

"LAMENT FOR APRIL 15"

and OTHER MODERN AMERICAN MADRIGALS

Composed for THE RANDOLPH SINGERS

DAVID RANDOLPH, Conductor



Photograph: David Newman

THE RANDOLPH SINGERS

(left to right) William Bridenbecker, Tenor; Anna Louise Kautz, Soprano; Bert Spiero, Bass; Mildred Greenberg, Contralto; Harriet Hill, Soprano; David Randolph, Conductor

It may well be that the appearance of this record marks the first time in history that a performing group has been so honored as to be able to issue a long-playing disc consisting entirely of works written especially for them (not on commission) by numerous composers.

This record contains the first fruits of a plan that had its inception in the mind of David Randolph as long ago as 1944. It was in that year that he organized The Randolph Singers, a group of five musicians devoted to the performance of Madrigals. Throughout the intervening years, during which they brought to the attention of the public — through their numerous concert tours and recordings — literally hundreds of early English, French and Italian Madrigals, it was their hope to create a rebirth of interest in this intimate form of music, but in the idiom of our own day. How well that hope has been realized is indicated by the fact that up to January, 1956, no fewer than twenty-seven modern Madrigals were composed especially for The Randolph Singers, of which thirteen are presented on this disc.

CLAFFIN: LAMENT FOR APRIL 15

Side 1, Band 1

This humorous work has already achieved world-wide fame. The composition of a rascal New York bank president, it is a verbatim setting of the Income Tax instructions by a reverse kind of logic. Therefore, it might be claimed that since in history the text of a Madrigal been so familiar to so many people. The humor of the work derives, of course, from the long-undervalued juxtaposition of this completely prosaic and far more serious music. Even the parentheses have been set to imitate the humor is further heightened by the completely "deadpan" interpretation given by The Randolph Singers.

MILLS: THE TRUE BEAUTY

Side 1, Band 2

Since he has obtained a text by a Seventeenth Century poet, Charles Mills has given to this madrigal a suggestion of an early English flavor. The opening appears, also, in fact, may bring to mind the English folk melody "Grasshoppers." The same fitting rhythm is present throughout the entire work, either by implication, or to actually. As the piece reaches its climax, the growing intensity of the harmonies reveals to us that this is music of the Twentieth Century. The madrigal concludes with a gentle receding of the opening response after this time, however, it is harmonized.

CLAFFIN: THE QUANGLE WANGLE'S HAT

Side 1, Band 3

This is a lighthearted setting of nonsense words by Edward Leach. At the climax of the work, when the "Quangle Wangle" says to himself "What a wonderful voice I have!" Avery Claffin has written a truly humorous duet on the final word, as if to suggest, as gracefully as possible, the quality of the noise.

Then, as the words refer to the "Flute of the Blue Baboon," there is an amusing reference to Massenet's opera, "The Magic Flute," as the last soprano notes the coloratura portion of the "Serenade of the Night" aria.

STEVEN: LIKE AS THE CULVER ON THE BARED BOUGH

Side 1, Band 4

Halley Stevens has given an atmospheric and very expressive setting to a poem by the early English writer, Edmund Spenser. The opening melody returns twice during the course of the work in the words "No joy of ought . . ." and again, as "Dark as my day . . ." With each recurrence, however, the melody is given a slightly more somber setting.

PINKHAM: "MADRIGAL"

Side 1, Band 5

Only four voices are used in this brief work (which, incidentally, takes only forty-four seconds!) One aural, but meaningful, touch is the necessary dissonance given to the harmonies as the four sing the words, "Always out of time they are."

KAY: HOW STANDS THE GLASS AROUND?

Side 1, Band 6

Major-General James Wolfe is said to have written these words on Sept. 12, 1759, just before the attack on Quebec. Guyton Kay has written, in an extremely contrapuntal style, this imparting to the work some of the complexity of texture often found in the eighteenth century. The idiom, however, will be found to be entirely contemporary.

LIST: REMEMBER

Side 1, Band 7

In this setting of a poem by Christine Bassein, Kurt List uses the opening four-note figure, — (to which he sets the words "Remember me") — as a "hook." These four notes will be found to pervade the entire work. At times, as at the very opening, they are intoned by the soprano voice, as a cantata figure. At other times, the figure is given to different voices. Toward the middle of the work, as the first soprano sings that figure repeatedly, the melody is divided among the four lower voices, with each one singing only one syllable.

