



## NEWS RELEASE

**Contact:** Greg Langel  
Media and Marketing Manager  
412-371-0600, ext. 524  
[Glangel@TheFrickPittsburgh.org](mailto:Glangel@TheFrickPittsburgh.org)

For Immediate Release

### ***FIRST FRIDAYS AT THE FRICK PRESENTS***

### **MEDIAEVAL BAEBES**

*Concert offers a new spin on Medieval Songs*

**Date/time:** Friday, September 4 at 7:00 p.m.

**Admission:** A donation of \$5 per adult is suggested

PITTSBURGH, August 24, 2009 — The *First Fridays at the Frick* summer concert season ends on a beautiful note as the Frick Art & Historical Center presents the **Mediaeval Baebes** on September 4, 2009, on the Great Lawn.

The Mediaeval Baebes are six talented women who breathe renewed life into the rich texts of medieval songs and poetry set to their distinctive interpretation of traditional music. They sing in a variety of medieval languages including French, Spanish, English, Italian, Gaelic, and Swedish. The music of the Mediaeval Baebes celebrates the medieval themes of nature, the life cycle, love, and longing, which are as relevant in 2009 as they were in 1409.

Although their original music evokes an earlier time, it is accessible to modern audiences. In fact, their hauntingly beautiful sound has so effectively captured their audiences' imagination that the Baebes have placed three studio albums into the top of the United Kingdom classical charts. They have performed before enthusiastic audiences in the UK, United States, Canada, and

Europe and received the 2007 Ivor Novello Award for Best Television Soundtrack for their contribution to the BBC production of *The Virgin Queen*.

The Mediaeval Baebes are Katharine Blake, musical director, vocals, recorders, violin; Esther Dee, vocals; Sarah Kayte Foster, vocals; Bev Lee Harling, vocals, violin, guitar, recorder; Melpomeni Kermanidou, vocals; and Emily Ovenden, vocals, recorders. Their backing musicians include Frank Moon and Kavus Torabi.

Founding member Katharine Blake is also the music director and lead composer and arranger for the group. Born in London, Katharine was classically trained at the Purcell School of Music and Richmond College. In 1996, she and a group of friends got together to sing songs from the Middle Ages purely for their own enjoyment. Within a year, they had released their first album, *Salva Nos*, which climbed into the UK's classical chart, and became Virgin Classics' fastest selling debut album. Their 1998 follow-up album, *Worldes Blysse*, blazed to number one in the classical charts. In May 2009, they released their latest album, *Illumination*, continuing to expand the boundaries of traditional and classical music.

Pulling lyrics from medieval texts and setting them to original scores using medieval and classical instruments, the Baebes offer a sound that is unique. In a 2002 NPR interview, host John Nielsen asked Blake what specifically drew them to the medieval texts. Blake replied, "I think it was one of the last periods in Western history where mythology and history were inextricably bound. The people lived in a world where you thought fairies and dragons were real . . . that so much fantasy was hardwired into everyone's daily thinking intrigues me. It's that combination of fantasy and a very gritty, mundane existence which is a fascinating juxtaposition."

Recognized as the originators of a new breed of acts responsible for spicing up the classical world, the Mediaeval Baebes have always pushed the boundaries in terms of attitude and musical approach. The group has a distinctively upbeat feel where 21<sup>st</sup>-century technology meets 13<sup>th</sup>-century culture, admirably illustrating *The Times of London's* contention that the Mediaeval Baebes are the "Spice Girls set loose in the court of King Henry VIII." While the Baebes put on

a good show, they are—more importantly—an extraordinary, balanced and highly proficient vocal ensemble.

The media sponsor for this concert is **WQED-FM 89.3**.

**The Mediaeval Baebes perform on Friday, September 4 at 7:00 p.m. on the grounds of the Frick Art & Historical Center.**

### **General information and hours of operation**

The Frick Art & Historical Center is located at 7227 Reynolds Street in Pittsburgh's Point Breeze neighborhood. Free parking is available in the Frick's off-street lot or along adjacent streets. The Frick is open 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Tuesday–Sunday and closed Mondays and major holidays. Admission to The Frick Art Museum, Car and Carriage Museum, Greenhouse, and Playhouse is free. Information about the Frick is available online at [TheFrickPittsburgh.org](http://TheFrickPittsburgh.org). For information and reservations, please call 412-371-0600, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday–Sunday.

For further information or images, please contact Greg Langel, Media and Marketing Manager in the External Affairs Department at the Frick Art & Historical Center, at 412-371-0600 ext. 524, or [Glangel@TheFrickPittsburgh.org](mailto:Glangel@TheFrickPittsburgh.org).

*The Frick Art & Historical Center, a museum, historic site and cultural center serves the public through preservation, presentation, and interpretation of the fine and decorative arts and historically significant artifacts for all residents of and visitors to Western Pennsylvania.*