

# Melos

CHOIR & PERIOD INSTRUMENTS



MILOT  
2019  
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# VOCES FEMINARUM

WOMEN IN MUSIC, WEST & EAST  
6TH - 19TH CENTURIES

# VOCES FEMINARUM ALBUM NOTES

*Melos Choir & Period Instruments*  
*Holly Gwynne-Timothy, Artistic Director*

*Present*  
**VOCES FEMINARUM**  
*Women in Music, West & East*  
*6th - 19th centuries*

with guests:  
Sadaf Amini, Santur; Bryan Martin, Medieval Lute, Voice  
Navaa Band of Kingston: Iman Moshiritabrizi, Voice  
Niloofer Kashi, Voice, Tanbur  
Alireza Ghane, Tar, Setar  
Reza Kashi, Daf, Tombak

## **Melos Choir (and guest singers):**

*Sopranos:* Helen Cluett, Margot Craft, Donna Delyea, Gilda DiCola Mills, Julia du Prey, P. Jill Frick, Marzieh Masoudian, Safa Mozaffari Kojidi, Ariel Zaichick.

*Altos:* Julia Buchholz, Rean Cross, Brenda Gluska, Niloofer Kashi, Ruth Oliver, Ann Hunnisett Rouget, Maja-Lisa Thomson.

*Tenors:* William Egnatoff, Gordon Gwynne-Timothy, Neil Hobbs, Paul Malo, Iman Moshiritabrizi, Edgar Tumak.

*Basses:* Robert Burkholder, Douglas Connors, John Gale, Bryan Martin, Brent Nuevo, Kris Michaelson, Alexandru Sonoc.

## **Melos Period Instruments:**

Baroque Players (at A415 pitch standard):  
Julia McFarlane - Violin 1  
Venetia Gauthier - Violin 1  
Lisa Draper - Violin 2  
Andrew Dicker - Violin 2  
P. Jill Frick - Recorders  
Eileen Beaudette - Viola  
Jeff Hamacher - Bass Viola da Gamba  
Katie Legere - Baroque Bassoon, Recorders  
Michael Capon - Harpsichord

## **Melos East-West Players (at A440 pitch standard):**

Eileen Beaudette - Viola  
P. Jill Frick - Recorders  
Katie Legere - Recorders, Dulcian  
Bryan Martin - Medieval Lute, Voice  
Jason Hawke - Recorder, Tenor Vielle  
Daphne Kennedy - Cello  
Fahd Abou Zainedin - Arabic Oud  
Margaret Walker - Darbuka, Riqq, Bells,  
Frame Drum



## **Program Notes & Translations by Artistic Director, Holly Gwynne-Timothy:**

Melos' Voces Feminarum album grew out of an East-West concert narrative in Early Music that was funded in 2019/20 by many generous donors and corporate supporters. Most notably, however, the Melos Board, Kingston Arts Council and the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul in Kingston sustained support for the project through the ravages of the pandemic, enabling Melos to perform a variation of the program quite fulsomely in 2022. The Sisters of Providence are the longest, steadily serving charitable force in Kingston, in particular for women and mothers; and/or people in our community marginalized by poverty or other social forces; they have also been ardent supporters of musical arts. Melos is very grateful for their generous grant support over 7 years, as well as for the privilege, even now, of having members of their order in our audience. Our attraction as Early Music fans to monastic repertoire, especially women's monastic repertoire, feels meaningfully supported by the visible presence and impact of the Sister's community in Kingston.

The COVID pandemic forced Melos to postpone the performance of the Voces Feminarum program until June, 2022. Pandemic-induced strictures forced us to abandon our hoped-for collaborations around the historic women's narrative with

Egyptian musicologist and q'anun virtuoso, Dr. George Sawa, and percussionist Suzanne Meyers-Sawa, as well as with members of Sine Nomine Ensemble for Medieval Music. We are grateful to all of them for their inspiration and tutelage over the years. We are particularly grateful to their lutenist, Bryan Martin for participating in this recording, on short notice, in June of 2023. Serendipitous expansions in Melos' community since 2018 have drawn us into contact with Kingston's many talented Iranian musicians, notably Santur virtuoso Sadaf Amini, and the four talented members of Navaa Band: Niloofer Kashi, Iman Moshiritabrizi, Alireza Ghane and Reza Kashi. We are privileged to share our differing musical cultures; to enjoy common and contrasting sonorities and passions without limits on our interpretations. Melos and our guests on this album are all very grateful to St. George's Cathedral and St. John the Apostle for permitting secular, multi-cultural concerts in their houses of worship. We are especially aware of this privilege and its symbolic value given the current tensions and conflicts overseas.

In rehearsals we have all benefitted from the stylistic and language coaching of the Iranian piece by Iman Moshiritabrizi and by Melos choristers Safa Mozzafari Kojidi and

Marzieh Masoudian. Melos' oud player, Fahd Abou Zainedin helped us learn the Arabic for Lamma bada yatathanna and suggested the best approach for our unusual forces to perform it. Their guidance and insight around the music enriches our perspective and helps those of us who have never sung in Farsi or Arabic to master the diction and style.

I am indebted to all our players and singers for their talents, shown in solos and ensembles; for their willingness to tackle languages, scales, ornaments, tuning and notation systems that are foreign or new to them. I am grateful to our players for creating their own improvisations, lending richness and virtuosity to seemingly simple, monophonic works.

*Voces Feminarum Album notes, in order of tracks as on our CD:*  
(Please note Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass abbreviations: S,A,T,B)

**1) Durme, Durme** - Traditional Sephardic lullaby, ca. 15th c.; arranged by Jurriaan Grootes. Melos Choir SAs with soprano soloist: Ariel Zaichick.

