemble)	2:09
13	Cantiga 340, A Song of Praise to Holy Mary: Virgen madre gloriosa (Troubador)	4:17
14	Cantiga 340, A Song of Praise to Holy Mary: Virgen madre gloriosa (Constantine Cassolas, Ensemble [handbells])	4:17
15	Instrumental Interlude on Cantigas Nos. 200, 221, 377, 189 & 231) (Ensemble [Moorish guitar, Turkish fiddle, shawm, clay drum])	6:43
16	Cantiga 56, A Miracle of Holy Mary (Troubador)	2:29
17	Cantiga 56, A Miracle of Holy Mary (Ensemble)	2:29
18	Cantiga 7, A Miracle of Holy Mary (Troubador, Jan DeGaetani, Ensemble [recorders, Moorish guitar, vielle])	1:48
19	Cantiga 327, A Miracle of Holy Mary (Troubador, Ensemble [Turkish fiddle, Moorish guitar, nun's fiddle, percussion])	0:36
20	Laudemus virginem - Splendens ceptrigera (Ensemble)	1:24
21	Cantiga 166, A Miracle of Holy Mary (Troubador, Ensemble)	2:45
22	Cantiga 10, A Song in Praise of Holy Mary: Rosa das rosas (Troubadour)	4:03
23	Cantiga 10, A Song in Praise of Holy Mary: Rosa das rosas (Ensemble)	4:02

# The Waverly Consort

**Michael Jaffee, director**

**Jan DeGaetani, mezzo-soprano**

**Constantine Cassolas, tenor**

**Nicholas Kepros, troubador**

**Kay Jaffee, recorder, rauschpfeife, psaltery, organetto**

**Judith Davidoff, medieval fiddles**

**Sally Logemann, shawm, recorder, nun's fiddle**

**Michael Jaffee, Moorish guitar, psalteries**

**Produced for Vanguard by Seymour Solomon**

Recorded in 1972 at Vanguard's 23rd Street Studio, New York City

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## NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

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The more than 400 songs that comprise *Las Cantigas de Santa Maria*, a collection of tributes to the Virgin Mary, were commissioned, compiled, and probably partially composed by one man over most of his lifetime, the "learned" **King Alfonso X "El Sabio"** (1221- 1284) of the Castilian Court at Toledo, Spain. It is a major source of European monophony, containing virtually every representative type of monophonic vocal music current in the 12th and 13th centuries.

Four manuscript copies of the *Cantigas* survive. Three are still in Spain: two at the Escorial and one at the National Library of Madrid; the fourth is in the National Library in Firenze, Italy. Of these four, the Escorial manuscript *j.b. 2* is the most complete and correct, both musically and poetically. Every tenth *cantiga* is illustrated by a miniature depicting one or two musicians playing an instrument. A total of over forty of these miniatures show an astounding variety of woodwind, string and percussion instruments, both of European and Arabic origin. The other Escorial manuscript, bearing the identification *T.j. 1*, is a visual delight, as it contains, for each of 210 *cantigas*, a series of six beautifully illuminated miniatures that faithfully depict the stories of the miracles in Alfonso's collection and are rich in medieval iconography. Unfortunately, very few involve musicians or musical instruments, in contrast to the simpler illuminations in Escorial *j.b.2*, all of which show musicians performing on 13th century instruments, making it the most impressive single collection of Spanish medieval music extant and one of the main sources of information about medieval instruments.

Of the bowed string instruments, many sizes and shapes are depicted, both those held under the chin and those held vertically. One small leg fiddle illustrated frequently is very similar to a folk instrument (*kemençe*) still played in Turkey, which we have used in this performance. Several different types of plucked string instruments are also shown: psalteries of various sizes and shapes, harps, and guitar-like instruments. Of the latter there seem to be two distinct families:

(1) the Moorish guitar, which had a rounded back, a long

neck without frets, and several decoratively carved holes in the soundboard; and

(2) the Latin guitar, somewhat smaller, with a flat back, a fretted fingerboard, and a single sound hole.