DVORKIN: MAURICE

Side 2, Band 1

Judith Dvorkin has subtitled this work "Shaggy Tale." It is a jocosely setting of a pun on a French word.

PINKHAM: FOLK SONG-LEGY

Side 2, Band 2

As in the case of his other madrigal on this disc, Daniel Pinkham uses only four voices in this work. The one, however, employs a philosophical text, whose mood is enhanced by the subtle and spry use of dissonance.

CANBY: THE INTERMINABLE FAREWELL

Side 2, Band 3

For the text of this bit of musical spoofing, Edward Tamm Canby has gathered every cliché used by departing guests and by their hosts. The music is in the form of a canon, over a repeated bass figure. However, with a sense of humor suggestive of Charles Addams, the composer prescribes that as each of the singers enters successively with the same melody, he or she does so in a different key. The resulting polyphony, as an example of real musical wit, it might be mentioned in passing that The Randolph Singers have often used this delightful work as the final encores in their concerts. It has never failed to send their audiences home laughing.

CLAFFIN: DESIGN FOR THE ATOMIC AGE

Side 2, Band 4

Avery Claffin achieves the humor in this work by giving an extremely serious musical setting to what are essentially ludicrous words. It is rather surprising, however, to realize how appropriate the text is to our own day, despite the fact that it was written many years ago by Edward Lear. Again, the performance is completely "deadpan."

When Mr. Claffin composed this madrigal for The Randolph Singers, he had no idea that they were scheduled to give a concert in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Thus, the piece of the first performance of this work was singularly appropriate.

KAY: WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Side 2, Band 5

Before the battle of Lexington, William Dawes and Paul Revere were both asked to cover the country. Dawes starting first. The text, written in the first person, conveys Dawes' bitterness over the fact that Paul Revere became famous, while he remained unknown.

HARMAN: A HYMN TO THE VIRGIN

Side 2, Band 6

This is essentially a duet for Soprano and Tenor, sung in old English, while the other three voices intone a Latin hymn in the background. The score prescribes that the lower three voices are to "intone without vibrato."

COMPOSERS RECORDINGS, INC.
170 West 74th Street, New York 23, N. Y.

The full high-fidelity quality of this recording can be realized on both stereo or monaural playback equipment.

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CRI-102

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This record contains the first fruits of a plan that had its inception in the mind of David Randolph as long ago as 1944. It was in that year that he organized The Randolph Singers, a group of five musicians devoted to the performance of Madrigals. Throughout the intervening years, during which they brought to the attention of the public — through their numerous concert tours and recordings — literally hundreds of early English, French and Italian Madrigals, it was their hope to create a rebirth of interest in this intimate form of music, but in the idiom of our own day. How well that hope has been realized is indicated by the fact that up to January, 1956, no fewer than twenty-seven modern Madrigals were composed especially for The Randolph Singers, of which thirteen are presented on this disc.

CLAFLIN: LAMENT FOR APRIL 15

This humorous work has already achieved world-wide fame. The composition of a retired New York bank president, it is a verbatim setting of the Income Tax Instructions! (By a reverse kind of logic, therefore, it might be claimed that never in history has the text of a Madrigal been so familiar to so many people.)

The humor of the work derives, of course, from the tongue-in-cheek juxtaposition of this completely prosaic text and the mock-serious music. Even the parentheses have been set to music! The humor is further heightened by the completely “dead-pan” interpretation given by The Randolph Singers.

MILLS: THE TRUE BEAUTY

Since he has chosen a text by a Seventeenth Century poet, Charles Mills has given to this madrigal a suggestion of an early English flavor. The opening soprano solo, in fact, may bring to mind the English folk melody “Greensleeves.” The same lilting rhythm is present throughout the entire work, either by implication, or in actuality. As the piece reaches its climax, the growing intensity of the harmonies assures us that this is music of the Twentieth Century. The madrigal ends with a gentle recollection of the opening soprano solo. This time, however, it is harmonized.

