



BRUCKNER

# *Motets*

Locus iste

Os iusti

Afferentur regi

Ave Maria

Vexilla regis

Ecce sacerdos

Tota pulchra es

Virga Iesse

Pange lingua

Inveni David

Christus factus est

CORYDON  
SINGERS

MATTHEW BEST

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# ANTON BRUCKNER

(1824–1896)

- 1 **Locus iste a Deo factus est** GRADUAL *four-part unaccompanied choir* . . . . . [3'22]
- 2 **Os iusti meditabitur** GRADUAL *four- and eight-part unaccompanied choir* . . . . . [4'56]
- 3 **Afferentur regi** OFFERTORIUM *four-part choir and three trombones* . . . . . [1'52]
- 4 **Ave Maria** *seven-part unaccompanied choir* . . . . . [4'00]
- 5 **Vexilla regis** *four-part unaccompanied choir* . . . . . [4'48]
- 6 **Ecce sacerdos magnus** *seven-part choir, three trombones and organ* . . . . . [5'05]
- 7 **Tota pulchra es** ANTIPHON *tenor solo, four-part choir and organ* . . . . . [5'44]
- 8 **Virga Iesse floruit** *four-part unaccompanied choir* . . . . . [4'23]
- 9 **Pange lingua** *four-part unaccompanied choir* . . . . . [4'34]
- 10 **Inveni David** OFFERTORIUM *four-part lower voices and four trombones* . . . . . [2'07]
- 11 **Christus factus est** GRADUAL *four-part unaccompanied choir* . . . . . [5'25]

## CORYDON SINGERS

with PHILIP SALMON tenor

GRAHAM CHAMBERS, JEREMY GOUGH, MARTIN KELLY, CHRISTOPHER STEARN trombones

THOMAS TROTTER organ

**MATTHEW BEST** conductor



**B**RUCKNER's music for the Roman Catholic liturgy is amongst the finest of the last 150 years. He had a profound faith in the doctrines of the Church and a persistent belief in his own abilities as a composer, even though in other respects he was painfully insecure and indecisive. The motets span nearly the whole of his mature compositional career and reflect clearly the melding of a polyphonic technique, derived from the Renaissance masters, with his own urgent chromaticism. In the May of 1861, Bruckner made his concert debut in the joint role of composer and conductor with his seven-part setting of the *Ave Maria* which marked the beginning of this compositional maturity. He was thirty-six and had, only the month before, completed five years of exacting contrapuntal study (undertaken partly by post) with one of the leading teachers in Vienna, Simon Sechter. He had already set the same text in 1856 on leaving the great Baroque monastery of St Florian (south-east of Linz), to which he had been admitted as a choirboy on the death of his father, and where he had later spent ten years as an assistant teacher and deputy organist. He had subsequently become organist at the Cathedral and Pfarrkirche in Linz and, at the end of 1860, conductor of the choral society there, the Liedertafel 'Frohsinn'.

Towards the end of 1861 he applied for the conductorship of the Dommusikverein und Mozarteum in Salzburg, having resigned that of the Liedertafel over a trifling incident, but was to suffer one of the long line of rejections that bedevilled his career. His Fugue in D minor and the Offertory *Afferentur regi*, composed soon after this, show no sign of his disappointment, illustrating his ability to isolate the tribulations of his life from the emotional meaning of his compositions.

In 1867 he began work on the F minor Mass, shortly after his three month stay in a sanatorium at Bad

Kreuzen, following a breakdown. It was completed in 1868, together with the hymn *Pange lingua* and the Offertory *Inveni David*. This year also saw his re-appointment as conductor of the Liedertafel and his acceptance of the professorship in harmony and counterpoint at the Vienna Conservatorium, following the death of his teacher, Sechter.

To celebrate the dedication of the votive chapel of the new Linz cathedral, the first performance of Bruckner's Gradual, *Locus iste*, was given in 1869, only a month after the first performance of his great E minor Mass in the same city. Nine years later he wrote the antiphon *Tota pulchra es, Maria* for the 25th anniversary of his friend and supporter, the Bishop at Linz, Franz Josef Rudigier. It was one of the few compositions that Bruckner produced during the depths of his depression following the poor reception of his third symphony.

In 1879, the year of the String Quartet in F major, he completed the Gradual *Os iusti*, dedicating it to Ignaz Traumihler, the *Regens Chori* of St Florian, and later in the same year he began work on his sixth symphony. Symphony No 7 was completed in 1883 and the *Te Deum* the following Spring. After a visit to Prague Bruckner returned to Vienna to set the Gradual *Christus factus est*, dedicated to Father Otto Loidol of the Benedictine Monastery of Krems-munster.

1885 saw the 1000th anniversary of the founding of the Linz diocese and Bruckner celebrated this event with *Ecce sacerdos*, dedicating it, like a number of his more extensive works, 'to the greater glory of God'. *Virgo Iesse floruit*, again dedicated to Ignaz Traumihler, was composed in the same year whilst work on the eighth symphony was still in progress.

