



Early Music • Alte Musik

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PALESTRINA
Missa de Beata Virgine I (1567)

Soloists of the Cappella Musicale di S. Petronio di Bologna
Sergio Vartolo, Director



Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525/6-1594)

Missa de Beata Virgine I (1567)

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina occupies an unrivalled position in the history of music and in particular in Catholic church music. His style of counterpoint, taken as a model for imitation by later generations, epitomized the aesthetic aims of the Counter-Reformation, the perfection of the *stile antico*, and has had an even wider influence as an essential element in the teaching of compositional technique.

Palestrina, his name taken from his presumed place of birth in 1525 or 1526, spent the greater part of his life in the nearby city of Rome. His early training was as a chorister at the basilica of S. Maria Maggiore, where he had a chance to learn something of current Franco-Flemish musical tradition at first hand. By 1544 he was serving as organist in Palestrina but in 1551 he returned to Rome, through the agency of Pope Julius III, previously Bishop of Palestrina. Here he was appointed director of music at the Cappella Giulia at St Peter's, established by Pope Julius II. His first book of Masses was published in 1554, with a dedication to the Pope, and the following year he joined the Cappella Sistina, but the death of the Pope and three weeks later of his successor Pope Marcellus was followed by the enforcement of the rule of celibacy for members of the Sistine Chapel, under the rule of Pope Paul IV, and Palestrina's dismissal, with other married members of the chapel. He now became *Maestro di cappella* of St John Lateran, retaining this position until his resignation in 1560. A period of employment at S. Maria Maggiore followed, with the opportunity to undertake further work in the service of Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este and to enhance still further his reputation as a composer. From 1571 until his death in 1594 he was again at the Cappella Giulia, remaining there in spite of attempts by other patrons to induce him to enter their service, whether in Vienna or in Mantua.

The Council of Trent, assembled in 1545 to bring

about a reformation of ecclesiastical and liturgical practice, reflected common humanist aims in its insistence on the clarity of words in liturgical music. In popular legend Palestrina has been credited with saving polyphony, against its opponents in the Council who favoured plainchant, by his composition of the *Missa Papae Marcelli*. Whatever the truth of the story, the Mass certainly demonstrates the possibility of intelligibility in polyphony, although Palestrina also continued to show his ability to write liturgical music in more florid styles. His knowledge of and interest in the traditional plainchant of the Church is exemplified in the task he undertook in 1577 of revising the chant of the *Graduale Romanum* and the *Antiphonale*, work that he left unfinished.

The *Missa de Beata Virgine* for four voices was included in the *Missarum liber secundus*, published in 1567, a collection that includes the *Missa Papae Marcelli*. The plainchant Introit *Gaudeamus omnes in Domino*, for a major Feast of the Blessed Virgin is here followed by Palestrina's polyphonic *Kyrie eleison*, derived from the plainsong of the Mass: *Cum jubilo* (Mass IX), the first phrase introduced by the *cantus*, to which the *altus* adds a counterpoint before the entry of the tenor in imitation of the first part and the entry of the bassus in imitation of the *altus*.

The *Gloria in excelsis Deo* again takes as its source the Mass: *Cum jubilo*, with each phrase of the plainchant taken as a point of imitation. There follows the Gregorian Gradual and an organ paraphrase of the hymn *Ave maris stella* by the Italian keyboard composer Girolamo Cavazzoni, a near contemporary of Palestrina, who was for much of his life associated with the Mantuan court of Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga, for whom Palestrina also provided music. The plainchant *Alleluia* is followed here by polyphonic treatment of the familiar *Credo*. This setting follows custom in allowing

an element of word-painting, as the bass line descends at the words *descendit de caelis*, followed by the homophonic *et incarnatus est*, the most solemn statement of the *Credo*. A three-voice texture is used for *Crucifixus etiam pro nobis*, the bassus returning for *Et in Spiritum Sanctum*. The Gregorian Offertory leads to the *Sanctus*, with its plainchant source in Mass XVII. *Pleni sunt caeli* is treated in three parts, without the bass, which returns for *Hosanna in excelsis* and the following *Benedictus*. The plainsong Communion Verse is succeeded by the final polyphonic *Agnus Dei*, with its canon imitation, and a second five-voice *Agnus Dei* that includes a canon at the fifth between the alto and second tenor in imitative entry of the upper *cantus*, while the bass enters in imitation of the first tenor in counterpoint that combines intricacy and a mastery of technique with a continuing clarity of texture.