The Moorish guitar was probably brought by the Moors to Spain during the conquest and later developed into the lute of the Renaissance, while the Latin guitar is the direct ancestor of the modern-day guitar. The Moorish guitar as pictured in the *cantigas* offers something of a puzzle, inasmuch as it would be virtually impossible to reconstruct a playable instrument conforming exactly to the artist's representation. In seeking a similar instrument for our performance, we concluded that the closest possible equivalent would be the modern-day *oud*, which is still played in the Near East and has changed very little during its long history. In the 13th century, both the Moorish and Latin guitars were, like the *oud*, played with a plectrum, probably made from a bird feather.

The wind instruments represented in the *cantigas* include horizontal and vertical flutes; reed instruments, including the predecessor of the Renaissance shawm; and various types of horns and metal straight trumpets. Percussion instruments include drums, small cymbals, castanets, and bells struck with hammers. Numerous other instruments are shown, including organs both large and small, bagpipes, hurdy-gurdies, and pipe and tabor.

Although the Arabs had been in Spain for more than 500 years when King Alfonso began work on the *cantigas*, no one can say with any certainty how much Eastern influence, if any, is present in the music and poetry of the *cantigas*. Higinio Anglès, whose edition and study of the *cantigas* is the most definitive to date, claimed to have found no evidence of an Arab influence. Other scholars disagree. Although the records of Alfonso's court remain lost, no one denies that Alfonso employed Arab as well as European musicians, as the miniatures plainly show. Indeed, surviving records indicate that in the year 1293 the Castilian court employed 26 *juglares*: 13 Moors, 12 Christians, and 1 Jew. (Of the 13 Moors, two were women who sang "profane" songs and danced.) The question remains: Did the Arab musicians take an active part in the actual musical

composition or did they function only as performers? Even if they played only melodies of European origin, one cannot help but speculate that the Arab musicians might have played these melodies freely, perhaps sometimes in an improvisatory, Eastern style. We cannot be sure until further evidence comes to light.

The poetry of the *cantigas* presents even greater areas for conjecture in the European-Arabic debate. Many of the poems are identical to the Arabic *zéjel*, a poetic form of refrain-verse alternation very similar to the French *virelai* and *ballade*. Other *cantigas* derive from the *rondeau*, a form somewhat less similar to the *zéjel*. As in the case of the music, any conclusions regarding the extent of Arabic influence on the poetry of the *cantigas* must remain more or less a matter of opinion.

The music of the *cantigas* was written on a five-line staff using square-shaped notes that clearly indicate pitch but are less precise with regard to rhythm. In interpreting the note values, many transcribers have relied heavily on the medieval system of rhythmic modes, in which different patterns of ternary meters are the norm. However, some scholars, including Anglès, employ binary as well as ternary meters. The poetic rhythm and stress of the words can also determine the choice of the musical rhythm, and since the poetry may not always fit neatly into a predetermined series of regular accents, the transcriber must frequently make arbitrary decisions.

All of the material used in this production, both musical and textual, is original; the narration spoken by the troubadour consists of exact translations of the original texts, and no modern additions have been inserted. Although the bulk of the music for this program was selected from the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, we have also included some polyphonic compositions from two other Spanish sources compiled slightly after the reign of Alfonso X. The *Benedicamus "Verbum patris"* is taken from the *Las Huelgas Codex*, which, although written down in the late 13th and early 14th centuries for use in the nunnery of Las Huelgas near Burgos, contains music dating largely from the 13th century. The Latin pilgrim songs, *Stella splendens in monte* and *Laudemus Virginem Splendens ceptigera*, are found in the *Llibre Vermeil* ("Red Book"), a 14th-century

manuscript from the monastery at Montserrat. These songs were sung and danced by the pilgrims to lift their spirits as they travelled on their long journeys to Montserrat and the many religious shrines in Alfonso's kingdom.

— **Michael Jaffee**

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#### ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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"Authenticity in and of itself is not the most important thing in my mind. To me, what's important is communicating directly to an audience. That's the point of all music, from early music to Stravinsky or Philip Glass."