This haunting Sephardic tune is one of three lullabies on Melos' *Voces Feminarum* album, set by contemporary composer, Jurriaan Grootes, in a perfectly ageless style for the tune. Thanks to Mr. Grootes for offering his arrangement freely on CPDL. Many versions of *Durme Durme* exist. The tunes and texts vary commensurately with the huge scope of the Sephardic diaspora following the brutal 1492 Alhambra decree of monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella, who ordered that all Jews be expelled from the Iberian Peninsula, the region formerly known as Al-Andalus, now known as Spain. When the large Jewish population was forced out of Spain, on foot, Sephardic tunes took root in north Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. The tunes absorbed regional musical influences in their new homes.

In this text the mother comforts her baby, guiding him or her spiritually with "Shema Yisrael": Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart, all thy soul and all thy mind".

Translation: *Sleep, sleep, mother's little one, free from worry and grief. Listen, my joy, to your mother's words, the words of Shema Yisrael. Sleep, sleep, mother's little one, with the beauty of Shema Yisrael.*

**2) O virtus Sapientiae** - Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179); arranged by Andrea Budgey. Melos Choir SAs a capella with Mezzo-soprano soloist, Brenda Gluska.

From the 4th century C.E. in the West until the Reformation, notwithstanding the formation of universities like Oxford, Cathedral Schools and Monasteries were the highest centres of learning for both men and women, in segregated, monastic communities. Generally their novitiates/students were of noble background, and entering these communities was seen as a privilege and societal honour or duty. The role of prayer by these communities for the outer world was seen as an essential safeguarding of society. Those who were gifted with visions, often, but not always, received respect and even broad acclaim. The culture of Christian Saints grew out of these communities. Germany and England in particular yielded a high volume of female saints and writings on the lives of women martyrs, mystics and saints, offered monastic education earlier than other parts of Europe.

In Europe between the 10th and 13th centuries there were many Abbeys offering broad education to nuns. Those that excelled intellectually would be promoted as Abbesses. In Germany and England, in particular, there were many nuns that we now call mystics - Abbesses of influence whose visions and inspired writings were respected as authoritative, documented and disseminated. 10th century German nun Hroswitha wrote plays, studied Boethius, and read Virgil. She was the first woman playwright in the West. Hildegard von Bingen sprang from and hugely contributed to this ambitious culture, arguably forging paths for and inspiring other women entering monastic life,

such as Herrad von Landesberg, Mechtild of Magdeburg and others. While European convents were havens of intellectual study and accomplishment for women, rules in the various orders of nuns, overseen by a male hierarchy, often limited the scope of the nuns' education, and demanded hours highly developed manual arts like embroidery which male monasteries avoided. Many orders of nuns would not have had the breadth of exposure within the standard, seven liberal arts that were the norm in the male monasteries. Yet, the expectation of female monasteries to offer health care and hospitalization was the same as that of their male counterparts; so study of science, medicine and surgical techniques was included in the education at the larger Abbeys. Music, however was different. The canon of music which became increasingly standardized and disseminated from the 6th century on in the west, to accompany worship, was virtually all penned by men. Transcription of that music - the chief way of learning to compose and the only means of transmission - was generally not an option for nuns. In Cistercian Abbeys nuns were not allowed to study the rules of counterpoint, to sing it or transcribe it - let alone compose it from scratch. (See notes on Las Huelgas and on the accomplishments of nuns and women in Baroque Italy).

Hildegard von Bingen entered monastic life in the Ursuline convent of St. Rupertsburg, some time between age 8 and 14. Her gift of visions was established by age 8, at which point she had her first encounter with her later mentor, Jutta. Hildegard's brilliance and intellectual output in science, theology and herbal medicine led her to be appointed an Abbess. Her writings, preaching and visions, unlike some of her female counterparts, commanded respect and conveyed her authority. Citing her visions, Hildegard successfully lobbied Roman church authorities for the formation of her own Abbey, geographically and logistically separate from the male Abbey to which her order of nuns had earlier been attached. Her music, which was set to her own sacred poetry, is unique in style, large in vocal range, and florid in its use of rapid scale passages. It is thought that she had exposure to the Songs of Solomon because of direct stylistic and metaphorical similarities to these passionate, sacred texts.

Translation: *O strength of Divine Wisdom who circled, whirling, encompassing all things in the single path which possess life. You have three wings: one soars into the heavens, the second distills from the earth, and the third flies everywhere. Praise be to you as befits you, O Holy Wisdom.*

**3) Nani, Nani** - Traditional Sephardic lullaby, ca. 14th c.; Holly Gwynne-Timothy, Soprano solo & Sadaf Amini, Santur.

Rough translation: Refrain: *"Lully, my little one, my sweet, beautiful boy, who will grow so big. Sleep before your dad comes home; he will come home with much joy as he has been out with a new adulterous lover - "Muevo amor".* By Vs. 2, She has locked her doors; her husband returns and beseechingly asks his lady to open the door and let him in. Vs 3: She refuses, angrily, and says: *"Ai, No! I won't open the door, I won't come to you or consent".* In the final lines she cries *"Ai! I am is no less beautiful than she is, and no less worthy; besides I have more jewelry/ wealth".*

Common in both West and East, women's texts could not directly assert her love or complaint towards the man, in a manner of overture or confrontation; so indirect expressions arose instead.

**4) Mit gunstlichem Herzen** - Oswald von Wolkenstein (1377-1445) Melos Choir & East-West Players & Navaa Band. Instrumental duet: Eileen Beaudette, Viola & Daphne Kennedy, Cello. P. Jill Frick, recorder; Katie Legere, recorder, dulcian; Sadaf Amini, Santur; Fahd Abou Zainedin, oud; Alireza Ghane, setar; Reza Kashi, daf; Margaret Walker, riqq. Duet: Eileen Beaudette, viola; Daphne Kennedy, cello.

