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Giovanni Pierluigi da

PALESTRINA

COR16155

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"The Sixteen's Palestrina cycle may just be a classic in the making."

GRAMOPHONE

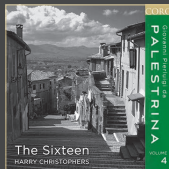


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"What superb advocates The Sixteen turn out to be, from the sensitively shaped Kyrie through the firm yet carefully rendered Gloria."

INTERNATIONAL RECORD REVIEW



COR16114

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"Inspired and grippingly performed."

INTERNATIONAL RECORD REVIEW



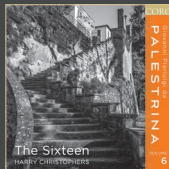
COR16124

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"[The Sixteen] are ardent and energetic ... painting and animating the words to vibrant effect."

***** Performance ***** Recording

Choral & Song Choice October 2015, BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE



COR16133

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The Sixteen
 HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

CORO

Giovanni Pierluigi da

PALESTRINA

VOLUME
 7

Palestrina's legacy and impact on sacred music worldwide is second-to-none. Composers through the centuries have studied and learnt from his gift for writing exquisite polyphony. Small wonder then that he has been called not only 'the prince and father of music' but also 'the saviour of church music'. At the final session of the Council of Trent, there were many discussions about the use of polyphony and whether or not it should be banned. In 1607, the composer Agostino Agazzari wrote: 'music of the older kind is no longer in use because of the confusion and Babel of the words'. And he went on to say that this music would have come very near to being banished from the holy Church by a sovereign pontiff had not Giovanni Palestrina found the remedy. The price of fame for Palestrina was that his legacy was to contain as many myths as facts.

Over the next few years, we are going to undertake a series honouring his great art, recording much unfamiliar but stunning music from every part of his life, giving a more accurate picture of his great achievements in music. I hasten to add that we are not endeavouring to record every note Palestrina penned – that would be more than a lifetime's work considering he wrote 104 Masses! But what we will do is present each volume based around a single Mass, here the *Missa Ave Regina caelorum*, and a theme relevant to that Mass – in this case women who feature so prominently in the



Photograph: Marco Borggreve

scriptures – alongside some of his settings of the Song of Songs. Palestrina published 29 such settings, which he dedicated to Pope Gregory XIII. In that dedication, he apologised, and indeed 'blushed and grieved', for having possessed light and vain ideas in the past (presumably referring to such music as his hugely popular madrigals on profane texts); and he asserted that he had changed his purpose by choosing 'those poems which have been written of the praises of our Lord Jesus Christ and his Most Holy Mother the Virgin Mary'. Remember that the Song of Songs comes from that part of the Old Testament which was often considered too sensual and erotic to be read. It was originally Hebrew love poetry, written down possibly 300 years or so before the birth of Christ, but these are texts which in Renaissance times were used in praise of the Virgin Mary.

I have always regarded Palestrina as the master craftsman whose music composers of all ages have attempted to emulate. He shapes his music in a beautifully sonorous way using a lot of suspensions but always coming back into the line of the music. However, it is this perfect craftsmanship that can sometimes make Palestrina's music sound all too perfect and occasionally academic. We have attempted to achieve real ebb and flow in his music, not clipping the ends of phrases but allowing the music to breathe, to convey the real meaning of the words and making our breaths part of the music as a whole. There is a wealth of word painting in which to indulge, especially in his Song of Songs motets. Our aim has been to be sensitive to this wonderful poetry and inject an energy and beauty to our performances that I hope goes some way to honour Palestrina as 'the celebrated light of music'.