According to Sergio Vartolo, director of the

Soloists of the Cappella di San Petronio di Bologna, Palestrina developed a madrigal style in his sacred music, originating in the work of Josquin. The present recording, based on a careful study of original sources, seeks to restore earlier performance traditions. Recorded at the Church of San Zeno a Cavalò in Verona, the choir consists of male voices only. The system of tuning is different from that now in use, offering, for example, pure thirds and recapturing in timbre something of the sonority of Palestrina's time. The inclusion of Gregorian chant stresses the relationship between polyphony and its origins. The inclusion of the organ *Ave maris stella* is a reminder of the connection at Mantua between the music of Cavazzoni and of Palestrina. The form of the present release draws attention again to the liturgical context in which Palestrina's music was heard.

Keith Anderson

Soloists of the Cappella Musicale di S. Petronio di Bologna

Michel van Goethem, Renzo Bez, Vincenzo Di Donato, Alessandro Carmignani,
Furio Zanasi, Marco Scavazza, Sergio Foresti
Sergio Vartolo, Director and Organ

Sergio Vartolo

Sergio Vartolo studied music, organ and harpsichord at the Conservatorio di Bologna and graduated from the University of the same city. Since 1970 he has performed throughout Europe as harpsichordist, organist, conductor, stage director and singer. His recordings have been awarded the Preis der

Deutschen Schallplattenkritik (Frescobaldi *Toccatas*), *Choc du Monde de la Musique* (Frescobaldi *Capriccios*) and *Diapason d'Or* (Luzzaschi *Madrigals*). Until June 1998 he held the post of *Maestro di Cappella* at the Basilica of S. Petronio in Bologna. He currently teaches harpsichord at the Conservatorio di Venezia.

1 Introitus

*Gaudeamus omnes in Domino diem
festum celebrantes sub
honore Mariae Virginis de cuius
solemnitate gaudent Angeli et
claudent Filium Dei. Alleluia.
Ps. Eructavit cor meum verbum bonum,
dico ego opera mea regi.
Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto:
sicut erat in principio et nunc et
semper et in saecula saeculorum.
Amen.*

2 Kyrie eleison

*Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison,
Kyrie eleison.*

3 Gloria

*Gloria in excelsis Deo.
et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.
Laudamus te. Benedicimus te.
Adoramus te. Glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.
Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens,
Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe,
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis:
qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram ad Mariae gloriam:
qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus Mariam sanctificans.
Tu solus Dominus,
Tu solus Altissimus, Mariam coronans, Jesu Christe,
cum Sancto Spiritu,
in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen.*

1 Introit

Let us all rejoice in the Lord
celebrating this feast day in
in honour of the Virgin Mary
at whose festival Angels rejoice
and together praise the Son of God. Alleluia.
My heart pours out a noble theme;
I address my poem to the king.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning
is now and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy,
Lord have mercy.

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to those of goodwill.
We praise you. We bless you.
We worship you. We glorify you.
We give thanks to you for your great glory.
Lord God, Heavenly king,
God the father almighty,
Lord the only son, Jesus Christ,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you who bear the sins of the world,
have mercy on us:
you who bear the sins of the world,
receive our prayer for the Glory of Mary:
you who sit at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.
For you only are holy,
you only are Lord.
you only are the most high, crowning Mary, Jesus Christ,
with the holy spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

4 Gradualis

*Benedicta et venerabilis es Virgo
 Maria: quae sine tactu pudoris inventa
 es mater Salvatoris.
 Virgo Dei Genitrix, quem totus non capit
 orbis in tua se clausit viscera
 factus homo.*

5 Ave maris stella

(organ)

6 Alleluia

*Alleluia. Felix es sacra Virgo
 Maria, et omni laude dignissima:
 quia ex te ortus est sol iustitiae
 Christus Deus noster*

7 Credo

*Credo in unum Deum,
 Patrem omnipotentem,
 factorem caeli et terrae,
 visibilium omnium et invisibilium.
 et in unum Dominum, Jesum Christum,
 filium Dei unigenitum;
 et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula.
 Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,
 Deum verum de Deo vero,
 genitum non factum,
 consubstantialem Patri;
 per quem omnia facta sunt.
 Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram
 salutem descendit de caelis,
 et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto,
 ex Maria virgine et homo factus est.
 Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato,
 passus et sepultus est,
 et resurrexit tertia die
 secundum Scripturas,
 et ascendit in caelum:
 sedet ad dexteram Patris.
 Et iterum venturus est cum
 gloria iudicare vivos et mortuos;
 cuius regni non erit finis.*

Gradual

Blessed and worthy of homage are you
 Virgin Mary: who were found without
 stain and are Mother of the Saviour.
 Virgin Mother of God: the whole
 world cannot encompass him, yet He confined
 himself in your womb and became man.

