

Music and Reformation Programme and Abstracts

16 September 2025

Lambeth Palace Library

10:00-10:30 **Coffee and Introductory Remarks (Mary Clayton-Kastenholz, Lambeth Palace Library)**

10:30-12:00 **SESSION 1**

Michael Gale (Open University), *A tale of two Walters: Singing for a living in post-Reformation England*

Samantha Arten (Washington University in St. Louis), *Prayers for the Queen's most excellent Majesty: Sacred Songs in Praise of Elizabeth I in Reformation Psalmbooks*

Michael Winter (Newcastle University), *Editing the Eton Choirbook: Rivalries and misunderstandings in Renaissance Musicology*

12:00-13:00 **Lunch (provided)**

13:00-14:00 **SESSION 2: FRAGMENTS AND FRAGMENTOLOGY**

Jemima Bennett (University of Kent/Bodleian Libraries), *Pre-Reformation Fragment Reuse in Late Medieval Oxford*

Holly Smith (University of Oxford), *Notions of Care and the Intimacy of Hiding – Manuscript Fragments at Lambeth Palace Library*

14:00-15:00 **Exhibition visit/break**

15:00-16:00 **KEYNOTE**

Peter Lefferts (University of Nebraska–Lincoln), *New Medieval Polyphony at Lambeth Palace Library*

This paper will be accompanied by a performance of the newly discovered music.

16:00-16:30 **Concluding Remarks (Mary Clayton-Kastenholz, Lambeth Palace Library)**

Abstracts in order of presentation

Michael Gale (Open University), *A Tale of Two Walters: Singing for a Living in Post-Reformation England*

Besides their significant impact over doctrinal matters and confessional practices, the religious upheavals of the mid-sixteenth century also left an indelible mark on the institutional organisation of state-sponsored religion, re-configuring its place within the broader social and economic fabric of early modern England. Drawing upon recent archival research, this paper explores the career paths opening up to professional singers in post-Reformation England through a single case study: the intertwining lives of two men (coincidentally both named Walter) with almost identical lifespans, both associated with the city of Winchester in southern England. Both were probably born around 1530, so would have received their earliest choral training during a time of radical change within the English church.

Walter Nowell (d.1605) followed a peripatetic career path as an ordained vicar-choral across south-west England, holding positions at Wells and Salisbury cathedrals and other minor ecclesiastical institutions in Winchester and Salisbury. Walter Cheyney (d.1601), on the other hand, exemplified a rather more parochial career model, apparently spending his entire working life within the vicinity of Winchester Cathedral as a lay singer and janitor. Besides pursuing their own music-centred careers, they also passed on their 'trade' within their own family units: Nowell as the maternal grandfather of prominent Anglican organist-composer Adrian Batten, whilst Cheyney was an uncle to the Jacobean church musician and consort-song composer William Wigthorpe.

Taken together, the career trajectories of both Walters reveal something of the professional opportunities now offered by the post-Reformation English church, and how these were embedded within much broader institutional, social, and familial networks. This paper also sheds further light on the lower echelons of a much larger career pyramid for professional singers – one which encompassed appointments at parish level right up to prestigious posts in the Chapel Royal and other apex institutions such as St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, and other cathedral foundations.

Samantha Arten (Washington University in St. Louis), *Prayers for the Queen's most excellent Majesty: Sacred Songs in Praise of Elizabeth I in Reformation Psalmbooks*

In the decades following the immense success of John Day's Whole Booke of Psalmes (1562), which successfully (if fictionally) positioned itself as authorized by the monarch for use in Church of England services, a new genre of psalm harmonizations emerged. Eight printed collections of music were published by John Day, Thomas East, and William Barley, featuring vocal music in four to six parts (and in one case, with lute accompaniment), harmonizing The Whole Booke of Psalmes' tunes or introducing new "common tunes" set to the WBP's metrical texts. These music

books form a discrete genre within early modern English printing, with a shared body of content and with common features of format, paratext, and intended use. As my ongoing scholarship shows, continuing the work of Nicholas Temperley, Christopher Marsh, and others, these psalm harmonization collections were intended primarily as forms of domestic recreation and Protestant devotion. Yet most, following the example of the WBP itself, also included a number of metrical hymns and canticles for use in Church of England liturgies.

One little-discussed feature of this psalm harmonization genre is that most also contain an anthem celebrating Elizabeth I, all of which were titled (with only slight variations) "A prayer for the Queenes most excellent Maiestie." Despite the uniformity of titles, each has a different text and music by a different Tudor composer. This paper analyzes these psalmbook anthems and the ways in which they resonate with the original WBP's claims to monarchical authorization for liturgical use, tacitly endorsed by Elizabeth herself; with the royal privilege that allowed for the exclusive printing of psalmbooks; and with the close relationship between Protestant faith, Church of England practice, and the monarch herself, understood even within the bounds of domestic spaces and private household performance in the long English Reformation.