CLAFLIN: THE QUANGLE WANGLE'S HAT

This is a light-hearted setting of nonsense words by Edward Lear. At the climax of the work, when the “Quangle Wangle” says to himself “What a wonderful noise there'll be,” Avery Clafin has written a truly horrendous discord on the final word, as if to suggest, as graphically as possible, the quality of the noise.

Then, as the words refer to the “flute of the Blue Baboon,” there is an amusing reference to Mozart's opera, “The Magic Flute,” as the first soprano quotes the coloratura portion of the “Queen of the Night” aria.

STEVENS: LIKE AS THE CULVER ON THE BARED BOUGH

Halsey Stevens has given an atmospheric and very expressive setting to a poem by the early English writer, Edmund Spenser. The opening melody returns twice during the course of the work: (at the words “No joy of aught . . .” and again, at “Dark is my day . . .”). With each reappearance, however, the melody is given a slightly more somber setting.

PINKHAM: “MADRIGAL”

Only four voices are used in this brief work (which, incidentally, takes only forty-four seconds!) One subtle, but meaningful, touch is the momentary dissonance given to the harmonies as the tenor sings the words; “Always out of tune they were.”

KAY: HOW STANDS THE GLASS AROUND?

Major-General James Wolfe is said to have written these words on Sept. 12, 1759, just before the attack on Quebec. Ulysses Kay has written in an extremely contrapuntal style, thus imparting to this work some of the complexity of texture often found in the early madrigals. The idiom, however, will be found to be entirely contemporary.

LIST: REMEMBER

In this setting of a poem by Christina Rossetti, Kurt List uses the opening four-note figure, — (to which he sets the words “Remember me,”) — as a “motto.” Those four notes will be found to pervade the entire work. At times, as at the very opening, they are intoned by the soprano voice, as an ostinato figure. At other times, the figure is given to different voices. Toward the middle of the work, as the first soprano sings that figure repeatedly, the melody is divided among the four lower voices, with each one singing only one syllable!

DVORKIN: MAURICE

Judith Dvorkin has sub-titled this work “A Shaggy Tale.” It is a jocose setting of a pun on a French word.

PINKHAM: FOLK SONG: ELEGY

As in the case of his other madrigal on this disc, Daniel Pinkham uses only four voices in this work. This one, however, employs a philosophical text, whose mood is enhanced by the subtle and sparing use of dissonance.

CANBY: THE INTERMINABLE FAREWELL

For the text of this bit of musical spoofing, Edward Tatnall Canby has gathered every cliché used by departing guests and by their hosts. The music is in the form of a canon, over a repeated bass figure. However, with a sense of humor suggestive of Charles Addams, the composer prescribes that as each of the singers enters successively with the same melody, he or she does so in a different key! The resulting polytonality is an example of real musical wit. It might be mentioned in passing that The Randolph Singers have often used this delightful work as the final encore in their concerts. It has never failed to send their audiences home laughing.

CLAFLIN: DESIGN FOR THE ATOMIC AGE

Avery Claflin achieves the humor in this work by giving an extremely serious musical setting to what are essentially ludicrous words. It is rather surprising, however, to realize how appropriate the text is to our own day, despite the fact that it was written many years ago, by Edward Lear. Again, the performance is completely “dead-pan.”

When Mr. Claflin composed this madrigal for The Randolph Singers, he had no idea that they were scheduled to give a concert in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Thus, the place of the first performance of this work was singularly appropriate!

KAY: WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Before the battle of Lexington, William Dawes and Paul Revere were both dispatched to rouse the county, Dawes starting first. The text, written in the first person, conveys Dawes' bitterness at the fact that Paul Revere became famous, while he remained unknown.

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This is essentially a duet for Soprano and Tenor, sung in old English, while the other three voices intone a Latin hymn in the background. The score prescribes that the lower three voices are to “intone without vibrato”.