Oswald was a nobleman, poet, composer, knight, soldier, and widely travelled diplomat of Germanic origin. He spoke 10 languages, was a prolific poet and song-writer whose writings were likely shockingly candid and confessional for their time as they are, even still, with abundant sexual references. As a knight and nobleman he was active in the territorial and political manoeuvres typical of his time, and as such he led a crusade against the invading Hussites. He also expressed ethnic and religious prejudices typical of his time

and culture. He had a wife and seven children, and also a lover, who apparently found reason to turn on him, entrapping him on behalf of powerful debtors he had accumulated. Oswald, however, was also brilliant and humorous. He was a lover of contrapuntal and literary and poetic devices. His music is considered influential in the developments away from medieval monophony towards renaissance imitative polyphony. *Mit gunstlichen Herzen* conveys the classic courtly longing for the unattainable beloved; in this case his beloved appears to have had a beautiful singing voice. I chose this piece for that reason, but also due to its palatable lyrics, extended, lovely tune, and for its form: it is a beautifully-conceived “round” or canon, enabling many combinations of performance.

Rough Translation: Vs 1: *Out of the depths of my heart I wish you an especially good, new year; and that out in the world your heart should flourish. So let it be, my heart- Amen! -that this is really true. Think about me my beloved, from afar.*  
Vs. 2: *Your singing and loveliness are so pleasing to me; the voice is true, known; These wishes, my beloved, may they fulfill us. I thank you for your words and am your servant. Enjoy them as always fresh and let them ever truly remain that way.*

**5) Presto from Sonata a Tre TWV 42:d10 - Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)**  
Trio: Julia McFarlane, Violin; Sadaf Amini, Santur; Daphne Kennedy, Cello.

Telemann spent a large part of his career in Poland, where, he says in his autobiographical writings, he heard and was influenced by the music played by the Roma there. This sonata was given the nickname “Gypsy Sonata”, due to the motives like the one outlined in our prelude here and in the melody of the Presto. I had long been looking for a chance to use this piece, with its explicit, historic crediting of influence from Eastern Europe. I am grateful to Sadaf Amini for her brilliant adaptation of the recorder part for her Iranian Santur; and to Julia McFarlane, violinist, and Daphne Kennedy, cellist, for their virtuosic rendering. The tune in this Presto of Telemann’s could well have other Eastern, folk origins and influences, in addition to and apart from the

Roma. An illuminating, culturally sensitive article on the Roma and the question of their musical influence can be found here:  
<https://www.romarchive.eu/en/music/classicalmusic/echoes-roma-reception-uhrovskamanuscript/>

**6) Lamma bada yatathanna** - Arabic muwashah, poem attributed to Lisan Al-Din Ibn al-Khatib (1313-74). Oud taksim and solo by Fahd Abou Zainedin, with all Melos singers, players & Navaa Band.

Ibn al-Khatib was an Arab-Andalusian polymath, historian, poet and politician. He wrote an exhaustive history of Granada, published in 1369. His poetry is rooted in the elevated Arabic forms which infused courtly culture in Al-Andalus, North Africa, and the near east. His poems, above all, however, were esteemed as so valuable as to be inscribed in stone on the walls in the Court of the Myrtles at the Alhambra Palace, showing its import to the elevated ruling culture of 14th c. Al-Andalus. He came from a ruling family and as such was channeled into positions of administration and leadership throughout his life. However, he also lived during periods of tumult, in exile in North Africa.

Ibn al-Khatib’s poetry on the walls of Alhambra Palace, Granada:



Translation: *Verse 1. When she appeared, walking with a swinging gait, Her beauty amazed me, oh my Love! I became the prisoner of her eye. Her stem folded as she bent.*  
*Verse 2. Oh my destiny and the reason of my confusion! Who can answer my complaint about love and suffering except for the Queen of Beauty?*

**7) Bahar-e delneshin** - Iranian song by Ruhollah Khaleqi (1906-65) Tutti  
Words: poem by Bijan Taraghi (1930 - 2009).  
Choir with Sadaf Amini, santur; Fahd Abou Zainedin, oud; Alireza Ghane, setar; Niloofar Kashi, Tanboor; Reza Kashi, daf; Margaret Walker, riqq; P. Jill Frick, recorder; Katie Legere, recorder; Eileen Beaudette, Viola; Daphne Kennedy, Cello. With violinists Julia McFarlane, Lisa Draper, Andrew Dicker and Venetia Gauthier; Jeff Hamacher, Bass Viola da Gamba.

Ruhollah Khaleqi was a Persian Classical musician composer and conductor. A foundational musicologist in Iran, he established the National School of Music in Tehran and steered its rigorous curriculum. His daughter studied there and became Iran’s first professional, woman conductor. Khaleqi also studied the Persian language and literature. The Persian valuing of elevated poetry with music shows in this poem by Taraghi, which Khaleqi popularized in his tuneful setting here. This song was enshrined as the first music ever broadcast on National Radio in Iran. It is widely loved and arranged by Persians at home and abroad.

Translation: *Pleasant Spring - Since the pleasant spring came upon the grass, the spring of my wishes spread your shadow on me. Like the breeze of the newly come spring visiting my home, so that my ruined cottage would be showered by flowers. Come and see me in astonishment, break the silence of my solitude, see my sorrow on my hot face which is like a lonely tulip. Oh you, whose face is my mirror, your love-my old grief, in this spring, come like a flower, put your head on my bosom.*

**8) Oror\*** - Traditional Armenian lullaby, pre-13th c.; Soghomon Soghomonian “Komitas” (1869-1935).  
Brenda Gluska, Mezzo-soprano solo with P. Jill Frick, Recorder; Julia McFarlane, Violin; Eileen Beaudette, Viola.