— **Michael Jaffee**, *The Boston Globe*, 1982

**The Waverly Consort** was organized in 1964 by **Michael Jaffee** and **Kay Jaffee** at New York University, and has taken its place as the foremost professional group in the early music field. As an ensemble, it has remained steadfast to its original aim, to offer music of extraordinary variety ranging from the 10th to the 18th centuries. The group presents music from virtually every European country, including regions from the former Soviet bloc. The repertoire comprises religious and secular music; purely instrumental music and vocal music, both *a capella* and accompanied; solemn music composed for cathedrals and madrigals for flirtatious lovers; aristocratic music for kings and queens as well as earthy music for peasants and townspeople. The Waverly Consort has performed more than 100 concerts at Lincoln Center and on tour across North America, South America, Britain and the Far East. Appearances at major festivals have been common, including the Casals Festival, the Hong Kong Festival, and the Madeira Bach Festival. Consisting of singers and instrumentalists expert in the early music style, and employing more than fifty unusual wind, string and percussion instruments of the Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque periods, the Waverly Consort was in the forefront of early music performance from their inception to the ensemble's retirement in 2016.

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**TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS**

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1 *Verbum patris (from Las Huelgas ms.)*

Verbum patris hodie Processit ex virgine; Virtutes angelice, Cum canoro jubilo Benedicamus Domi	Today the Father's Word comes forth from the Virgin; angel choirs, with sweet rejoicing, now let us bless the Lord.
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2 PROLOGUE to *Las Cantigas de Santa Maria*

Don Alfonso of Castile, of Toledo and Leon king, and lord from Compostela to the Kingdom of Aragon; of Cordoba, of Jaen and Seville as well, and of Murcia where is known his favor before God; of the Algarve, won from the Moors and to our faith, along with ancient Badajoz, Moorish Nevel and Jerez, Fallen Beger and Medina, and reconquered Alcalá; And who by right is lord of all Romanic peoples, did author this book to the honor and praise of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Holy Mother of God, in whom is all his hope...

3 PROLOGUE

*The Prologue indicates what qualities are important for writing verse.*

Porque trobar e' cousa en que jaz entendimento, poren queno faz á-o d'aver e de razon assaz, per que entenda e sábia dizer o que entend' e de dizer lle praz, ca ben trobar assi s'á de ffazer.	Since writing verse entails understanding, the troubador must have knowledge sufficient for perceiving and expressing what he feels and wishes to say. In this way is good verse made.
E macar eu estas duas non ey com' eu querria, pero provarei a mostrar ende un pouco que sei, confiand' en Deus, ond'o saber ven, ca per ele tenno que poderei mostrar do que quero algũa ren...	hough I not understand as much as I ought, yet will I try to show the little I perceive, trusting in God, the source of all we know, from Whom I have whatever I may reveal of the troubadour's art...

4 CANTIGA 1

*This is the first song of praise to Holy Mary, making mention of the Seven Joys she received from her Son. [Here are recounted the Annunciation, Nativity, Epiphany, Resurrection and Ascension, the coming of the Holy Spirit and Mary's coronation as Queen of Heaven.]*

Des oge mais quer' eu trobar pola  
Sennor onrrada, en que Deus quis  
carne fillar beeyta e sagrada, por nos  
dar gran soldada no seu reyno e nos  
erdar por seus de sa masnada de vida  
perlongada, sen avermos pois a  
passar per mort' outra vegada.

E poren quero começar como foy  
saudada de Gabriel, u lie chamar foy:  
"Ben aventurada Virgen, de Deus  
amada, do que o mund' á de salvar  
ficas ora prennada; e demais ta  
cunnada Elisbeth, que foi dultar, é  
end' envergonnada"...

Hence will I be troubadour of that  
noble lady in whom God took mortal  
flesh, now sanctified and holy, to  
bestow the inheritance of eternal life  
and grant us a place in His kingdom  
ever free from the pain of death.

I begin with Gabriel's greeting upon  
Annunciation Day: "Favored Virgin,  
beloved of God, be now filled with  
Him who will save the world; and thy  
cousin Elizabeth, who once  
despaired, is now repentant and  
great with child"...

5 CANTIGA 158

*This song tells how Holy Mary delivered a knight from prison and commanded him to go to her church at Rocamadour.*

De muitas guisas los presos solta a  
mui gloriosa, santa e Virgin Maria  
tant' é con Deus poderosa. E de tal  
razon vos quero contrar un mui gran  
miragre, que fez por un cavaleiro bõo  
d'armas e de mannas e en servir un  
ric-ome cug' era, mui verdadeiro; e  
foi pres' en seu serviço e en carcer  
têevrosa o meteron e en ferros, como  
gente cobiiçosa...