Harry
Christopher



1	Angelus Domini descendit	8.05
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2	Ave maris stella	6.12
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3	In diebus illis	4.42
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4	Beatae Mariae Magdalenae	3.50
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5	Beata Barbara	8.06
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SONG OF SONGS: nos. 19-21

6	Adiuro vos filiae Ierusalem	2.53
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7	Caput eius aureum optimum	2.15
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8	Dilectus meus descendit in hortum suum	2.56
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9	Susanna ab improbis senibus	6.59
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10	Veni sponsa Christi	2.20
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MISSA AVE REGINA CAELORUM

11	Kyrie	3.20
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12	Gloria	4.55
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13	Credo	7.37
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14	Sanctus	1.45
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15	Benedictus	2.03
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16	Agnus Dei I & II	4.03
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	Total Running Time	72.01
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Palestrina (1525-94) is perhaps the most famous of all Renaissance composers, certainly by name. His proper name was Giovanni Pierluigi, but like many of his contemporaries, proud of their origins, he liked to be called after the place of his birth, Palestrina, a small town about 25 miles from Rome. By the time of his death his reputation outshone all others, to some extent it must be said because he spent his life in Rome as a servant of the Roman Catholic Church, at the centre of the Counter-Reformation, providing music for the Pope himself and the most prestigious group of singers in the world at that time, the Papal Choir. His musical legacy is prodigious even by the standards of the time – he wrote over 100 Masses and numerous motets, Magnificats, hymns and other pieces for all the main feasts in the Church year. He was fortunate in being able to publish much of his music himself in his own lifetime, and also to be the first Renaissance composer to have a complete edition of almost his whole

output published in modern notation. Today some pieces are quite familiar, others less so or almost unknown, much superb music still lacking a proper place in the repertoire, in church or in concert.

Women feature prominently throughout the Old and New Testaments. Apparently Mary was a common name in Jesus' time in Palestine and several Marys took part in some of the most important events of the New Testament (e.g. being present at the Crucifixion and being the first to know of the Resurrection). Obviously the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a pivotal figure in the establishment of Christianity, and a huge amount of music has been written in her praise. Every composer of importance set all the standard Marian texts. Other women feature in the Gospels, among them Mary Magdalene and Mary of Bethany (sister of Martha and Lazarus), Mary, the mother of James and Mary Salome. Inevitably there is some confusion of identity of the various Marys, less so with

that Mary who appears in all four Gospels, called Magdalene, which may be taken to mean 'from Magdala', a settlement on the Sea of Galilee.

Palestrina's 5-voice motet **Angelus Domini descendit** (*Dominica Resurrectionis*) was first published in 1581. He had begun issuing his music at the age of 30 in 1554 with the first book of Masses; the first motet collection came out in 1564, other volumes appearing regularly in the following years. Numerous reprints, in his lifetime and after, attested to the music's popularity and suitability for use in churches from the largest and most prestigious to the smallest provincial foundation.

Here the story is of the women going to the tomb, according to the Gospel of John to anoint the body of Jesus, and finding it empty with an angel there. Each of the Synoptic Gospels and John have rather different versions of the story and of which of the Marys were

these first witnesses of the Resurrection. The same narrative is used by Francisco Guerrero in his masterly 6-voice motet *Maria Magdalene* of 1570, which begins enigmatically '*Maria Magdalene et altera Maria...*'; in Palestrina's version of the text, the names of the women are nowhere mentioned. ABCB in form, each part of the motet ends with triple-time Alleluias, in celebration of the Resurrection. Palestrina set this text (or part thereof) three times: the Offertory (*Dominica in Octava Paschae*) published in 1593 uses a shortened version; and there is an 8-voice setting copied in a 1748 manuscript in the Vatican library.

Palestrina published a set of hymns for the Church year (4, 5 & 6 voices) in 1589, simultaneously in Rome (choirbook) and in Venice (partbooks). They were reprinted immediately in 1590 (Venice); in 1625 (Rome), with a *basso continuo* part; and in Antwerp in 1644, unattributed and edited to suit the latest revision of the Breviary, in a volume entitled *Hymni*