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CRI-102 Vol. 1

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LAMENT FOR APRIL 15

Side 1, Band 1
 Avery Claffin

Who must file. Every citizen of the United States—
 Whether an adult or minor, who had six hundred dollars
 Parenthesis . . . twelve hundred dollars if sixty-five years
 of age or over. Close parenthesis.
 Or more gross income in nineteen fifty-five, must file.
 Most of your tax is withheld from your wages every
 payday,
 Or paid on declarations of estimated tax every quarter.
 Parenthesis. See page fourteen relative to the declaration
 of estimated tax.
 However, the law requires you to file an annual return
 To determine whether you owe more or should get a
 refund.
 You are entitled to one exemption for each dependent
 who meets all the following requirements:
 One; received less than six hundred dollars,
 And, two; received more than one-half of his support
 from you,
 Parenthesis, or from husband or wife if this is a joint
 return. Close Parenthesis.
 And, four, was either a citizen or resident of the United
 States,
 The Republic of Panama, Canada, Mexico, or the Canal
 Zone.
 And, five Parenthesis, a, close parenthesis,
 Was related to you in one of the following ways:
 Mother, Father, Grandmother, Grandfather, Brother, Sister,
 Grandson and Granddaughter, Step-brother, Step-sister, Step-
 mother, Step-father, and Mother-in-law.
 You can deduct your mother-in-law, father-in-law, Brother-
 in-law,
 Sister-in-law, Son and Daughter-in-law -
 But-in the case of children who are residents of the
 Republic
 Of the Philippines -
 And who were born to, or were legally adopted by
 servicemen in the Philippine Islands
 Before July five, nineteen-forty-six, consult your
 Internal Revenue Office.
 After hearing these instructions, you should be able to
 prepare
 Your own return
 Unless you have complicated problems.

THE TRUE BEAUTY

Side 1, Band 2
 Charles Mills

Thomas Carew (b. 1589)
 He that loves a rosy cheek
 Or a coral lip admires,
 Or from star-like eyes doth seek
 Fuel to maintain his fires.
 As old Time makes these decay
 So his flames must waste away.
 But a smooth and steadfast mind
 Gentle thoughts and calm desires
 Hearts with equal love combined
 Kindle never dying fires.
 Where these are not, I despise
 Lovely cheeks or lips or eyes.

THE QUANGLE WANGLE'S HAT

Side 1, Band 3
 Avery Claffin

Edward Lear
 On the top of the Crumpetty Tree, The Quangle Wangle sat
 But his face you could not see on account of his Beaver
 Hat.
 For his hat was a hundred and two feet wide,
 With ribbons and bibbons on every side, and bells and
 buttons, and loops and lace,
 So that nobody ever could see the face of the Quangle
 Wangle Quee . . .
 But there came to the Crumpetty Tree
 Mr. & Mrs. Canary.
 And they said, "Did ever you see any spot so charmingly
 airy.
 May we build a nest on your lovely hat, Mister Quangle
 Wangle,
 Grant us that, O please, let us come and build a nest,
 of whatever
 Materials suits you best, Mister Quangle Wangle Quee."
 And besides to the Crumpetty Tree came the Stork, the
 Duck,
 And the Owl, The Snail and the Bumble Bee, the Frog
 and the Fimble Fowl.
 And the Golden Grouse came there, and the Pobble who
 has no toes,
 And the small Olympian Bear, and the Dong with the
 luminous nose.
 And the Blue Baboon who played the flute and the
 Orient Calf
 From the Land of Tute, and the Attery Squash and the
 Bisky Bat,
 All came and built on the lovely hat of the Quangle
 Wangle Quee.
 And the Quangle Wangle said to himself on the Crumpetty
 Tree
 "When all these creatures move, what a wonderful noise
 there'll be."
 And at night by the light of the mulberry moon
 They danced to the flute of the Blue Baboon.
 On the broad green leaves of the Crumpetty Tree.
 And all were as happy as happy could be
 With the Quangle Wangle Quee.

SONNET: LIKE AS THE CULVER ON THE BARÉ BOUGH

Side 1, Band 4
 Edmund Spenser (1552-1599)
 Halsey Stevens

Like as the culver on the baréd bough Sits mourning,
 Mourning for the absence of her mate,
 And in her moan sends many a wishful vow
 For his return, that seems to linger late;
 So I alone, now left disconsolate,
 Mourn to myself the absence of my love,
 And wand'ring here and there all desolate,
 Seek with my plaints to match that mournful dove.
 No joy of aught that under heav'n doth have
 Can comfort me, but her own joyous sight,
 Whose sweet aspect both God and man can move,
 In her unspotted pleasance to delight:
 Dark is my day whiles her fair light I miss,
 And dead my life, that wants such lively bliss.