Michael Winter (Newcastle University), *Editing the Eton Choirbook: Rivalries and Misunderstandings in Renaissance Musicology*

Since it's (re-)discovery at the end of the nineteenth century, the Eton Choirbook has attracted interest from musicologists and performers. However, due to the choirbook format (in which each voice part is laid out individually across a double page) the music of the manuscript cannot be studied easily without a transcription or edition.

In the first half of the twentieth century, several musicologists undertook the task of editing the manuscript, including R. R. Terry, Anselm Hughes, Alick Ramsbotham, and Sylvia Townsend Warner. Although all produced transcriptions, none succeeded in transforming their work into a critical edition. Ultimately, the 1950s saw the publication of two separate editions of parts of the manuscript: one by the *Plainsong and Medieval Music Society* (PMMS) and the other by the newly established *Musica Britannica* series of the *Royal Musical Association* (RMA). The near-simultaneous appearance of these editions sparked accusations of intellectual theft and breaches of agreements.

This paper explores this dispute as understood by those directly involved, drawing on both public and private sources. Rarely examined materials held in the British Library, including the RMA's minute book (BL MS 71017) and personal correspondences (BL MS 71046, 71049, 71050, 71061), as well as the PMMS's minute book, form the basis for this investigation.

Jemima Bennett (University of Kent/Bodleian Libraries), *Pre-Reformation Fragment Reuse in Late Medieval Oxford*

Scholars of manuscript fragment reuse in England have, historically, focused on the years after the Reformation, with the Dissolution, the dispersal of monastic libraries, and destruction of supposedly heretical texts. This is no less true for music fragments: the fragmentation of service-books is so closely linked to the Reformation that it has been argued that the pre-Reformation use of music fragments in bindings, in Oxford at least, is so rare as to be negligible, but this is not the case. This paper will examine the use of manuscript fragments as flyleaves and pastedowns in Oxford bookbinding in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. It will demonstrate that fragmentation and subsequent reuse of music manuscripts in bookbinding have a pre-Reformation history. Without denying the substantial increase in the reuse of music manuscript fragments and fragment of service-books at the Reformation, we should also acknowledge that it did not begin there.

This paper will consider the factors that prompted the pre-Reformation reuse of music manuscript fragments in late medieval Oxford bindings, such as a binder's supply of materials, or the personal choices of a binder or their patron, to provide a context for subsequent reuse later in the sixteenth century. Further than the musical and textual content of a fragment, I will focus on the material elements of its reuse and the implications for our understanding of the working practices of a network of bookbinders in Oxford in this period, and the ways in which manuscripts containing music were used and valued. The paper will set palaeographical and codicological analysis of bindings and fragments in the context of documentary evidence to consider both the book destruction and fragment reuse practices of late medieval Oxford, and begin to construct a methodological framework within which fragments in bindings can be interpreted.

Holly Smith (University of Oxford), *Notions of Care and the Intimacy of Hiding – Manuscript Fragments at Lambeth Palace Library*

The investigation of what occurs after a manuscript is deemed 'un-fashionable', useless and condemned to destruction is the focus of the emergent and ever-expanding field of Fragmentology. I will examine a selection of chant fragments held in the collection at Lambeth Palace Library, uncovered in an ongoing cataloguing project. I will give details of these fragments which are the first scholarly treatment of this corpus of chant fragments, I will also incorporate the notion of care in different forms throughout the life of a manuscript fragment. I synthesise an analytical, descriptive approach commonly found in manuscript studies scholarship with an approach that allows for the human and social aspects of a manuscript or manuscript fragment's life. As a result, a holistic picture of the life of a fragment can be constructed encompassing the intricacies of the palaeographical and codicological features. I use these factors to present a viewpoint that perhaps alongside destruction and neglect causing a manuscript's fragmentation, we might incorporate ideas of care and aesthetic judgement into the methodology of fragment studies.

Peter Lefferts (University of Nebraska–Lincoln), *New Medieval Polyphony at Lambeth Palace Library*

About two years ago, in the process of shelf checking Lambeth Palace Library's early printed books—a preliminary step in the ongoing re-cataloguing of the collection---two leaves of fourteenth-century English music were discovered, serving as front and rear flyleaves in a book published on the continent in 1482. Further examination of the binding has revealed almost three dozen slender vertical strips from the same original volume of music that were incorporated as sewing guards. In an open and generous collaboration that has stretched around the world, from London and Cambridge to the state of Nebraska in the US and to Seoul, South Korea, scholars have been working to assess this find. My talk will bring together various threads to set out where we are today in our understanding of this significant musical discovery. Observations will be offered on musical style and notation, reconstruction, and context, and there will be live performance of some of the most legible pieces.