Armenians, like the Sephardim and Moors of Al-Andalus experienced a brutal Diaspora. In the Armenians’ case it was at the hands of the Turks towards the end of Ottoman Empire. In general with imperial conquests, ethnic diasporas, and strict religious revolutions,

West or East, as in the 16th century dissolution of monasteries and violent Protestant reforms in the West, there are often significant setbacks in the arts: loss of aural traditions, and repression of expressive freedoms, especially for women. The Armenians had a rich aural tradition of music, elevated forms and “Classical” instruments and techniques associated with their music, much of which, like the music of the Sephardim, was lost, fractured or dispersed. In the late 18th through the 20th centuries, however, the fields of music history and ethnomusicology in higher education, in both the West and East, grew, becoming established in the best universities and conservatories. Ethnographers and music historians worked hard to recover lost musics still held in aural traditions and underground practices, by studying musical practices in “nastive” communities, as well as by studying of neglected manuscripts, art or correspondence. All of these efforts led to the the revival and sharing of large bodies of ancient music, and the birth of studied “performance practices”. “Komitas” was a brilliant Armenian composer and ethnographer of the early 20th century, who is credited with the sourcing, observation, notation and thus revival of a huge corpus of Armenian Early Music. This ancient lullaby Oror is set to drones characteristic of traditional Armenian vocal and instrumental practices. The poetry of the mountain region of Agn, where this lullaby was preserved, is full of references to nature, reflecting the deep connectedness of the Armenians to their landscape.

Translation: *You are precious, you are faultless. What can I bring you that is precious? Oror (a lullaby). I’ll bring you the moon, The perfect stars of the moon. Your countenance is like the morning, The dew of the morning rests on it. Moist mists retreat, So that the sun’s light can shine upon you.*

\*Note AD’s error on printed CD jacket: lists this as a Sephardic Lullaby, rather than Armenian Lullaby.

**9) Tres morillas m’enamoran** - Anonymous canción, from the Cancionero Musical de Palacio (1505-20). Jason Hawke, Recorder; Eileen Beaudette, Viola; Vocal sextet: Rean Cross, Brenda Gluska, Gordon Gwynne-Timothy, Paul Malo, Robert Burkolder, Kris Michaelson.

The Cancionero de Palacio, discovered in the 19th century, is a collection from the court of the Duke of Alba in Salamanca, considered the most comprehensive and revealing collection of Spanish renaissance music, containing over 450 songs. The songs show what we know to be close links between Spanish and Italian style by the 15th century, with this villancico, a cousin of the Italian “frottola”. The frottola was a prototype of the madrigal, but strophic, and more homophonic than contrapuntal. There are many references in the songs of the Cancionero to encounters between Moors, Christians and Jews; but most are martial or “pro-Christian/ pro-Spanish Monarch” (as in Una Sañosa Porfia). This piece is a moving example of the human tendency for romance or attractions to occur across cultural and religious boundaries. Strikingly this song exists in two versions in the Cancionero - an anonymous setting and a more rhythmic, contrapuntal setting by Juan del Encina, who was a descendant of Jewish conversos (converts to Christianity). It conveys the voice of a Christian man who fell in love with three Moorish women in the formerly Andalusian city of Jaén. The women go out to pick olives and are saddened to find the groves barren. Then, according to their admirer, they lose their former vitality in response to the land’s barrenness. Encina’s setting adds a conversational verse between the women that gives us a hint of the symbolism here: it is their forced conversion to Christianity that drains them of their colour and brightness, finding their formerly fruitful land barren and unnourishing.

Translation: *I fell in love with three Moorish girls from Jaén:  
Aicha, Fatima and Marién.  
Three Moorish girls, so happy and lively,  
Went to pick olives and found them all plucked away, in Jaén:  
Aicha, Fatima and Marién.  
They found them plucked away, and turned back in dismay,  
all their colours/ brightness gone, in Jaén:  
Aicha, Fatima and Marién*

*This is the verse from Encina’s setting, which we are not singing in this performance: I said to them, “Who are you, ladies, who rob me of my life (steal my heart)?*

*“We are Christians who were Moors in Jaén”  
Aicha, Fatima and Marién.*

**10) Pulcherrima rosa** - Anonymous Czech song of Marian praise from the 15th c. Codex Specialnik. Melos Choir TBs with Melos East-West players and Navaa Band. Opening cello solo: Daphne Kennedy. Verse 2 solo viola variation: Eileen Beaudette.

The *Codex Specialnik*, now housed in the museum of Hradec Králové, originated in an Utraquist monastery near Prague (Utraquists were an ideological branch of the Hussite reform movement). It is unusual in its rich collection of 14th & 15th c. monophonic and polyphonic works by well known composers and by lesser known composers. It also contains this beautiful, anonymous song, *Pulcherrima Rosa*, the tune of which evokes the late the Middle Ages, and whose descriptive language is rooted in the language of the medieval cult of Mary. From the sanctioning of the cult of the Virgin in Byzantium by the Council of Ephesus in 431, Mary’s following grew in the East and spread westward. By the 12th century in Roman Christendom, the cult of Mary included in its devotional songs numerous poetic, sometimes amorous appellations for her. She was a beautiful rose; Star of the Sea (Mary was seen as a life-saving guide to mariners); Queen of the Heavens (she was seen the primary intercessor between sinful humans and Christ’s/ God’s judgement) and more. As the woman who gave birth to God’s son, she was also seen as the redeemer of Eve’s sin, thus claiming a moral image for women in communal and spiritual life, in contrast to the legacy of shame left by Eve, who took the brunt of creating mankind’s “original sin”.