MADRIGAL (For Four Voices)

Side 1, Band 5
 Daniel Pinkham

Robert Hillier
 Piping Anne and Husky Paul
 Once they swelled our madrigal,
 She watched him and he watched her,
 Always out of tune they were.
 Yet from two discords may be
 Love's most tuneful harmony;
 Such a music they have wrought,
 As to set our skill at naught.
 Let the nightingale in vain
 Liff his amorous refrain,
 Let the dying reedy swan,
 Cease her prothalamion.
 They are sunk in such a bliss
 Deep as old Atlantic is.
 End our song and come away
 Music hath no more to say.

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HOW STANDS THE GLASS AROUND!

Side 1, Band 6

Major-General James Wolfe is said to have written these
 words on Sept. 12, 1759, just before the attack on
 Quebec.
 James Wolfe
 Ulysses Kay
 How stands the glass around?
 For shame ye take no care, my boys;
 Let mirth and wine abound,
 the trumpets sound,
 The colors they are flying, boys, to kill or wound.
 May we still be found content with our hard fate, my boys,
 Content on the cold, cold ground.
 Why, soldiers, why, should we be melancholy, boys?
 Why, soldiers, why? Whose business 'tis to die!
 What, sighing? Fiel fie, fie, fie, fie, fie!
 Don't fear, drink on, be jolly, boys!
 'Tis he, or you or I! Don't fear!
 Cold, hot, wet, or dry,
 we're always bound to follow, boys,
 and scorn to fly!
 'Tis but in vain, I mean not to upbraid you, boys.
 'Tis but in vain, for soldiers to complain:
 Should the next campaign send us to Him who made us,
 boys,
 We're free from pain!
 But if we remain, a bottle and a kind landlady cure all
 again.

REMEMBER

Side 1, Band 7
 Kurt List

Christina Rossetti
 Remember me when I am gone away,
 Gone far away into the silent land,
 When you can no more hold me by the hand,
 Nor I half turn to go, yet turning stay.
 Remember me when no more, day by day,
 You tell me of our future that you planned:
 Only remember me; you understand,
 It will be late to counsel then and pray.
 Yet if you should forget me for a while
 And afterwards remember me,
 Do not grieve, for if darkness and corruption leave a
 vestige of the thoughts that I once had,
 Better by far you should forget and smile,
 Than that you should remember and be sad.

MAURICE

Side 2, Band 1

Judith Dvorkin

Once upon a time there lived a little French boy.
His name was Maurice, Maurice Formidable.
Now as any school boy knows, Formidable is a French
word meaning marvellous, extraordinary
Practically the seventh wonder of the world.
And because his name had this meaning
Poor little Maurice,
He was always being made the butt of a joke.
For example: When he was called upon in school to recite
This is what would happen
"Maurice," the teacher would say,
"Maurice, if you had three apples and six friends"
("Yes m'am")
"How would you divide the apples evenly?"
Maurice thought the problem over and then replied,
"I would divide three by six and give each friend
half an apple."
"Good!" said the teacher. "Good?" the pupils asked,
"C'est (C'est is French for "it is"),
"C'est formidable!"
And they laughed and laughed and laughed.
Well, that's how it went — through grammar school and
high school and college and even when he entered
the business world.
Never was he able to forget that a pun could be made
upon his name.
When he reached the age of thirty
Our Maurice met the love of his life. He courted
her,
He won her heart, and soon they were man and wife.
Oh the years went by quite quickly
And their love, it remained quite intense.
But there was one flaw in their happiness:
And that was due to the simple fact that no matter how
much he tried to alter the situation,
He was completely unsuccessful at it and everyone
continued to have jokes at his expense.
When next we see Maurice he's just turned seventy-one,
And is about to leave this world.
His loving wife is standing by,
Listening carefully to his final wishes.
And he has one important last request.
"People have always made fun of my name
And it would pain me to think
That after I am gone
They would continue to do it.
So when you have my tombstone made, let it say simply
'He lived and died
A good man
And was faithful to his wife.' "
But the best intentions go awry, and so it was with
Maurice's.
For when the townspeople passed the graveyard
And read the inscription on his tomb,
Their comment was always the same.
"In memory of my husband, Maurice, Born 1814, Died
1885,
A man good and true, Faithful to his wife for forty-one
years".
Faithful to his wife for forty-one years?
"AH, C'EST FORMIDABLE!"