Sacri in Breviario Romano. Polyphonic hymns, alternatim with chant, such as these, were basic repertoire for churches large and small in the late 16th century and there was a substantial demand for new settings with the reformed texts approved during the Councils of Trent. In modern times, hymns have fallen out of favour often because of the lack of correct chants for the alternatim verses, with the versions paraphrased by composers in the polyphony no longer available in modern chant books such as the *Liber Usualis*. **Ave maris stella** (marked *In festis Beatae Virginis*) was such a staple of the Marian repertoire that the chant was more or less standardised by Palestrina's time. There are minor variants from that in the *Liber Usualis* today, but the version Palestrina uses is easily confirmed from the polyphony: in many hymns of the time the chant is generally clearly outlined in the tenor voice. He uses that best-known version of *Ave maris stella*, which starts with a rising fifth. Palestrina adds an extra voice (tenor) for the 7th

and final verse in canon at the octave below with the soprano.

In diebus illis (for 4 voices, marked *In die Sanctae Mariae Magdalенаe*) was first published by Palestrina in 1564. The motet relates the story of the sinner woman at the house of Simon the leper who anoints the feet of Jesus with ointment from an alabaster box. She is not named in the text, but in the 16th century she was thought to be Mary Magdalene. Later interpretation of the Gospel passages led to identification of the sinful woman as another woman altogether, perhaps still called Mary.

Likewise, for the Feast of St Mary Magdalene on 22nd July, the text for **Beatae Mariae Magdalенаe** contains another example of the confusion caused by the presence of the various Marys in the Gospel narratives. Here Mary Magdalene is erroneously conflated with Mary of Bethany, the sister of Lazarus, who was famously raised back to life

by Jesus from the depths of his tomb after four days. Palestrina gives us a finely wrought musical response to the words, set with his favoured 5-voice combination of voices, with two tenors.

Of course, there were many women who played an important part in the life of the early Christian church other than those mentioned in the Biblical narratives. Some became saints and composers would celebrate them in music. St Barbara, a 3rd-century Greek, was an example of virginal virtue, rewarded with a place in heaven, martyred for steadfastly maintaining her Christian beliefs in the face of pagan persecution by, amongst others, her father. Though her story is nowadays regarded as wholly fabulous, she still remains in the list of Catholic saints. The Gonzaga dynasty, who ruled in Mantua from the 14th to the 17th centuries, adopted her as their patron saint. Palestrina wrote two motets in her praise, both published in 1572, not surprisingly, for he had had close

connections with the Gonzagas over many years. In 1578 Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga commissioned several Masses from Palestrina composed around chant from the Mantuan liturgy, which had survived the standardisations of the Councils of Trent; and in 1583 Palestrina even embarked on ultimately unsuccessful discussions with Guglielmo regarding moving to Mantua as choirmaster. ***Beata Barbara***, for 6 voices, is in two parts, in ABCB form. Rather less well-known than the 5-voice *Gaude Barbara*, it is equally fine, and deserving of more frequent performances.

The 29 motets on verses from the *Song of Songs* take us back to the most important Biblical woman of all, Mary the mother of Jesus. These pieces are, with Palestrina's books of madrigals, somewhat anomalous in his output. They are non-liturgical, although they could be, and were, sung in services. But much of their purpose was for use by the ordinary man or woman, in occasional

private and public devotions, for the practice of spiritual exercises encouraged by such notables as St Philip Neri, and by various religious confraternities. They were undoubtedly extremely popular and affordable, for there were 11 reprints up to 1613.

The 3 motets from the set recorded here are nos. 19, 20 and 21, ***Adiuvo vos filiae Ierusalem, Caput eius aureum optimum*** and ***Dilectus meus descendit in hortum suum***. All are scored for the usual five voices, this time with two altos rather than two tenors. They are intimate vocal chamber music, set in a simple style, lacking any pretension to complexity or virtuosity, yet not out of place sung by a large choir in a cathedral. Palestrina demonstrates in these pieces what variety and intensity of feeling can be expressed with the simplest of means. His motet ***Susanna ab improbis senibus***, first published in 1575, is, like *Beata Barbara*, for six voices, with two sopranos and two tenors, a bright and