Translation: *Most beautiful rose, blooming from a thorn, from the budding flower a lily is born.  
Serving humbly and with chastity, the created one gave birth to the creator.  
Unique virgin, no-one is worthy of you Gleaming star of the sea, Light of the moon;  
Serving humbly and with chastity, Queen of this sad world, and mother of Eve  
Who lightens our punishment.  
We give thanks for the son, Mother and advocate.  
After life on this earth, We need your help, Father-born;  
from the fires of judgment, Virgin mother, save us. Amen.*

**11) Ne m’oubliez mie** - Anonymous French polyphony from the Montpellier Codex, 13th c.. Tutti.

The Montpellier Codex is an important manuscript containing early French polyphony, both sacred and secular. This motet, Ne m’oubliez mie is a beautiful example of a courtly love song set to a counter-melody, in this case a kind of ostinato bass line. The codex also includes Franconian motets and isorhythmic motets, and works set to cantus firmi originating from Notre Dame. (Cantus firmi are pre-existing chant lines forming the tonal and textual underpinning of a polyphonic composition). Although the works in the Codex are not by named composers there are numerous concordances with other manuscripts, that show influence and outright compositions by famous composers of this age: Perotin, Phillip the Chancellor and Adam de la Halle, for example. We start our performance with the untexted lower part sung by Tenors and Basses, borrowing an important courtly love phrase from the text above: *Bon amour, m’agrée! “Fine love, please me!”.*

Translation: *Do not forget me, Lovely fair one!  
When I do not see you, I am all the more saddened,  
for I never forget your great worth or your companionship  
Not for a single day, and I will never desire the love of another woman.  
It is the sap in the branch! I have love!  
Marion has gone there:  
I have a fine love, pure love, who suits me.*

**12) Je me complains** - by Guillaume Dufay (1400-74). Vocal Trio: Rean Cross, Brenda Gluska, Holly Gwynne-Timothy Dufay was the most influential and celebrated European composer of the 15th century, in the sphere of both Church and Court, with vocal polyphony being the main, sought-after music in his time. He synthesized and refined the strict contrapuntal and poetic “formes fixes” of his age, also incorporating the styles of various countries where he travelled. *Je me complains* is an equal-voiced love song in rondeau form. It is very challenging in its rhythms and masterful in its closely imitative writing.

Translation: *I complain piteously to myself alone, more than to anyone else, of the grief pain and torment that I suffer - more than I can describe. The pain of love*

*keeps me so anxious that I cannot escape its cruelty. And my fate also wishes this to be, but I swear this is what youth does to all.*

**13) Res est admirabilis** - Polyphonic chant from the Fontrevaud Gradual of Eleanor of Brittany (1184-1241). Melos Choir a cappella. *Res est admirabilis* is from the *Fontrevaud Gradual* of Eleanor of Brittany, a beautifully illuminated antiphony with Gregorian Chant and three polyphonic works. Eleanor of Brittany was given the Gradual by her parents when she entered the cloister at Fontrevaud Abbey in 1290. Eleanor became Abbess of Fontrevaud in 1304 and gave the coveted Gradual to the Abbey upon her death.

Translation: *It is an admirable thing, a venerable Virgin gave birth untouched without knowing a man, Full of the Holy Spirit she became a mother. From the hinge above the belly, fertilized by the saving dew, the fruitfulness of the woman gave birth, sacred virginity intact. As dew descends upon the grass so did the word of the supreme father appear in a virgin. She did not forsake her father but put on mortal form in her mother’s womb. Just as the rain makes the earth fruitful by divine graceso does the virgin; the Holy Spirit cleanses her from sin.It is not the work of man but it is the work of deity and great virtue she conceived and begat a man who did not know her, the author of salvation. Amen.*

**14) Jag önskar** - Anonymous lament, ca.16th c., Sweden. Melos Choir SAs a capella.

Known as *Klosterjungfrun*, this haunting, two-part song, that we call “Jag önskar” for its opening phrase, is of anonymous authorship and unknown date of origin. Although it sounds medieval in its austerity, and may well be, it is thought to date from the early 16th c.. It appears to have had the function of a kind of propagandistic lyric, popular among Protestant reformers, who rejoiced in or encouraged the collapse of Roman Catholic monastic communities in Sweden. For the translation here, I am grateful to Catherine Thomson, the daughter of Melos alto, Maja-Lisa Thomson.

Translation:

Verse 1

*I wish the entire world and the convent were burnt,  
and all the fake nuns were dead.*

*My mother and father who should have clothed  
and fed me, are as good as dead to me.*

Chorus:

*Because the linden has leaves and the leaves fall off,  
and the earth supports all the green forests.*

Verse 2

*And when I left the convent, I was met by three strange  
dishes: the first was hunger, the second was thirst,  
the third was three sleepless nights.*

Chorus, as above

**15) Fa mi fa** - Anonymous, polyphonic motet, ca. 1300, from the Las Huelgas Codex. Melos Choir SAs a capella.

The Cistercian convent of Las Huelgas, in Burgos, was founded in the late 12th century by King Alphonso VIII. Built alongside the royal residence, it came to function as the Spanish Westminster Abbey. The services were rich in music, and a Schola Cantorum and scriptorium were established for teaching sight singing, musicianship and producing manuscripts. Las Huelgas' nuns were encouraged to write and sing polyphony, even though such activity was forbidden for them as women under Cistercian rule. The Las Huelgas Codex notably contains indigenous works, likely written by women. This "Fa mi fa" motet appears at the end of the Codex, and is the first example of a polyphonic solfège exercise in Europe. The text has a double entendre, extolling the virtues for the women of practicing their sol-fa, while honouring their founding Abbess, Maria Sol, known as Dona Misol. This piece is thought to be "indigenous" to Las Huelgas. It apparently gained acclaim, and spread, turning up in two other Cistercian music collections, one in Clairvaux, France, and the other in Trier, Germany. In the Las Huelgas version of the piece - a manuscript called Huelgas 11 - the piece is badly fragmented, incomplete and not polyphonically "correct". However it has been fleshed out in light of its completed parts found in the other manuscripts. We perform a short version of it here.