In many ways is the captive freed  
through the glorious Virgin Mary, so  
great is her power through God. Now  
on this very theme I will tell a  
miracle she worked for a knight,  
strong in arms and bearing and  
faithful in service to his lord. Once, in  
action, he was captured and placed  
in irons in a gloomy cell...

6-7

CANTIGA 318

*This song tells of how Holy Mary avenged herself of a cleric who had stolen the silver from a cross. [Instruments]*

8-9

PILGRIM SONG (Llibre Vermeil)

Stella splendens in monte Ut solis  
radium, Miraculis serrato, Exaudi  
populum.

Shining Star on this bright mountain,  
pierced as by the sun's own light,  
hear thy people.

Concurrunt universi Gaudentes  
populi, Divites et egeni, Grandes et  
parvuli, Ipsum ingrediuntur, Ut  
cernunt oculi, Et inde revertuntur  
Graciis repleti.

Rich and poor, great and lowly, all  
who gather rejoicing, on seeing the  
mountain revealed they may enter  
upon it and come back filled with  
grace.

10-11

CANTIGA 8

*This one tells how Holy Mary caused a candle to rest on the fiddle of a minstrel playing before her image.*

A Virgen Santa Maria todos a boar  
devemos, cantand' e con alegria,  
quantos seu ben atendemos.

To the Holy Virgin Mary we owe  
unending praise, in joy forever  
singing, all those who for her favor  
hope.

[From the seventh strophe]: "Esto  
vos non sofreremos!"

[From the seventh strophe]: "This  
you will not do!"

12

CANTIGA 117

*This song tells of a woman who was paralyzed in both hands after she broke her vow and worked on the Sabbath; repentant, she went to Saint Mary of Chartres, where she was cured.*

A Virgen Santa Maria todos a boar  
devemos, cantand' e con alegria,  
quantos seu ben atendemos.

To the Holy Virgin Mary we owe  
unending praise, in joy forever  
singing, all those who for her favor  
hope.

[From the seventh strophe]: "Esto  
vos non sofreremos!"

[From the seventh strophe]: "This  
you will not do!"

13-14

CANTIGA 340

*A song of praise to Holy Mary.*

Virgen Madre gloriosa,  
De Deus filla e esposa,  
santa, nobre, preciosa,  
quen to boar saberia ou podia?  
Ca Deus que é lum' e dia,  
segund' a nossa natura  
non viramos sa figura  
senon por ti, que fust' alva...

Glorious Virgin Mother,  
of God now daughter and spouse,  
gentle maiden tender,  
can man thee glory render?  
As God is the light of day,  
incarnate in our nature,  
we'd not have seen His splendor  
but through thee, blessed dawn...

15 INSTRUMENTAL INTERLUDE consisting of the melodies of five cantigas:

- A song in praise of Holy Mary [Cantiga 200]
- A song telling how Holy Mary cured King Fernando [Alfonso's father] of a grave illness during his childhood [Cantiga 221]
- How King Alfonso granted the position of Town Clerk to one of his servants; because of much opposition to the appointment, the king asked Holy Mary's help and she then assured the appointment [Cantiga 377]
- This song tells of a man enroute to Saint Mary of Salas who encountered a dragon on the way and killed it; infected by the dragon's poison, he was cured by Holy Mary [Cantiga 189]
- How Holy Mary enabled three children to move great marble stones destined for the building of a church, though all the people of the town together had been unable to move them [Cantiga 231]

16-17

CANTIGA 56

*This song tells how Holy Mary caused five roses to grow from the mouth of a monk upon his death, for he had honored her with five psalms, each beginning with one of the letters in the name Maria.*

Gran dereit' é de seer seu miragre  
mui fremoso da Virgen, de que mater  
quis por nos Deus glorioso. Poren  
quero retraer un miragre que oy'  
ond' averedes prazer oyndo-o  
outrossi, per que podedes saber o  
gran ben, com' aprendi, que a Virgen  
foi fazer a un bon religioso. Este sabia  
leer pouco, com' oy' contrar, mas  
sabia ben querer a Virgen que non á  
par; e poren foi compõer cinque  
salmos e juntar, por en ssa loor  
crecer, de que era desejoso.