The last of Bruckner's shorter sacred works, the hymn *Vexilla regis*, was completed in 1892, but the major



project of this period, the great ninth symphony, was to remain incomplete at his death four years later. Bruckner was already in physical and mental decline, yet the motet shows no sign of a diminution of his inventiveness or technical brilliance.

**Locus iste** is a poignant, uncluttered ternary-form working of the text from the Mass for the Dedication of a Church. Bruckner extends his syllabic word setting only towards the end, on 'Deo', where sliding chromatics spice all parts. The middle section is characterized by imitative entries, first led by the basses then by the tenors, each phrase pushing the work towards a new, more exotic key, before returning to the clear C major of the first section repeat, now modified.

**Os iusti** is a setting of Psalm 37: 30–31 (Psalm 36 in the Vulgate). Its dedicatee, Ignaz Traumihler, was an adherent of the Cecilian movement, devoted to unchromatic, a cappella, choral music in the supposed style of Palestrina, and Bruckner produced for him a work clearly in the Lydian mode and undeviating from the tenets of composition in this style. The ternary form is adeptly manipulated, Bruckner skillfully concealing the return from the imitative middle section to the more chordal and syllabic framing section. The work ends with the plainchant Alleluia celebrating the God-given wisdom of Doctors of the Church.

**Afferentur regi**, taken from the Common of a Virgin Martyr and based on Psalm 45: 15 (44 in the Vulgate), has three trombones to support the choir, is ternary in shape, and predominantly imitative. Of especial note is the tonic pedal employed with surprising effect in the final cadence.

The supplication to the Virgin, **Ave Maria**, derived from the Annunciation, is set for divided parts, facilitating the contrast of upper and lower voices. The final cadence is the 'Marienkadenz', used by the composer in his earlier



ANTON BRUCKNER

setting of the text, in the F minor Mass, the third symphony, and elsewhere.

The Phrygian mode setting of the great Passiontide hymn in honour of the Cross, **Vexilla regis**, to words by the sixth century Bishop of Poitiers, Venantius Fortunatus, suggests in its opening phrase the 'Dresden Amen', used by Wagner for the Grail motif in *Parsifal* (Bruckner had



been present at its first performance in 1882). The powerful key shifts in this work illustrate the lengths to which Bruckner was prepared to go in order to gain impact and expressiveness in his settings of well tried texts.

The Common of a Confessor Bishop is the appropriate source for the prophetic text of **Ecce sacerdos**. Three trombones and organ complement the often-divided mixed chorus. The dramatic harmonic shifts of the opening are contrasted with the smooth imitation of the answering section (again with hints of the ‘Dresden Amen’) and the whole develops into one of the most formally interesting of the motets. The thrice repeated ‘Ideo iureiurando’ section forms the backcloth against which the contrasting sections are thrown, most notably the penultimate section in which the whole choir sings the Aeolian plainchant, ‘Gloria Patri et Filio’.

In **Tota pulchra es, Maria** (words from the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin), each statement by the solo tenor is immediately affirmed or developed by the full choir, with sparing support from the organ. Bruckner saves one of his most startling chromatic shifts for the words ‘Mater clementissima’ when, in the space of four bars, he wrenches the key down a semitone, from D minor to D flat major, in order to express the wonderment of this mercy.

Another prophetic text, from the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin, provides the source for **Virgo Iesse floruit**. The ‘Dresden Amen’ again plays an important part in some of

the cadences of this piece. Bruckner uses the through-composed techniques of the Renaissance in this work but develops that form with key changes and parallel chord movements that stretch its tolerance to the limit.

**Pange lingua** is a hymn of the Corpus Christi office by the thirteenth-century theologian, St Thomas Aquinas. Bruckner’s Phrygian mode setting was, on its first publication, ‘corrected’ by Franz Xavier Witt—a Cecilian—much to the composer’s displeasure. The setting of the hymn is chorale-like, with the same music used for all three verses, only a heartfelt Amen being added to mark its finish.

From the Common of a Confessor Bishop, **Inveni David** is set for the divided tenors and basses of the choir, accompanied by four trombones. This gives the work a powerful but sombre hue, emphasized by the F minor key of the work’s opening. Bruckner makes great play of the major/minor shift here, stressing the ambivalence of the text.

The setting of the Holy Week Gradual **Christus factus est** is intended for Maundy Thursday. It is certainly the most effective that Bruckner made, though not the most fully scored, and impresses less by the drama of the setting than by the subtle intricacy of harmonic shift and motivic development. The final cadence is a fine summation of Bruckner’s art, reconciling outward movement with inner stillness.

