



ALAMIRE FOUNDATION

Research Unit Musicology, KU Leuven
International Centre for the Study of
Music in the Low Countries



Johanne mouton.



musical notation on two staves with lyrics: *rie*
cleyson ky

musical notation on two staves with lyrics: *rie cleyson Kyrie*
cleyson.



ENO.

Benedictus dominus deus meus qui

docet manus meas ad bellum et digitos meos

musical notation on two staves with lyrics: *os ad bellum Kyrie cleyson.*

Presentation

Alamire Foundation

The heritage of Petrus Alamire

The Alamire Foundation takes its name from the music copyist and entrepreneur Petrus Alamire (Nuremberg, c. 1470 – Mechelen, 1536). Alamire was born to the Bavarian merchant family Imhoff and moved at an early age to the Low Countries, where he was active in Habsburg-Burgundian court circles. His choice of a pseudonym referring to the music pitch *A* (called *A-la-mi-re* in Renaissance music theory) reflects his work as a music scribe and calligrapher. He was active as the leader of a workshop of copyists and illuminators who produced sumptuous and lavishly decorated choirbooks and partbooks. The manuscripts were destined for the courts of rulers including Philip the Fair, Margaret of Austria, Charles V, Henry VIII and Pope Leo X. Some were commissioned by wealthy burghers such as the Fugger banker family in Augsburg. About sixty manuscripts and fragments produced by Alamire's workshop survive today, dispersed all over Europe. Together they contain a significant part of late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Franco-Flemish polyphony. Composers including Josquin des Prez, Pierre de la Rue, Johannes Ockeghem and Adriaen Willaert are represented. Alamire's workshop thus played a major role in spreading and preserving the musical heritage of the Low Countries at the peak of their music-historical importance.

History and mission

The Alamire Foundation was founded in 1991 as a co-operative association between the University of Leuven (KU Leuven, Musicology Research Unit) and the non-profit organisation Musica (Impulse Centre for Music). Its mission is to undertake, stimulate, and co-ordinate innovative research on music and musical life in the Low Countries from the early Middle Ages until 1800. It uses state-of-the-art methods, including digital preservation. The Foundation's research results appear as monographs, critical editions, facsimile publications, and articles in leading journals.



© Pol Leemans

The Foundation also publishes its own *Journal of the Alamire Foundation*. Alongside these traditional media, the Foundation seeks to make its research results available to the widest possible public through other means, including websites, exhibitions, and cultural events. Collaboration and contacts with leading academic and heritage institutions, concert organisations, and renowned ensembles and performers result in international conferences, music laboratories, concerts, festivals, and exhibitions. Through a continuous dialogue with scholars and musicians all over the world, the Alamire Foundation thus offers a unique and leading forum for both research and music practice.

The House of Polyphony

Since 1991 the Alamire Foundation has been located in the Central Library of KU Leuven. In 2011 Alamire Foundation, KU Leuven and the City of Leuven inaugurated a second location, The House of Polyphony. Located within the historic Park Abbey site, the centre offers scholars and performers a laboratory for study, experimentation, and collaboration. It also provides a concert-space for small-scale performances and houses an expanding collection of historical music instruments. The House is conceived not only as a study centre, but also as a forum for disseminating musicological research beyond a purely academic environment. This concept is unique: no comparable structure exists elsewhere for bringing musicology, musical practice, and a wider audience together.

Alamire Digital Lab

The Alamire Digital Lab (ADL) is a state-of-the-art digital photography centre for musical heritage, allowing the Alamire Foundation to digitise manuscripts and printed books according to the strictest quality criteria. The ADL is composed of a fixed setup, located in the University Library of KU Leuven, and a mobile unit. The fixed setup is used mainly to digitise manuscripts and books in the university collection and music sources that are in Leuven temporarily (for instance, as part of exhibitions). The mobile equipment travels to institutions where manuscripts and printed books to be digitised are permanently housed. The high-resolution images produced by the ADL (80-100 million pixels) enable a new approach to primary music sources. With their unparalleled level of detail, these images allow research on the musical notation, as well as on the text, the illumination, and the material aspects of the sources. Their precision



The Alamire Digital Lab at
the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana

also opens the way to digital restoration of damaged manuscripts. By means of virtual exhibitions and multi-media applications, the digital images also provide access to priceless or fragile – and therefore otherwise inaccessible – sources. Dissemination of cultural heritage to a wide audience through digitisation attests to the cultural relevance of the Alamire Digital Lab. With the development of the ADL, the Alamire Foundation is playing a significant role not only in European musicology, but also in broader cultural and artistic terms.

