

MEDIAEVAL BÆBES

The Mediaeval Baebes announce 'The Procession' Christmas Concert Sunday 17th December, St Mary's Arts Centre, Sandwich

With uplifting vocals and a torch lit procession, The Mediaeval Baebes will wind their way magically towards St Mary's Arts Centre in Sandwich, on Sunday 17th December.

Set to enchant the audience right from the very start, families, musicians and reenactors are invited to enhance the procession in whatever way they enjoy. Bring a drum, a lantern, or dress up and frolic, as this immersive experience sets the tone for the magical evening to come. Join in the pomp and pageantry, or just experience the torch lit spectacle before it culminates in a grand entrance into the beautiful and historic old church.

Lush, ethereal harmonies and dazzling array of exotic and period instruments will see the Mediaeval Baebes weaving their magic and exalting the true spirit of Christmas once again.

Joyous music from this classical chart-topping choir will showcase well-known Christmas carols and traditional folk songs, alongside tracks from their latest seasonal album 'MydWynter.' And, with captivating storytelling uncovering origins and folklore hidden in the lyrics, the spirited choral music will also include innovative settings of ancient and romantic poetry too.

The Mediaeval Baebes are one of the most successful female-led, early music and folk ensembles in Europe. Over the years, the Mediaeval Baebes have released eleven studio albums and won an Ivor Novella Award for their performance on the BBC serialization 'The Virgin Queen.' They have also received two Emmy nominations and a Royal Television Society award as the featured artist alongside composer Martin Phipps, for the TV theme tune of ITV's hit show 'Victoria.'

In 2023 The Mediaeval Baebes collaboration with Orbital's 'Ringa Ringa' enjoyed number 6 status in the album charts. And, their unique siren call was invited to collaborate with TikTok lockdown sensation The Wellermen, as part of their 'Explorations' remix album.

Come join the Mediaeval Baebes and be immersed in glorious merriment. Tickets are now available from www.mediaevalbaebes.com at a cost of £27.50 each and £12.50 for a child.

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Note to Editors:

Doors open at 7.00pm. The concert will commence at 7.30, break for a short interval and close at 9.30pm.

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About the Mediaeval Baebes

The Mediaeval Baebes exquisite storybook opened its pages in 1996, when a group of friends broke into a North London cemetery and sang together, clad in flowing white gowns and crowns of ivy.

The unique Mediaeval Baebes classical chart topping choir, was conceptualised and formed in 1996 by musical director, composer and producer Katharine Blake. The group have released 11 studio albums, won an Ivor Novella Award for their performance on the **BBC serialisation "The Virgin Queen"** and received two **Emmy nominations** and a Royal Television Society award as the featured artist alongside composer Martin Phipps for the theme tune of **ITV's hit TV show "Victoria"**.

Throughout their many incarnations, the Mediaeval Baebes' haunting classical vocals have led them to tour the world taking in the UK, United States, Canada, Asia and Europe; where they have performed in venues ranging from castles and caves through to cathedrals and Glastonbury. They have toured with **Jools Holland** and played at the **Royal Albert Hall**, Carnglaze Caverns in Cornwall, the Jersey Opera House, Tewkesbury Abbey and have supported **Michael Flatley** in Hyde Park as well as performing at the legendary Lilith Fayre.

They were also invited by enthusiast **Iggy Pop** to perform on his **Radio 6 Christmas Day special**.

Katharine Blake is known for her unique choral writing style. Sourcing lyrics from mediaeval and romantic texts which she sets to original scores, she reinvents traditional and folk songs and is often accompanied by the Mediaeval Baebes' plethora of mediaeval and folk instruments. Whilst singing in an array of obscure and ancient languages, the Baebes offer a beguiling musical beauty and ethereal talent. The choice of mediaeval texts are mythological, philosophical and often dark in topic, meditating upon the inevitability of death, the pointlessness of material possessions, the agony of unrequited love or the dangers of vinous hallucinations. The more familiar material, such as their classic anthology of Christmas Carols "Of Kings and Angels" offers a refreshing and exotic twist to well-known classics

Katharine Blake is also known as the lead singer and song writer of 90s avant-garde rock band Miranda Sex Garden, and has worked with **Nick Cave, Michael Nyman and John Cale**.

2019 saw the release of the group's ground breaking and fantastical nursery rhyme album, A Pocketful of Posies, which celebrates the contrast of child-like innocence with the surreal and dark content inherent in the ancient rhymes.

MydWynter was released in November 2022 and is the 11th Studio album. The beautiful album is a loose sequel to the Of Kings and Angels Christmas themed album, and is a gentle reminder that not every winter mystery can be wholly illuminated. Some things just stay obscured!

Their recent collaboration with Orbital 'Ringa Ringa' enjoyed number 6 status in the album charts and they were invited to collaborate with their siren call with the tiktok lockdown sensation The Wellermen as part of their remix album 'Explorations.'

