

General information

The project week is intended for both singers and singing instrumentalists—students, professional musicians and advanced amateurs.

Participants should be open to aural, modal and language-oriented training.

Solmisation is used as a basic tool. Participants are expected to sing directly from facsimiles of the manuscript sources. This approach helps to open the ears and to develop a flexible and transparent voice.

For more information please visit:

<http://www.erhardt-martin.de/nusmido.html>

Organisation

- Participants are expected to be well prepared. Material needed for preparation (the 'Singer' and 'Reader') will be sent out at the end of June.
- Location: Johanneskirche, 06110 Halle (Saale), Germany.
- **The course will begin on Monday 17 July 2017, at 6 p.m.**
- From 18 July: Daily instruction roughly from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 2.30 to 6.30 p.m.. Individual lessons in the evenings.
- **Final concert for all participants: Sunday 23 July, 5 p.m., Johanneskirche, Halle.**
- Languages of instruction: German, English, French and Dutch.
- Course fee: €160 (copy costs included), to be paid in cash during the week.
- Accommodation: free sleeping accommodation is possible for up to 8 persons who are prepared to sleep in one large room, at An der Johanneskirche 2, across the street from the church. A kitchen, a shower and toilets are available. Please bring your own (air) mattress and bed linen or sleeping-bag.
- Single or two-bed rooms in guest apartments are also available in the vicinity for about €20 per night.
- **Application deadline: 18 June 2017.**
- Application and contact: erhardt.martin@web.de

Teachers

The ensemble *Nusmido* was founded in 2008, crucially inspired by their common teacher and mentor Dr. Rebecca Stewart. Since its inception, the ensemble has been striving towards a specifically modal interpretation of early music, and performs regularly throughout Germany and Austria. Its repertoire spans several centuries, from early Gregorian chant to 16th century polyphony. *Nusmido's* first CD recording was released in 2015 (J. Ockeghem: *Missa l'homme armé*). Under the name "Schola Nusmido", the ensemble wishes to share its vision and experiences within the context of week-long training courses.

Martin Erhardt teaches historical improvisation and music theory in Weimar and Leipzig and recorder in Halle. As a recorder player, harpsichordist, organist, portative organ player and singer, he gives concerts with several ensembles specialised in medieval, Renaissance and baroque music. He is the director of the Leipzig Improvisation Festival and author of the textbook *Upon a Ground - Improvisation on Ostinato Bases*.

Milo Machover, studied in Paris and Freiburg. He specialises in early music as a singer and a flute player. He has worked with the ensembles *Non Papa*, *Cantus Modalis* and *Schola Stralsundensis* and is a founding member of *Nusmido*. He teaches early ensemble music at Frankfurt University of Music.

Ivo Berg was awarded a doctorate at the UdK Berlin for his work on the phenomenon of musical tension. Alongside his scientific research his interests include active musicianship and the challenges of music education. He currently teaches and conducts research at the Vienna University of Music (Institute for Music Education).

Modal interpretation project week

17–23 July 2017

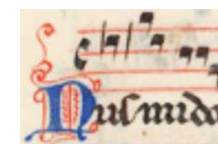
in Halle (Saale), Germany

ARS NOVA



VITRY - MACHAUT

SCHOLA NUSMIDO



Martin Erhardt
Milo Machover
Ivo Berg

It happened only once: a treatise on notation gave its name to an entire musical period. *Ars nova* (Latin for “new art”) – such was the title of Philippe de Vitry’s seminal work from 1322/23.

These were turbulent times: Jacobus of Liège was just putting the finishing touches to his *Speculum musicae*. In the final book of this lengthy treatise, the old man complained bitterly and with a great deal of polemic that the younger generation of composers were turning their backs on their own traditions. From Avignon came a much stronger voice still: in 1324/25 Pope John XXII promulgated a memorable bull, the *docta sanctorum patrum*, which prohibited under threat of punishment the musical innovations of the *Ars nova* from entering the church. This new art was incompatible with religious devotion, its ‘sweet sounds’ and ‘artificial playfulness’ too profane for pious ears. That a pope should feel impelled to interfere in the contents of the Church’s music was a sign that the *avant garde* was shaking things up quite a bit!

For the first time, art and ritual, two of the most elemental constituents of music (according to H.-H. Eggebrecht) were presented here as mutually exclusive entities. But are we really dealing with two opposite and irreconcilable poles? Does a greater level of artistry necessarily undermine the ritual value of music?

This question will accompany us throughout the project week. Of course, our first goal will be to get to know and to sing the pieces. In order, however, to reach a more profound understanding of this 700-year-old music, we must sensitise ourselves to the artistry (*subtilitas*), as well as develop a better understanding for the devotional and ritual aspects (*devotio*) that this music inspired. Indeed our project week will be successful if we manage to reunite art and ritual.

A look at Vitry’s treatise reveals a very different mindset than the remarks of the elderly Jacobus of Liège would suggest: the theoretical teachings of *Ars nova* actually

demonstrate in an elegant manner how tradition and innovation can be seamlessly integrated. The old doctrine set out by Franco of Cologne and expanded upon by Petrus de Cruce and others is here further refined. The notation system of the *ars nova* is thus the result of a thought process that developed over generations, rather than an isolated trend of the times.

The two protagonists of this period (and of our project week), Philippe de Vitry (1291-1361) and Guillaume de Machaut (1302-1377), were outstanding figures. This was at a time when the identity of musicians and composers was just starting to distinguish itself from the greyness of anonymity. Both men were famous during their lifetime, not just as influential musicians but also (according to Peter Gülke) as royal advisers, travelling diplomats, high-ranking clerics, pedagogues and poets – in short, two great and world-renowned personalities.

Machaut’s career, for example, began as secretary to John the Blind of Luxembourg, King of Bohemia (and father of Charles IV). And Vitry was friends with Petrarch, who called him: “ever the keenest and most ardent seeker of truth, so great a philosopher of our age.”

For this course we have selected an assortment of pieces associated with the Virgin Mary, such as Vitry’s motet *Vos quid admiramini / Gratissima virginis species / Gaude, gloriosa*. What does it mean to hear three different texts simultaneously? How does this motet fit in the sacred-secular continuum? Is isorhythm an artificial technique or does it fulfil an aesthetic ideal? Those are some of the questions we will ask ourselves during the week.

The *Messe de Nostre Dame* stands out among Machaut’s prolific oeuvre as a unique work of art. We wanted to perform some of the movements of this mass but also place it in its contemporaneous context. The anonymous *Messe de Tournai* appeared in a similar environment and

offers an interesting point of stylistic comparison. We therefore decided to combine the two mass cycles for the six movements of the ordinary (*Kyrie-Gloria-Credo-Sanctus-Agnus Dei-Ite missa est*).

The *Ite missa est* from the *Messe de Tournai* holds a special function: it is written in the form of a motet. The tenor sings “*Ite missa est*” while the upper voices have two different texts (“*Se grasse...*” and “*cum venerint...*”). What does it mean to have two languages (here Latin and French) being sung simultaneously?

The proper of the mass (*Introit-Gradual-Alleluia-Offeratory-Communion*) will be sung according to a 14th century chant source (F-Pn latin 8885). We wish to thereby acknowledge once again the importance of Gregorian chant as the basis and foundation of Christian polyphony until the end of the Renaissance.

Last but not least, we would like to make a brief foray into the world of *formes fixes* (rondeau, ballade, virelai) and explore a couple of Machaut’s secular jewels.

Martin Erhardt
(Translation Milo Machover)