Current projects

New Perspectives on Polyphony

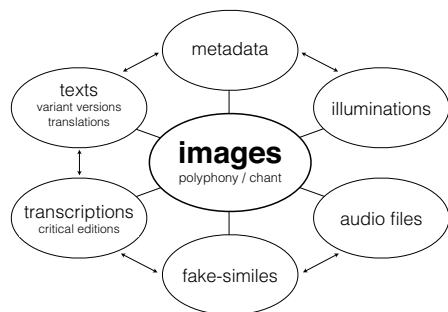
Alamire's Musical Legacy Revealed Through High-Technology Research Tools

Conceived out of a fundamental concern for the preservation, accessibility, study, and valorisation of the musical heritage of the Low Countries, *New Perspectives on Polyphony* focuses on Franco-Flemish music during its Golden Age, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. A consequent objective is to raise awareness of this musical heritage in the fields of research, performance practice, education, and culture. *New Perspectives on Polyphony* pays particular attention to the most important group of sources preserving this polyphonic music, the so-called Alamire manuscripts. These manuscripts, which have been physically separated since the sixteenth century, will be reunited online in order to facilitate innovative research and to enable a comparative approach. The digitisation of the corpus is being carried out by the Alamire Foundation, by means of the Alamire Digital Lab, together with DIAMM (Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music – University of Oxford), and in collaboration with such prestigious institutions as the Royal Library of Belgium and the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.



Inspiration Day at the House of Polyphony © Silvano Magnone

Integrated Database for Early Music



The *Integrated Database for Early Music* (IDEM) is an interdisciplinary, multifaceted database of manuscripts and printed books that are relevant to the Alamire Foundation's research and activities. IDEM is constructed around a central database, consisting of the digital images of primary sources. This core is surrounded by interrelated sub-databases that contain information about the manuscripts and books, including their physical characteristics, their content, and illumination, as well as recordings, editions, and so-called 'fake-similes' (adapted versions of the original images, facilitating performance from the original notation). IDEM is conceived as a tool enabling in-depth study of these sources from multiple perspectives. With this interdisciplinary approach, the Alamire Foundation is going beyond the field of musicology to position itself within the international research community in domains such as codicology, liturgy, history, art history, and literature.

Inventory of Antiphoners in Flemish collections

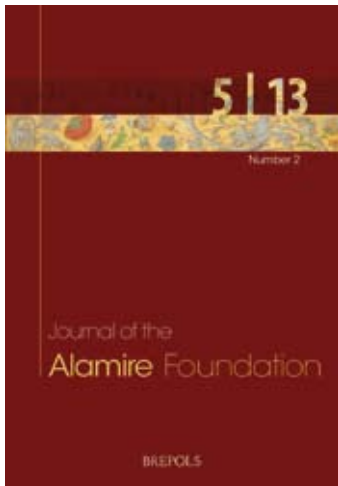
This project, supported by the Flemish government, is the first step toward creating an inventory of manuscript antiphoners (liturgical books that contain plainchant for the Divine Office) produced in Flanders during the ancien régime. The goal of the project is to bring the rich chant traditions of Flanders to the attention of scholars, musicians and a broad public. The project also aims to reveal the importance of these traditions in the history of Western European musical and religious life. The inventories will be published by Brepols in a series entitled *Notated Office Manuscripts Preserved in Flanders (c. 1100 – c. 1800)*.

Universiteitsbibliotheek Gent, Antifonarium Tsgrooten, fol.47v
© Universiteitsbibliotheek Gent



Outcome and valorisation: some examples

Publications



Journal of the Alamire Foundation,
5/13, number 2

Journal of the Alamire Foundation

In October 2009 the Alamire Foundation launched the *Journal of the Alamire Foundation*, a biannual, internationally peer-reviewed periodical published by Brepols. The *Journal's* primary aim is to provide a critical forum for the most recent and outstanding research on music in or related to the Low Countries up to the end of the ancien régime. Each issue comprises three sections. In the first, a group of related articles focuses on a specific theme. The second part consists of free papers applying the full range of musicological approaches to any relevant topic. The third section promotes dialogue between the worlds of performance and scholarship by discussing recent performance events, productions, editions, books, or issues. The *Journal's* distinctive ingredients guarantee it a unique profile. Its emphasis on high quality research aims at placing it among the leading journals in its field.

Exhibitions

Divine Sounds

Seven Centuries of Gregorian Chant Manuscripts in Flanders

From the early Middle Ages until the end of the ancien régime, Gregorian chant was omnipresent in European musical life. Despite the fact that Flanders played an important role in the development and circulation of this repertoire, and that a significant number of plainchant manuscripts are preserved, this area of Flanders' musical and artistic heritage is still unknown to many. In 2011 the Alamire Foundation, in collaboration with Illuminare (Centre for the Study of Medieval Art – KU Leuven), presented a selection of these manuscripts, ranging from the eleventh to the eighteenth century. The exhibition *Divine Sounds* in Leuven's M – Museum demonstrated how music manuscripts changed over the centuries with respect to production, illumination, musical and text notation, and the choice of repertoire. The exhibition focused attention not only on the manuscripts themselves, but also on their contents. Music preserved in four antiphoners on display at the exhibition was performed by international ensembles. An audio-visual installation, called 'Dioramatized #2', offered visitors a way to listen to these recordings and hear the differences in style, form and method of performance.