richly sonorous combination. Susannah was another woman who chose a life of virtue, but not chastity, for she was married. She also, like Barbara, may have been a mythical figure personifying a didactic moral tale. Her extensive story, recorded in the Apocrypha in the Protestant tradition, and as an appendix to the book of Daniel in the Vulgate, is an example of a seemingly impossible moral predicament from which she is only saved by her trust in the goodness of the Lord. When it seems she is doomed, the wise intervention of a young man called Daniel, presumably the prophet himself, snatches her from the jaws of death. Her story with its sexual moral dilemma makes her seem more human than St Barbara. She was several times chosen as a subject by great artists (Van Dyck, Rembrandt, Gentileschi, Tintoretto, Rubens and others), probably in part because of the opportunity for the depiction of a voluptuous female nude, but also because of her human frailty and vulnerability. Handel (1749) composed

an oratorio on this same story from the time of the Babylonian exile. Palestrina's setting of this long narrative is masterly in maintaining interest throughout, right up to the joyous triple time of the conclusion celebrating the saving of innocent blood.

Veni sponsa Christi, published in 1564, marked *In festo virginum*, was standard liturgical repertoire, set to music by many composers. Palestrina's music, for 4 voices, is simple and intimate in style, just like his 29 Song of Songs motets. The plainchant is memorable and unmistakeable in its melodic outlines (rising and falling in thirds at the outset). Palestrina also wrote a 4-voice Mass on the same chant melody.

Five of Palestrina's Masses take the historic chants of the great Marian Antiphons *Ave Regina caelorum*, *Regina caeli* (2), *Alma Redemptoris Mater* and *Salve Regina* for their thematic material. All were issued in print between 1599 and 1601, except for *Missa Salve Regina*

which remained in manuscript until published in Haberl's complete edition in 1887. ***Missa Ave Regina caelorum***, for 4 and 5 voices, is written in a fairly simple style, making it suitable for a wide range of Marian services in churches large and small. Characteristically Palestrina writes two Hosannas, a couple of brief phrases in duple time and a more extended separate section in the usual quick triple time. *Agnus Dei II* expands to five voices with a canon between the tenor and 2nd alto at the interval of a fifth, giving a satisfying conclusion to this fine Mass.

Renaissance church composers naturally assigned a large part of their output to the various liturgical and extra-liturgical celebrations in praise of the BVM – and indeed Palestrina was no exception in this respect, dedicating some of his greatest music to her. One only has to think of his *Stabat Mater* for 8 voices, much performed and admired in his own time as well as today. But other women in the Christian story have also been

well served by Palestrina, if not in great quantity, certainly with music of great

variety and of the highest quality, as the pieces recorded here demonstrate.

Martyn Imrie

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Palestrina (1525-94) è probabilmente il più noto tra i compositori rinascimentali, perlomeno di nome. In realtà si chiamava Giovanni Pierluigi, ma come molti dei suoi contemporanei, fieri delle proprie origini, preferiva essere conosciuto col nome del suo paese di nascita, Palestrina, una piccola città a circa 40 chilometri da Roma. All'epoca della morte la sua reputazione offuscava quella di tutti gli altri compositori; va detto che in qualche modo questo si doveva al fatto che egli avesse passato la vita a Roma al servizio della Chiesa Cattolica Romana, durante la Controriforma, producendo musica per lo stesso Papa e per quello che era al tempo il più prestigioso coro del mondo: il Coro Papale. L'eredità

musicale di Palestrina è prodigiosa, anche per il metro di quei tempi. Egli compose più di cento messe e numerosi mottetti, magnificat, inni ed altri brani per tutte le principali ricorrenze dell'anno ecclesiastico. Palestrina ebbe la fortuna di poter pubblicare gran parte della sua musica egli stesso nel corso della sua vita, oltre ad essere il primo compositore rinascimentale ad avere una completa edizione di quasi tutta la sua produzione pubblicata in notazione moderna. Oggi alcuni brani sono piuttosto noti, altri meno o quasi sconosciuti, con molta musica eccellente che ancora non ha trovato un luogo adatto nel repertorio, sia concertistico che da chiesa. Le donne ricoprono un ruolo di rilievo sia nel