Christmas with the Mediaeval Baebes

An Interview with Founding Members Katharine Blake and Marie Findley

Heather Joy (or Editors name) catches up with Katharine Blake and Maria Findlay, two of the founding members of the Mediaeval Baebes, in advance of their 'The Procession' Christmas Tour.

The Mediaeval Baebes are one of the most successful female-led, early music and folk ensembles in Europe. In addition to receiving 2 Emmy nominations, they have toured with Jules Holland and supported Michael Flatley in Hyde Park. They have won a Royal Television Society award alongside composer Martin Phipps for their soundtrack to ITV's hit period drama 'Victoria,' and have also won an Ivor Novella Award for their performance on the BBC serialization 'The Virgin Queen.'

So what gave you the idea to start The Mediaeval Baebes Katharine?

To be honest, I have always loved mediaeval music and performing. But, the idea of forming a mediaeval band really took hold after I broke into a North London cemetery with several friends over 25 years ago and we sang together for fun, clad in flowing white gowns and crowns of ivy.

I then met Marie at a festival. Apparently I was drinking cider and singing a mediaeval song that she loved. She asked what it was and I realised that she was as passionate about all things mediaeval as I was. I told her about the new band I was forming and asked her to join us. I didn't even know if she could sing! It was the start of a wonderful collaboration and a friendship that has spanned over 27 years. Best decision ever!

How would you describe the sound of Medieval Baebes, Marie?

Ah, I never find it an easy task to describe or classify our sound. I love that we create a real mix of haunting melodies, ethereal enchantments, rousing incantations, and cheeky ditties with catchy hooks! Many of us are classically trained and I like to think that with a style of unconventional arrangement and composition, along with a playful and fantastical image, we have used our talents to create a different music sound.

Many of our musical backgrounds come from a more rock & roll origin and although we do replicate and sing traditional Mediaeval songs, we often set Mediaeval poetry to our own original compositions too. This means we perform a soundscape that plays to everyone's romantic sense of our past, in an accessible, fun and beautiful way.

Why The Procession – what is the significance of the procession?

'We are always looking to add some more magic, theatre and story-telling to our performances' explains Katharine. For us the pageantry seen in our costumes and headdresses, is just as important as the composition of the songs. The procession is an extension of this. For the past few years we have processed to celebrate the Winter Solstice at our Christmas concert in London and I liked the idea of making 2023 our 'procession year'.

Every one of our concerts this year has started with a procession and at Christmas time it just makes it even more magical and fun. We invite everyone to join in, so our audience can become immersed in the Christmas pageantry and fantasy that makes Christmas special to us all. And of course, in mediaeval times street processions were an intrinsic part of holiday celebrations which often featured chanting voices and ringing bells.

How has the Mediaeval Baebes grown or changed over the years Marie?

I think we are definitely more ambitious and diverse, especially when you look back to the simplistic and traditional approach that we started out with. We now enjoy singing in many different languages such as Middle English, Latin, Mediaeval Spanish, Arabic and Modern English; as well as performing with an enormous range of ancient and exotic acoustic instruments including Recorders, Viol da Gamba, Hurdy Gurdy, Oud, Cuatro, and acoustic guitar. This has really helped us grow both musically and professionally.

What is the best part of being a Mediaeval Baebe Katharine?

We all have our own, different wow monuments and there are so many different experiences where do I start... I really enjoyed performing across the world in Canada, Asia, Europe and the United States. We have sung in castles and caves, through to cathedrals and Glastonbury, as well as performing at the Jersey Opera House and the legendary Lilith Fayre. But, performing on Iggy Pop's Christmas day special was one of the best for me. I am a huge fan of his, and he of us, so that was a real 'wow' moment. What is yours Marie?

I agree, a difficult one to choose. The Baebes are an astonishing collective of very talented women who are just fun to be around both on and off stage, so going on tour is one of the best parts for me. I love it. Also, my life-long obsession has been history, and our songs are designed to be sung in old churches and Cathedrals. Our sound rises into the rafters and vaulted ceilings. For me it is just perfect. Always a wow moment. I feel so very privileged to be able to sing in so many awe-inspiring venues.

However, singing at the Royal Albert Hall was just an absolute honour and another favourite of mine was the Minstrels Gallery at Hampton Court Palace. Here I felt a huge powerful sense of history and real a connection to all the musicians that must have sung there through the ages.

Katharine How will the Mediaeval Baebes top their huge achievements next?

Ha, I am not sure we can! But... as we have found over the years, we have changed and new opportunities always come up for a new exciting challenge. For example, in 2023 we collaborated with Orbital 'Ringa Ringa' and enjoyed being part of the number 6 status in the album charts. And, we were also invited join our siren call with the TikTok lockdown sensation The Wellermen when we collaborated on part of their remix album 'Explorations.' So who knows what will be next!

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