This lovely miracle is rightly from  
her of whom was born Almighty God.  
Now I tell again a miracle I heard  
wherein you'll delight on hearing it  
just as it was passed on to me; here  
you'll learn of the wonderful sign the  
Virgin sent to a faithful monk.  
Although this monk could hardly  
read at all, so great was his devotion  
to the Blessed Virgin that, eager to  
glorify her name, he joined together  
five psalms in her honor.



Dos salmos foi escoller cinque por esta razon e de ssuu os pōer por cinque letras que son en Maria, por prender dela pois tal galaredon per que podesse veer o seu Fillo piadoso...

From among the psalms and hymns he chose five, joining at random those which began with one of the five letters in Maria's name, hoping thus to win her favor and thereby see her blessed Son...

18

CANTIGA 7

*This song tells how Holy Mary delivered the pregnant abbess, fallen asleep weeping before her altar.*

Santa Maria amar devemos muit' e rogar que a ssa graça ponna sobre nos, por que errar non nos faça, nen peccar o demo sen vergonna.

Love to Holy Mary we offer in our prayer that she bestow her grace and so defeat the brazen devil who would see us in sin and shame.

Porende vos contarey un miragre que achei que por ũ' abadessa fez a Madre do gran Rei, ca, per com'eu apres' ei, éra-xe súa essa. Mas o démo enartar a foi, por que empreñar s' houve dun de Bolonna, hóme que de recadar avia e de guardar séu feit' e sa besonna...

On this very theme I will tell a miracle that came my way. As it was told to me, there was once an abbess who prayed with love to Holy Mary, Mother of the Eternal King. But the devil did outwit her once, and she was then pregnant by a man from Bologna, of whom she kept his deed and her burden...

19

CANTIGA 327

*How Holy Mary cured the cleric whose legs had turned backwards because he had made underwear of an altar cloth he had stolen. [Instruments]*

20 PILGRIM SONGS: *Laudemus virginem - Splendens ceptrigera*  
(from *Llibre Vermeil*)

Laudemus virginem, Mater est, Et eius filius Jhesus est.

Let us praise the Virgin who is mother, and whose son is Jesus.

Plangamus scelera Acriter, Sperautes in Jhesum Jugiter. Splendens ceptigera, nostri sis advocata, Virgo puerpera.

Let us bewail our sins, ever trusting in Jesus. Radiant Empress, plead our cause, O Virgin with child.

Tondentes pectora, crimina confitentes Simus Altissimo.

Beating our breasts, confessing our sins, may we be exalted.

21

CANTIGA 166

*How Holy Mary cured a man in her church at Salas who had been paralyzed throughout his body.*

Como poden per sas culpas os omes seer contreitos, assi poden pela Virgen depois seer silos feitos. Ond aveo a un ome, por pecados que fezera, que foi toileito dos nenbros dila door que ouvera, e durou assi cinc' anos que mover-se non podera, assi avia os nenbros todos do corpo maltreitos.

Just as man for all his sins is often rendered lame, so through Holy Mary can he find health again. Now see a man who for his many sins was left crippled in both arms and legs. Five years passed, but he moved not at all; not one limb of his body could he use.

Con esta enfermidade atan grande que avia prometeu que, se guarisse, a Salas logo irya e hfia livra de cera cad'ano ll' ofereria; e atan toste foi sao, que non ouv' y outros preitos....

Such suffering did he then endure that he vowed, if cured, to take to Salas a pound of votive wax and offer it there. Instantly was he cured; no trace of pain remained...

22-23

CANTIGA 10

*A song in praise of Holy Mary, telling of her beauty, virtue and power.*

Rosa das roses e Fror das frores, Dona das donas, Sennor das sennores. Rosa de beldad' e de paracer e Fror d'alegria e de prazer, Dona en mui piadosa seer, Sennor en toiler coitas e dorres.

Rose of all roses, Flower of flowers, supernal Lady, exalted of all. Rose of grace and beauty, flower of delight and joy, clement lady, refuge from pain and sorrow.

Esta Dona que tenno por Sennor e de que quero seer trobador, se eu per ren poss' aver seu amor, dou ao demo os outros amores.

This woman whom I take for my lady, of whom I would be troubadour, if her love might now be mine, all others gladly I forsake.

— Translations from the original Galician-Portuguese by **Kenneth C. Ritchie**

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