FOLK SONG: ELEGY (For Four Voices)

Side 2, Band 2

Daniel Pinkham

Robert Hillier
Now time has gathered to itself the lily and the rose,
To fade upon a dusty shelf, Where no man knows.
Now all things lovely fail and wane,
The tender petals close
And in the dawn shall bloom again,
No lily, no rose.
Now from the garden of thy face
The lily and the rose are gathered
To a dusty place
Where no man knows.

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THE INTERMINABLE FAREWELL

Side 2, Band 3

A canon, in which each voice enters in a different key,
making for some rather humorous polytonality.
Edward Taffall Canby
So long, so long, Good-by, Good night.
We're glad you came, it's been loads of fun, so nice
of you,
Do come again. It's early still, the evening's young.
Do stay awhile, don't go quite yet.
We'll have to go, it's been just divine, we love your
place,
How do you do it? So nice of you to think of us,
We must get home, Let's meet again.
Don't go.

DESIGN FOR THE ATOMIC AGE

Side 2, Band 4

Avery Claffin

Edward Lear
When the two old Parrots, and the two old Storks,
And the two old Geese, and the two old Owls,
And the two old Guinea Pigs, and the two old Cats,
And the two old Fishes became aware
By reading in the Newspapers, of the calamitous extinction
of the whole
Of their families, they refused all further sustenance
And sending out to various shops, they purchased great
Quantities of Cayenne Pepper and Brandy, and Vinegar,
Pepper and blue sealing wax.
Besides Seven immense glass Bottles with air-tight
stoppers.
And having done this, they ate a light supper
Of brown bread and Jerusalem Artichokes,
And took an affecting leave of the whole of their
acquaintance which was
Very numerous and select, very distinguished and
responsible,
And ridiculous.
And after this they filled the bottles with the ingredients
For pickling.
And each couple jumped into a separate bottle,
By which effort, of course, they became thoroughly
pickled in a few minutes.
Having previously made their wills, by the assistance of
the
Most eminent Lawyers, in which they left orders that
The Seven Bottles should be carefully sealed up with the
Blue sealing wax
And that they themselves in the Bottles should be
presented to the museum
For the perpetual benefit of the pusillanimous public.

"WHAT'S IN A NAME!"

Side 2, Band 5

Before the battle of Lexington, William Dawes and Paul
Revere were both dispatched to rouse the county, Dawes
starting first.
Helen F. More Ulysses Kay
I am a wand'ring, bitter shade;
Never of me was hero made.
Poets have never sung my praise,
Nobody crown'd my brow with bays;
And if you ask me the fatal cause,
I answer only, "My names was Dawes."
'Tis all very well for the children to hear
of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
But why should my name be quite forgot,
Who rode as boldly and well, God wot?
Why, should I ask? The reason is clear,
My name was Dawes and his Revere.
When the lights in the Old North Church flashed out,
Paul Revere was waiting about,
But I was already on my way.
The shadows of night fell cold and gray
As I rode with never a break or pause.
But what was the use, when my name was Dawes?
History rings with his silv'ry name;
Closed to me are the portals of fame.
Had he been Dawes and I Revere,
No one had heard of him I fear.
No one has heard of me because,
He was Revere and I was Dawes.

A HYMN TO THE VIRGIN

Side 2, Band 6

A duet for Soprano and Tenor, with the other three voices
intoning a Latin hymn in the background.
14th Century Carter Harman
Of one that is so fair and bright
Velut Maris Stella
Brighter than the day is light.
Parens et Puella
I cry to Thee, Thou see to me.
Levedy, Pray to Thy son for me.
Tampia.
That I might come to Thee
Maria.
All this world was forelore
Eva Peccatrice.
Tyl our Lord was Ybore
De Te Genetrice
With Ave it went away
Thuster night and comz the day
Salutis.
The well springeth out of Thee.
Virtutis
Levedy, Flowr of alle thing
Rosa Sine Spina
Thou bear Jesu, Hevene King, Grafia Divinia
Of Alle Thou berst the Prize, Levedy, Queen of Paradys
Electa
Mayde, Milde, Moder Es.
Effecta.