



The Nightingale and the Rose: Musical meeting points of Christianity, Judaism and Islam in medieval Spain and beyond

Alva: Vivien Ellis – voice, percussion, Giles Lewin – ‘Ud, vielle.
Venue: St John’s Episcopal Church, Princes Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4BJ.
Date: Thursday 18 March 2010. Time: Doors open: 6.45pm.
Concert: 7.30pm-9.30pm.

Our concert includes folk songs such as La Rosa Enflorece, traditional and new settings of Arabic devotional poetry from early medieval Spain, and Cantigas de Santa Maria from the court of Alfonso el Sabio, the wise and learned thirteenth century Spanish King of Castile and León. His court became a multicultural haven for artists, scientists and musicians - Jews, Muslims and Christians alike. Musicians from these three great religions are depicted playing and singing side by side in the beautiful images which accompany the Cantigas, Alfonso’s collection of over 400 songs recounting miracles associated with the Virgin Mary, one of the most spectacularly illustrated manuscripts of the period.

The mingling of cultures which occurred in Spain during Moorish rule led to many instruments being introduced into Europe, including the Arabic ‘Ud which evolved into the lute, and the rabab, fore-runner of the medieval vielle and ultimately the fiddle. Both the ‘Ud and the vielle feature in our concert, accompanying narrative ballads and songs of love, longing and devotion, in Medieval Spanish, Judeo-Espagnol, Hebrew, Occitan and Arabic.

Singer **Vivien Ellis** performs medieval, Renaissance and traditional music with The Dufay Collective, Sinfonye and

her own duo Alva. She has appeared in seasons with the Royal Shakespeare Company and Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre. Her voice has featured on many TV and film soundtracks.

Giles Lewin specialises in the traditional music of Europe and the Middle East. His interest in the Arab influences in medieval music led him to Cairo, where he studied Arabic violin with Ashraf al Sarki. Giles is a founder member of the early music ensemble The Dufay Collective, traditional group The Carnival Band and the folk big band Bellowhead.

Alva was formed in 1997 to explore the links between early European vocal repertoire and surviving folk song; by comparing the two traditions, Alva brings a fresh approach to early music presentation.

Supported by the Edinburgh Hispanic Festival and the Early Music Forum of Scotland.

Cost: £10.

Booking: Tickets Scotland Ltd, 127 Rose Street, Edinburgh, EH2 3DT. 0131 220 3234.

<http://www.tickets-scotland.com/>
9am-6pm (8pm Thursday), 11am-6pm Sundays.

The 2010 Middle East Festival Website: www.mesp.org.uk
For further information on the Middle East Festival contact:
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