For a detailed scholarly commentary on this piece, see the work of David Catalunya at:

<https://www.brepolonline.net/doi/pdf/10.1484/J.JAF.5.114051>

**16) Adagio Molto** - 2nd movement from Bassoon Concerto, RV 497, by Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741). Katie Legere, solo Baroque Bassoon with Melos Baroque players (A415). We know Vivaldi masterfully taught talented young women and girls at the Ospedale della Pietà in Venice where he was musical director. The talented orphans put on regular concerts for the public and the school over time achieved great renown. References to named, talented singers and players of instruments abound both in Vivaldi's music, where he would assign a difficult solo to a particular girl; and in contemporary reports of audience members.

In the case of this virtuosic Bassoon solo, we do not know whether Vivaldi actually had one of his students ever play this piece, let alone perform it in public. In general Bassoons were considered a man's instrument. However we do have this eye-witness account by a woman below. Hester Thrale Piozzi heard the young women and girls of the Ospedale in recital, and commented. Her account supported my wish to include a female Bassoon player of Vivaldi's music on this album; and Katie's wish to play this particular challenging work for us on her gorgeous, new Baroque Bassoon. Of course, we did not erect a screen to hide Katie's face, as was often done to the young performers at the Ospedale. To add to our modern performance privileges, we had close up videography by Amin Pourbarghi, who beautifully captured Katie at play in our live performance of this program, June 2022. This passage was read as part of our live performance of this program.

**Reading: Words of Hester Thrale Piozzi 1769**

We were this evening carried to a well-known conservatory called the Mendicanti, who performed an oratorio in church with great, and I dare say, deserved applause. It was difficult for me to persuade myself that all the performers were women, till, watching carefully, our eyes convinced us, as they were but slightly grated. The sight of girls, however, handling the double bass, and blowing into the bassoon, did not much please me: and the deep-toned voice of her who

sang the part of Saul, seemed an odd unnatural thing enough. Well! These pretty sirens were delight to seize upon us after and press our visit to their parlour with a sweetness that I know not who would have resisted. We had no such intent; and amply did their performance repay my curiosity for visiting Venetian beauties, so justly celebrated for their seducing manners and soft address. They accompanied their voices with the fortepiano, and sung a thousand buffo songs with all that gay voluptuousness for which their country is renowned. **1769**

**17) Imple os nostrum** - Sr. Caterina Assandra (ca. 1590-after 1618). Melos Choir & Baroque players (A415): P. Jill Frick and Katie Legere, recorders, with Michael Capon, harpsichord, and Jeff Hamacher, bass gamba.

Sister Caterina Assandra entered the Benedictine convent of Saint Agata in Lomello in 1609. Prior to that she had studied organ and counterpoint at Pavia Cathedral under Benedetto Re, gaining renown as a performer and composer before taking religious orders. Like her fellow Benedictine nun-composers in Ferrara, the Aleotti sisters, Assandra wrote sacred motets in concertato style: orchestrated works for voices with distinct parts for instruments. By the late 1500's instrumental music in Italian convents was played by nuns during worship, using keyboards, viols, flutes, cornets and trombones along with the choir. Assandra's works spread beyond Italy and were picked up by the Milanese publisher Lomazzo, making her the first Italian nun to have a collection of works published. This motet comes from Assandra's book of sacred motets for 2-3 voices, published in Milan in 1909.

Translation: *Fill our mouths and fill my lips with your glory, with your praise and your joy, O Lord, for the sake of thy glory; that we may praise thy glory on timpani and on organ; on harps and pipes. With the cymbals of jubilation the nations give thanks to you, Christ, our Lord.*

**18) Che si può fare** - Barbara Strozzi (1619-77) with Michael Leopold, lute.

I thank Michael Leopold, lutenist, for allowing Melos to release this recording of myself singing

this with him from a short recording session we undertook in 2019. Please learn more about Michael and his beautiful output on lute and theorbo at these sites:

<https://www.pegasusearlymusic.org/artist/3496/>

<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/michael-leopold-mn0002218506>

Unlike the other accomplished women composers in this Italian Baroque set, Barbara Strozzi never undertook religious orders or training, and she was not of purely aristocratic lineage. Born and baptized in Venice, as Barbara Valle, she was the illegitimate daughter of Isabella Griega, a woman of servant class, known as "La Gregghetta". Barbara's paternal line is not known; however it is assumed her father was Giulio Strozzi, Isabella's employer. He was a leading Venetian intellectual and a member of the liberal Venetian "think-tank", the Accademia degli Incogniti. Isabella and Barbara lived in Giulio's home. Giulio took a passionate interest in music and dramatic arts, himself a well-known writer of poetry, plays, song lyrics and opera. He is the author of the lyrics to this wrenching love lament by his quasi-adopted daughter, Barbara. Giulio encouraged Barbara's abundant musicianship, folding her by her early teen years into the musical activities of his intellectual circle. Giulio enlisted the famous operatic composer, Francesco Cavalli as Barbara's composition teacher by the time she was 15 years old. By age 18, Barbara took Giulio's surname as her own, confirming our sense of his paternal claims on her. She is reported to have developed impressive skill as a singer with a stunning voice, capable of accompanying herself on lute and theorbo. Contemporary reports show that she widely impressed the nobility in semi-public performances of her own works. Barbara went on to write and publish a large volume of music, both secular and sacred motets for 2-5 voices. Remarkably she published 8 volumes of music while living, and was the most widely published composer of secular music in her time. While Barbara never married, she had at least 3 children with her lover, Giovanni Paolo Vidman, a nobleman associate of her father's from Venetian intellectual circles.