St.-Pieters- & Paulusabdij,
Codex Hildegard von Bingen, fol.170r
© Alamire Digital Lab



Festivals

Laus Polyphoniae

Each August, thousands of early music aficionados gather at *Laus Polyphoniae*, a high-profile festival staged by AMUZ (Flanders Festival – Antwerp) since 1994. The programme for each edition of the festival – created in collaboration with the Alamire Foundation – features a careful selection of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century music by a single composer or centred around a set theme. The festival aims to present repertoire to a broad public in a creative, stimulating, and accessible way. *Laus Polyphoniae* concerts and events take place in historical locations throughout Antwerp, with the AMUZ music centre, located in the former church of St Augustine, at the heart of the festival. This Baroque monument, adapted with advanced technology, offers a modern concert space with unsurpassed acoustics.



© Koen Broos

Passie van de Stemmen

Passie van de Stemmen (Voices of Passion), an initiative of the Alamire Foundation and the Leuven cultural centre 30CC, is an annual festival for early music in Leuven featuring international ensembles such as Capilla Flamenca, Cappella Pratensis, ClubMedieval, Encantar, Ensemble Cinquecento, Ensemble Micrologus, Huelgas Ensemble, La Reverdie, and Psallentes. The festival first took place in 2009 in conjunction with the M – Museum Leuven’s inaugural exhibition *Rogier van der Weyden 1400-1464: Master of Passions*. The following two editions were also organised within the scope of exhibitions: *The Anjou Bible. Naples 1340. A Royal Manuscript Revealed* (2010); and *Divine Sounds. Seven centuries of Gregorian chant manuscripts in Flanders* (2011). The fourth festival (2012) was devoted to *Reformation(s)*, while the fifth will focus on the relationship between the Low Countries and Italy (2014).



Psallentes © Hendrik Vanden Abeele

Milestones

- 1991 The Alamire Foundation, International Centre for the Study of Music in the Low Countries, is founded as a co-operative association between KU Leuven (Musicology Research Unit) and the non-profit organisation Musica (Impulse Centre for Music). The Foundation is housed in the central building of the University Library (Leuven).
- 1996 Publication of the first volume of the *Monumenta Flandriae Musica*, a series of modern critical editions and transcriptions of unpublished Flemish music from the Middle Ages to circa 1800. Each volume is accompanied by a scientific introduction describing historical context, text edition and performance practice.
- 1999 The exhibition *Alamire's Treasury: Music and Miniatures from Charles V's Time (1500-1535)* is organised by the Alamire Foundation in the Predikherenkerk in Leuven. In the same year, the theme of this exhibition devoted to the Alamire manuscripts is further developed in the international colloquium *The Burgundian-Habsburg Court Complex of Music Manuscripts (1500-1535) and the Workshop of Petrus Alamire*.





© Pieter Baert

- 2002 The Alamire Foundation organises the 17th International Conference of the International Musicological Society, attended by leading scholars in the musicological field.
- 2005 A research project focusing on the polyphonic sacred music repertory in northern France in the period ranging from c. 1370 to 1550 results in a series of four exhibitions. Under the title *Cantus21. Patrimoine musical du Nord de la France*, these events take place simultaneously in Cambrai, Douai, and Bailleul.
- 2009 M – Museum Leuven hosts the exhibition *Divine Sounds. Seven Centuries of Gregorian Chant Manuscripts in Flanders*, created by the Alamire Foundation.
- 2011 As a result of a partnership between the Alamire Foundation, the KU Leuven, and the City of Leuven, the House of Polyphony is inaugurated in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Fabiola of Belgium. Located on the Park Abbey site, it acts as a centralising point for research, performance, and valorisation of music from the Low Countries.
- 2012 A unique collaboration agreement with the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana enables the digitisation, study and description by the Alamire Foundation of the manuscripts in the Vatican Library collection containing polyphony related to the Low Countries (late fourteenth early seventeenth century). The first digitisation campaign results in more than 14,000 images which will be made accessible online through the *Integrated Database for Early Music* (IDEM). The project is supported by the Flemish Ministry of Culture and the KU Leuven.

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Your support helps the Alamire Foundation in achieving its goal of studying and valorising the musical heritage of the Low Countries.

Donations Donations are welcome:

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