The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC) announces a public lecture

by

Prof Dr Mark Everist, University of Southampton

Cantum Pulcriorem Invenire: Thirteenth-Century Latin Poetry and Music

The long thirteenth century (c1170 to c1320) saw the emergence of three coherent repertories of polyphonic music: settings of liturgical chant called organum, motets that were originally derived from parts of organum and the conductus. Organum and the motet have been the subject of impressive levels of musicological study in the last 150 years whereas the conductus – despite its status as the first consistent repertory of newly-composed polyphony – has remained somewhat in the shadows. Although the repertory has been catalogued, little work, admittedly very distinguished, has been built on these bibliographical foundations. The conductus therefore stands at the centre of this project, merging Latin poetry and music in a single genre. Cantum pulcriorem invenire (the title quotes lines from the treatise Ars cantus mensurabilis that instruct would-be composers of conductus first of all ‘to find a more beautiful melody’) seeks to understand the Latin poetry and music of the conductus with a view to reinstating it alongside organum and motet, the position that it enjoyed in the eyes and words of all thirteenth-century theorists. This understanding is gained by an analysis of repertories and chronology, poetry and music, in conjunction with a review of the highly contested question of the genre’s rhythm and metre.

2 May 2013 at 6 pm, Room 0003

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