Translation: *What can you do? The rebel stars have no pity; what can you do, if heaven has no influence of peace upon my sorrows?*

*What can you do? What can you say?*

*From the stars disasters rain down on me at all hours; what can you say if perfidious love denies relief From my torments. What can you say?*

**19) Sonata nona** - Opus 16, 1693 - Sister Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704) Melos Baroque players (A415). Leonarda was born in a noble family in Novara, Italy. She undertook musical training there, likely studying composition with Gasparo Cassati, who testified to her brilliant compositional skills. She entered religious life in an Ursuline convent by age 16. By age 30 she was recorded as music instructor at the convent; and by age 56 she was the Mother Superior there. She wrote sacred masses and motets for large forces, choral and instrumental, presumably for festal services in her community. She also published instrumental works, such as this Sonata Nona, from her Opus 16 collection of sonatas, which demonstrate her talent as a composer for strings, as well as a kind of opening or porosity that had developed by the 16th century in Italy between the outer world of commercial music publishing and the cloistered life of nuns.

**20) O caeli cives** - Sister Chiara Margarita Cozzolani (1602-78) Melos Choir & Baroque players (A415). Soloists: Paul Malo, Tenor 1; Gordon Gwynne-Timothy, Tenor 2. Born into a wealthy merchant family in Milan as Margarita Cozzolani, she entered Santa Radegonda, a Benedictine convent in Milan, at age 18, taking the name "Chiara" in her new identity as Christ's "spouse". For at least the first 30 years of her monastic life, Chiara was a prolific composer, with her principle collections being published between 1640-50. The only surviving copy of her first published collection was lost in 1945, a casualty of WWII. Isabella also wrote numerous duets and solos; a concerted Vespers and Paschal Mass. She ceased publishing music in the last two decades or so of her life. Her large scale choral motet on this album, O caeli cives, celebrates the life of St. Catherine and was written to be performed on the feast day of St Catherine,

November 25, likely in cooperation with some men, possibly guest monks or clerics, singing the Tenor and Bass parts. The nuns' performances on major feast days became quite popular over time, packing the Church, and arousing the ire of the Archbishop Alfonso Lita, who tried to restrict their musical output. However, he received pushback from noble fans of the convent's musical performances. This pushback from wealthy (male) patrons against Church strictures on women presumably helped the sisters remain creatively active for much of Chiara's tenure there.

We chose to double the choir parts with strings in this performance. The work is comprised of a non-Liturgical dramatic text, wherein the Tenors and Basses sing as the earthly or human voice, asking the heavens what happened to St. Catherine after her death. The angels, sung by the sopranos and altos, answer them, joyfully reporting on St. Catherine's happy, eternal presence in heaven.

Translation: Men / people: *O citizens of heaven, O angels of peace, listen, hurry, come, tell us:*

*where might she dine,*

*where might she rest, Catherine, Christ's bride?*

The Angels: *In heaven she rests, and among the saints is her peace.*

Men: *O happy rest, blessed fate! Tell us: where does she rule, exalted, crowned, Catherine, Christ's bride?*

Angels: *In heaven she reigns now, and among the saints is her kingdom.*

Men: *O happy eternal realm, O blessed fate! Tell us, angels of God: where does that glorious queen triumph?*

Angels: *In heaven she triumphs, and among the saints is her victory palm.*

Men: *O happy triumph, O blessed palm, blessed fate! Tell us: where, jubilant, does she delight, rejoice, exult, that happy Catherine?*

Angels: *In heaven she delights, exults, and rejoices, and her joy is complete.*

Men: *O sweet laughter, happy joy, blessed fate! So does Catherine, Christ's chaste bride, rest now in heaven? Angels: Forever.*

Men: *In heaven does she now rule? Angels: Forever.*

Men: *In heaven does she triumph? Angels: Forever.*

Men: *In heaven is she joyful? Angels: Forever.*

Tutti: *Forever, in heaven now she rules, rests, triumphs, is glad, exults, forever she will sing, "Alleluia."*

#### Melos Choir (and guest singers):

*Sopranos:* Helen Cluett, Margot Craft, Donna Delyea, Gilda DiCola Mills, Julia du Prey, P. Jill Frick, Marzieh Masoudian, Safa Mozaffari Kojidi, Ariel Zaichick.

*Altos:* Julia Buchholz, Rean Cross, Brenda Gluska, Niloofar Kashi, Ruth Oliver, Ann Hunnisett Rouget, Maja-Lisa Thomson.

*Tenors:* William Egnatoff, Gordon Gwynne-Timothy, Neil Hobbs, Paul Malo, Iman Moshiritabrizi, Edgar Tumak.

*Basses:* Robert Burkholder, Douglas Connors, John Gale, Bryan Martin, Brent Nuevo, Kris Michaelson, Alexandru Sonoc.