Hail, star of the sea

(organ)

Alleluia

Alleluia. Happy are you, holy
 Virgin Mary, and most worthy of
 all praise: because from you
 has arisen the sun of justice, Christ, Our God.

Creed

I believe in one God,
 the Father almighty,
 maker of heaven and earth,
 of all things visible and invisible,
 And in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
 only son of God;
 and born of the Father eternally,
 God of God, light of light,
 true God of true God,
 begotten, not made,
 of one substance with the Father,
 by whom all things were made.
 He who for mankind
 and for our salvation descended from heaven.
 and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit,
 of the Virgin Mary and was made man.
 He was crucified even for us under
 Pontius Pilate, he died and was buried;
 and he rose again on the third day
 according to the Scriptures,
 and ascended into heaven:
 and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
 And again he will come
 with glory to judge the living and the dead,
 whose kingdom will have no end.

*Et in Spiritum Sanctum,
Dominum et vivificantem,
qui ex Patre Filioque procedit.
qui cum Patre et Filio simul
adoratur et conglorificatur,
qui locutus est per Prophetas.
Et unam, sanctam, catholicam,
et apostolicam Ecclesiam.
Confiteor unum baptismum
in remissionem peccatorum.
et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum.
Et vitam venturi saeculi.
Amen.*

8 Offertorium

*Beata es Virgo Maria,
quae omnium, portasti Creatorem:
genuisti qui te fecit
et in aeternum permanes Virgo.
Alleluia.*

9 Sanctus

*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.*

10 Communio

*Beata viscera Mariae Virginis
quae portaverunt aeterni
Patris Filium.
Alleluia.*

11 Agnus Dei

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona nobis pacem.*

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is likewise worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the Prophets.
And I believe in one, holy, catholic,
and apostolic church.
I acknowledge one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins.
And I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

Offertory

Blessed are you, Virgin Mary,
who bore the Creator of all:
you gave birth to the one who
made you and remain for ever a Virgin.
Alleluia.

Holy, holy, holy

Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God of Sabaoth.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Communion

Blessed is the womb of the
Virgin Mary that bore the
Son of the eternal Father.
Alleluia.

Lamb of God

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins
of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins
of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins
of the world, grant us peace.



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STEREO

DDD

Giovanni Pierluigi da
PALESTRINA

(1525/6-1594)

Missa de Beata Virgine I (1567)Soloists of the Cappella Musicale di S. Petronio di Bologna
Sergio Vartolo, DirectorPlaying
Time
55:24

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|-----------|---|-------------|
| 1 | Gaudeamus (Plainchant) | 5:28 |
| 2 | Kyrie | 5:59 |
| 3 | Gloria | 5:49 |
| 4 | Benedicta (Plainchant) | 3:54 |
| 5 | Ave maris stella
by Girolamo Cavazzoni
(c. 1525-after 1577)
(Sergio Vartolo, organ) | 3:32 |
| 6 | Alleluia | 2:56 |
| 7 | Credo | 9:22 |
| 8 | Beata es Virgo Maria
(Plainchant) | 3:01 |
| 9 | Sanctus | 7:34 |
| 10 | Beata viscera (Plainchant) | 1:29 |
| 11 | Agnus Dei I | 3:01 |
| 12 | Agnus Dei II | 2:48 |

Born in Italy in the 16th century, Palestrina ranks with Lassus and Byrd as one of the most important figures in the music of this time. Though conservative in style, he was one of the first composers to bring together the influences of Italian, French and Flemish music. His output was prolific, and among his sacred works are 104 Masses, 375 Motets and 35 Magnificats. This performance of the plainsong-based *Missa de Beata Virgine I*, with its interpolation of Gregorian chant and the use of the organ, seeks to restore earlier performance traditions and draws attention to the liturgical context in which Palestrina's music was heard.

Recorded at the Church of Saint Zeno, Cavalo, Verona, Italy, in October, 1995.

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