DOUGLAS HAMMOND © 1984



- 1 **Locus iste** a Deo factus est:  
inaestimabile sacramentum irreprehensibilis est.
- 2 **Os iusti** meditabitur sapientiam,  
et lingua eius loquetur iudicium.  
Lex Dei eius in corde ipsius  
et non supplantabuntur gressus eius. Alleluia.
- 3 **Afferentur regi** virgines post eam:  
proximae eius afferentur tibi in laetitia et exultatione:  
adducentur in templum regi Domino.
- 4 **Ave Maria**, gratia plena, Dominus tecum.  
Benedicta tu in mulieribus  
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Iesus.  
Sancta Maria, mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus,  
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.
- 5 **Vexilla regis** prodeunt:  
Fulget Crucis mysterium,  
Quo carne carnis conditur  
Suspensus est patibulo.  
  
O Crux, ave, spes unica,  
Hoc passionis tempore  
Auge piis iustitiam,  
Reisque dona veniam.  
  
Te summa, Deus, Trinitas,  
Collaudet omnis spiritus:  
Quos per Crucis mysterium  
Salvas, rege per saecula. Amen.
- 6 **Ecce sacerdos** magnus, qui in diebus suis placuit Deo.  
Ideo iureiurando fecit  
illum Dominus crescere in plebem suam.  
Benedictionem omnium gentium dedit illi,  
ei testamentum suum confirmavit super caput eius.  
Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto,  
sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper,  
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

*This dwelling is God's handiwork; a mystery  
beyond all price that cannot be spoken against.*

*The mouth of the just is exercised in wisdom,  
and his tongue will be talking of judgement:  
the law of his God is in his heart,  
and his footsteps will not be distracted. Alleluia.*

*The virgins that be her fellows shall be brought unto the King:  
they that bear her company shall be brought unto thee with joy  
and gladness and shall enter the palace of the Lord the King.*

*Hail, Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee.  
Blessed art thou amongst women,  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

*The banners of the king advance:  
the mystery of the Cross shines forth;  
he, the creator of all flesh,  
flesh himself, was hanged.*

*Hail, O Cross, our only hope;  
in this Passiontide  
increase justice to the pious,  
grant forgiveness to sinners.*

*God, most high Trinity,  
may every soul praise you:  
forever reign over those you save  
through the mystery of the Cross. Amen.*

*Behold a great priest who in his days pleased God.  
Accordingly the Lord vowed  
to increase his people.*

*He granted his blessing to all his peoples  
and confirmed his oath over his head.  
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.*



- [7] **Tota pulchra es**, Maria. Et macula originalis non est in te.  
Tu gloria Ierusalem. Tu laetitia Israel.  
Tu honorificentio populi nostri.  
Tu advocata peccatorum. O Maria! Virgo prudentissima.  
Mater clementissima. Ora pro nobis.  
Intercede pro nobis ad Dominum Iesum Christum.
- [8] **Virgo Iesse** floruit: Virgo Deum et hominem genuit:  
pacem Deus reddidit, in se reconcilians ima summis.  
Alleluia.
- [9] **Pange lingua** gloriosi  
Corporis mysterium  
Sanguinisque pretiosi  
Quem in mundi pretium  
Fructus ventris generosi  
Rex effudit gentium.
- Tantum ergo sacramentum  
Veneremur cernui,  
Et antiquum documentum  
Novo cedat ritui:  
Praestet fides supplementum  
Sensuum defectui.
- Genitori genitoque  
Laus et jubilatio.  
Salus honor virtus quoque  
Sit et benedictio,  
Procedenti ab utroque  
Compar sit laudatio.
- [10] **Inveni David** servum meum,  
oleo sancto meo unxi eum,  
manus enim mea auxiliabitur ei  
et brachium meum confortabit eum. Alleluia.
- [11] **Christus factus est** pro nobis obediens  
usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.  
Propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum  
et dedit illi nomen, quod est super omne nomen.
- Thou art all fair; O Mary: there is no spot in thee.  
Thou art the glory of Jerusalem. Thou art the joy of Israel.  
Thou art the great rejoicing of our nation.  
Thou are the advocate of sinners. O Mary! Most prudent Virgin.  
Mother most clement. Pray for us.  
Intercede for us through the Lord Jesus Christ.*
- Now hath blossomed Jesse's rod: a Virgin bears both man and God:  
God restoreth peace to men: high and low are one again.  
Alleluia.*
- Now my tongue the mystery telling,  
of the glorious body sing;  
and the blood, all price excelling  
which the world's eternal king,  
in noble womb once dwelling,  
shed for this world ransoming.*
- Therefore we, before him bending,  
this great sacrament revere;  
types and shadows have their ending,  
for the newer rite is here.  
Faith, outward sense befriending,  
makes the inward vision clear.*
- Glory let us give, and blessing  
to the Father and the Son;  
honour, might and praise addressing,  
while eternal ages run:  
ever too his love confessing,  
who, from both, with both is one.*
- I have found David my servant;  
with my holy oil I have annointed him:  
my hand shall hold him fast,  
and my arm shall strengthen him. Alleluia.*
- Christ for us became obedient  
unto death, even the death of the cross.  
Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him  
and given him a name which is above every name.*





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