#### Melos Period Instruments:

Baroque Players (at A415 pitch standard):

Julia McFarlane - Violin 1

Venetia Gauthier - Violin 1

Lisa Draper - Violin 2

Andrew Dicker - Violin 2

P. Jill Frick - Recorders

Eileen Beaudette - Viola

Jeff Hamacher - Bass Viola da Gamba

Katie Legere - Baroque Bassoon, Recorders

Michael Capon - Harpsichord

Melos East-West Players (at A440 pitch standard):

Eileen Beaudette - Viola

P. Jill Frick - Recorders

Katie Legere - Recorders, Dulcian

Bryan Martin - Medieval Lute, Voice

Jason Hawke - Recorder, Tenor Vielle

Daphne Kennedy - Cello

Fahd Abou Zainedin - Arabic Oud

Margaret Walker - Darbuka, Riqq, Bells, Frame

Drum

#### Bios of our Guest Instrumentalists:

**Sadaf Amini** was born in Tehran, Iran, where, at the age of 12, she began studying the Santur, and later entered Tehran Music School. In 2012, she received her Bachelor's degree in Iranian Music Performance from Tehran University. During her studies, she trained with Masters of Music and Santur. She received her Master's Degree in Music Technology and Digital Media, University of Toronto, 2018. She has performed at various music festivals, collaborated with diverse ensembles at multiple concerts and in album recordings. She is interested in combining Iranian melodies and instruments with other genres of music, and collaborating with musicians from different backgrounds. Sadaf was a winner of the YGK Emerging Musician Competition in 2019; she is a recognized virtuoso and a mesmerizing performer, expressing her feelings through her own compositions. Since 2019 Sadaf has performed in four Melos concerts, and on two Melos CD/Album recordings: Iberian Triptych and this *Voces Feminarum* album.

**Niloofar Kashi** is a talented musician who lives and works the Peel District School Board in Mississauga, Ontario. Born and raised in Iran, she fell in love with music at a young age and began singing and playing the Tanboor, a traditional Iranian instrument. In 2018, Niloofar moved to Kingston to pursue a degree in English literature at Queen's University. In 2022, Niloofar joined a few friends' musical practice, creating their own group, Navaa Band. Niloofar's unique style combines traditional Iranian melodies with modern influences, creating a sound that is both hauntingly beautiful and irresistibly catchy. Her performances are a true reflection of her passion for music, captivating audiences with the soulful Eastern tunes and mesmerizing Tanboor melodies. Niloofar has performed in one live concert with Melos, in addition to singing on this *Voces Feminarum* album.



**Iman Moshiritabrizi** is a Ph.D. chemical engineering student at Queen's University and works on modelling pharmaceutical production processes. From age 10 he had aspirations of becoming a pop star and so began studying guitar first then voice with that goal in mind. This satisfied his musical passion for a while until, through his vocal studies, he found that Avaz - singing in traditional (Classical) Iranian style - developed both the natural flexibility and subtlety in his voice, as well as giving it a lot of power, which in turn enhanced his pop voice. However, after starting Avaz classes, he felt increasingly drawn to this rich, Persian tradition; now he prefers Saz and Avaz sessions with traditional Iranian musicians like his colleagues in Navaa Band. Iman has performed in concert with Melos three times and is featured here on Melos' Voces Feminarum album.

**Alireza Ghane** developed an interest in Iranian Classical music when he was a child listening to his father playing the Ney. He started learning the Setar at age 16 and continued a more disciplined study of the Setar during his academic education in Civil Engineering. Alireza trained with master Babak Pirmoradi and Alireza Golshan, with whom he focused on the Iranian Radif. Radif is a collection of many old melodic figures preserved through countless generations of oral tradition. Radif organizes the melodic figures in a number of different tonal centres called Dastghah. Alireza often practices improvising together with a traditional Iranian singer, such as with Iman Moshiritabrizi, in various Dastghahs. Alireza recently received his Ph.D. in hydrotechnical engineering from Queen's University and is currently living in Mississauga, and works as a water quality scientist there for Ecometrix. Ali has performed in concert with Melos three times and is featured here on Melos' Voces Feminarum album.

**Reza Kashi**, a talented musician and skilled engineer who immigrated to Canada in 2017, brings a multi-dimensional background to Melos. Reza's passion for music was nurtured by his musically gifted family, who instilled in him a love for various instruments, including percussion, drums, and guitar. Despite pursuing a successful career in engineering, Reza has

remained actively dedicated to his musical craft. He holds an M.Sc. in Civil Engineering from the University of Manitoba and is currently based in Kingston, where he contributes his expertise to the Engineering, Technology and Innovation industries. Reza's diverse experiences, as both an immigrant, professional in the sciences, a performer of a range of musics, as with many of our colleagues and guests, enrich the musical perspective that infuses Melos' collaborative programs. Reza has performed in concert with Melos twice, and he is featured on Melos' Voces Feminarum CD.

**Bryan Martin** Baritone and lutenist Bryan Martin is active as a performer and researcher of early music. He holds degrees in conducting and musicology from the University of Toronto, and is a founding member of the Sine Nomine Ensemble for Medieval Music. With Sine Nomine he has performed and recorded in Canada, the U.S. and England, and has been featured on CBC Radio and National Public Radio in the U.S. Occasionally, Bryan can be heard performing with other groups around Toronto, especially Soundstreams' Choir 21 and the choir of St. James' Cathedral. Over the years, Bryan has turned his hand to many things, having been at various times an orchestra musician, conductor, scholar, teacher, union leader, computer technician and radio producer. These days he devotes most of his time to the Music Library at the University of Toronto, where he is responsible for cataloguing, computers, and audio-visual technology and preservation, as well as serving as the resident early music expert. When not performing he enjoys producing recordings, most recently for Pax Christi Chorale and Musicians in Ordinary, and occasionally directs live concert video productions. He recently produced an edition of a 15th-century English musical manuscript, together with a recording by Sine Nomine of its contents, to be published with a translation of the accompanying Latin text by Fordham University professor Andrew Albin. Bryan has performed five programs with Melos and has coached and lectured for us in Kingston on a variety of Early Music topics, such as Gregorian chant, Mozarabic chant, and the evolution of the European lute and guitar out of the Arabic oud.

