

Myd Myne Songe ~ With My Song

Words and Music of Medieval England

A Workshop for Singers by Stef Conner

10.30 am – 5.00 pm, Saturday 12th May 2018
Easebourne Priory, near Midhurst, West Sussex

Tracing the art of English lyric back to its very infancy, this workshop invites participants to explore the words and music of the earliest songs written down in these islands, the beautiful manuscripts in which they were preserved and the culture in which they were created. At a time when the language of the poems was, in the words of Peter Dronke, 'not yet over-worn or over-familiar' the religious English song diverged from its grander but more literal Latin counterpart into a reflective, more intensely personal idiom, in which imagery was harnessed to convey more than the literal meaning of the words. Workshop participants will delve into the subtle, provincial metaphors of these songs and the picture of the society they painted, from the earliest glimmer in Caedmon's famous 'Hymn' of the 7th century, through the hermetic and modest 12th century songs of St Godric to the emotive Middle English lyrics of the 14th century. Through a combination of aural learning and reading from manuscript facsimiles, Stef helps singers to form a closer bond with the musical material, de-mystifying the neumes, – our earliest musical symbols – the language and the orthography of the songs and unlocking their modal musical style through improvisation exercises drawn from the earliest medieval treatises. Following on from these exercises, workshop participants will collaborate to develop their own harmonic and contrapuntal arrangements of the songs in a reconstructed medieval idiom, straying beyond the manuscript into the realms of the oral tradition that not only pre-dated and co-existed with its written relative but perhaps outlived it too, in the folk songs still sung today.

Who is it for? Anyone who enjoys singing and learning about a different period of music.

All music will be provided.

Applications: Please return the application form and fee to arrive not later than Saturday 28th April.



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Royal Philharmonic Society prize-winning composer and singer **Stef Conner** draws on ancient poetry and traditional song in creating contemporary music infused with sounds from the distant past. She graduated with a starred first in music from the University of York in 2005, before joining the Mercury Prize-nominated folk band the *Unthanks*, performing at such venues as the Barbican, Covent Garden, Glastonbury, and the BBC Folk Awards. Stef's antiquity-inspired performance career complements her current research post at the University of Huddersfield, where she is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow investigating lost oral traditions. She conducts an amateur choir in Cambridge, Timeline Choir, which specialises in singing English folk and medieval music as well as commissioning new works inspired by heritage themes.

Timetable: Coffee from 10.30 am. Music begins at 11am and ends at 5.00 pm with breaks for lunch & tea. Coffee & tea provided. Café next door & pub across the road - or bring a packed lunch & explore the park.

Venue and directions: the historic Refectory at Easebourne Priory (GU29 0AH). This is just off the A272 as you leave Midhurst in the direction of Petworth. Ample parking. Nearest rail stations are Haslemere and Petersfield – it may be possible to arrange lifts from others attending the workshop.

Fee: £16 for members and other fora, £22 for non-members and £10 for under 25's.

Organiser: Janet Gascoine
Email: janetgascoine@btinternet.com Tel: 01892 770601
Mob: 07933039489 (emergencies only please)

✂----- **APPLICATION FORM: Myd Myne Songe**, Easebourne Priory, 12th May 2018

Please return this form as soon as possible (& before 28th April 2018), with a cheque payable to 'Southern Early Music Forum', to: **Janet Gascoine, Triples Cottage, Station Road, Withyham, East Sussex, TN7 4BT**

I belong toEarly Music Forum / I would like to join SEMF. I enclose £.....

Name.....Phone.....

Email..... OR I enclose an sae (delete as applicable)

Address.....

Voice (SATB etc)

Stef has suggested a possible run-through at 4:30 pm to which friends and family could be invited: do you have anyone who would like to and is able to come along and listen? Yes / No (please circle)