

Notes From the Choir Loft, September 29, 2019

You might have noticed the changes in some of the music at Mass recently. This is because we've been able to hire an alto section leader who is an excellent singer, but also who is a world class *Viola da Gamba* player. Her name is Ann Marie Morgan and she's an excellent musician. But, what is that instrument that she plays that looks so much like a cello, you might ask. Well, A viol is a bowed string instrument. Similar to the cello, the viol, or *viola da gamba*, is played between the legs (hence the name 'viola da gamba', literally 'leg-viol'). While it is not a direct ancestor of the violin, there is some kinship between the two instrument families. The viol first appeared in Europe in the late 15th century, and subsequently became one of the most popular Renaissance and Baroque instruments. Viols were heard primarily in ensemble, or consort, music. Historically, the viol has many shapes and sizes. By the 16th century, a standard shape for the viol did emerge with broad ribs, sloping shoulders and a fairly flat, fretted neck. - From the Viola da Gamba society.

A little about Ann. Praised by the Baltimore Sun for her “beguiling musicality” Ann Marie Morgan has performed in the Bach St. John and St. Matthew Passions with the Philadelphia and Minnesota Orchestras. She is a regular guest at numerous Bach Festivals including Oregon, Bethlehem, and Boulder, has performed and taught internationally in Germany, the Czech

Republic and Turkey. She has been *concerto* soloist (*viola da gamba and violoncello piccolo*) with Apollo's Fire: The Cleveland Baroque Orchestra and the Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado. Recently, she returned to work with The Cleveland Orchestra as viola da gamba soloist in Bach's St. John Passion, was Bach Passion viol soloist with the Colorado and Quad Cities Symphonies, performed on *violoncello piccolo* with tenor Nicholas Phan, and appeared in a recital with Grammy nominated harpsichordist Jory Vinikour. A frequent chamber music collaborator and recording artist, she can be heard on twenty commercially released recordings on both baroque cello and viola da gamba. Recent live appearances include concerts at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall; in Istanbul, Turkey; in Santa Fe and at the University of Minnesota. Ms. Morgan has served on the Early Music faculties of the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, and at the Interlochen Center for the Arts. She received her Bachelor of Music (cello) from Peabody, and her Artist Diploma (viola da gamba and baroque cello) from Oberlin. From the Denver Early Music bio listing.

We are grateful to have Ann as our alto section leader and we're sure that she'll bring tremendous musicality and beauty to our Masses.

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