

Cambridge Introductions to Music

Medieval Polyphony and Song

What characterizes medieval polyphony and song? Who composed this music, sang it, and wrote it down? Where and when did the different genres originate, and under what circumstances were they created and performed? This book gives a comprehensive introduction to the rich variety of polyphonic practices and song traditions during the Middle Ages. It explores song from across Europe, in Latin and vernacular languages (precursors to modern Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish); and polyphony from early improvised organum to rhythmically and harmonically complex late medieval motets. Each chapter focuses on a particular geographical location, setting out the specific local contexts of the music created there. Guiding the reader through the musical techniques of melody, harmony, rhythm, and notation that distinguish the different genres of polyphony and song, the authors also consider the factors that make modern performances of this music sound so different from one another.

Helen Deeming is an Honorary Research Associate at Royal Holloway, University of London. She is the author of *Songs in British Sources, c.1150–1300* (2013) and the editor, with Elizabeth Eva Leach, of *Manuscripts and Medieval Song* (2015) and *A Cultural History of Western Music in the Middle Ages* (forthcoming).

Frieda van der Heijden specializes in medieval vernacular song and manuscript production. In her PhD dissertation (2018) she demonstrates aspects of increasing commercialization in the production of (music) books in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Northern France. She has taught musicology, music history, and medieval history courses at Royal Holloway and Utrecht University.

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Helen Deeming , Frieda van der Heijden
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HELEN DEEMING

Royal Holloway, University of London

FRIEDA VAN DER HEIJDEN



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Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
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for Matthew, Zoë, and Sammy

HD

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for Hucbald

FvdH

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