Vecchio che nel Nuovo Testamento. Si ritiene che Maria fosse un nome molto diffuso in Palestina ai tempi di Gesù, e molte donne di nome Maria prendono parte ad alcuni dei più importanti eventi narrati nel Nuovo Testamento, come ad esempio l'essere presenti alla crocifissione e le prime ad essere a conoscenza della resurrezione. Ovviamente la Vergine Maria, madre di Gesù, era una figura centrale nell'affermazione della cristianità, e un'enorme quantità di musica è stata scritta in sua lode.

Ogni compositore di rilievo ha messo in scena tutti i testi mariani classici. Altre donne compaiono nei Vangeli, tra le quali Maria Maddalena e Maria di Betania (sorella di Marta e Lazzaro), Maria, la madre di Giacomo e Maria Salome. Inevitabilmente v'è una certa confusione di identità tra le varie Marie, ad eccezione della Maria che appare in tutti e quattro i Vangeli, detta Maddalena, che può essere intesa a significare "di Magdala", un insediamento sul Mar di Galilea.

Il mottetto a cinque voci di Palestrina ***Angelus Domini descendit*** (*Dominica Resurrectionis*) fu pubblicato per la prima volta nel 1581. Egli aveva iniziato a pubblicare la sua musica all'età di trent'anni, nel 1554, col primo libro di messe; poi seguì la prima collezione di mottetti, presentata nel 1564, seguita da altri volumi che comparvero regolarmente negli anni seguenti. Numerose ristampe si susseguirono nel corso della sua vita come dopo la morte, a testimonianza della popolarità delle composizioni e la loro idoneità per l'esecuzione in chiese, dalle più grandi e prestigiose alle più piccole sedi provinciali.

Qui si narra la storia delle donne che si recano al sepolcro, a detta del Vangelo di Giovanni, per ungere il corpo di Gesù, e lo trovano vuoto, sorvegliato da un angelo. Ciascuno dei Vangeli sinottici, e lo stesso Giovanni, racconta una versione differente su quale tra le Marie fosse tra i primi testimoni della resurrezione.

La medesima narrativa è impiegata da Francisco Guerrero nel suo magistrale mottetto a sei voci *Maria Magdalene* del 1570, il quale esordisce enigmaticamente con "*Maria Madgdalene et altera Maria...*"; al contrario nella versione di Palestrina il testo non cita i nomi delle donne. Ogni parte del mottetto in forma ABCB si conclude con degli Alleluia in tempo ternario a celebrare la resurrezione. Palestrina mette in scena questo testo (o sue parti) tre volte; l'Offertorio (*Dominca in octava paschae*) pubblicato nel 1593 ne utilizza una versione abbreviata, ed esiste una versione ad otto voci copiata in un manoscritto del 1748 custodito nella Biblioteca Vaticana.

Nel 1589 Palestrina pubblicò una serie di inni per l'anno ecclesiastico (a 4, 5 e 6 voci) simultaneamente a Roma come libro corale e a Venezia come libro di parti. Questi vennero immediatamente ristampati a Venezia nel 1590, a Roma nel 1625 con una parte per basso continuo, e ad Anversa nel 1644; questi ultimi

senza attribuzione ed editi in modo da conformarsi alla più recente revisione del Breviario, in un volume intitolato *Hymni Sacri in Breviario Romano*. Inni Polifonici, cantati in *alternatim* come questi, costituivano il repertorio di base per chiese d'ogni dimensione nel tardo XVI secolo, quando vi era una grande richiesta di nuove versioni basate sui testi riformati ed approvati dal Concilio di Trento. In tempi moderni hanno perso popolarità, spesso per la mancanza di vocalizzazioni adatte ai versi in *alternatim*, laddove i compositori hanno parafrasato versioni polifoniche non più disponibili nei moderni corali come il *Liber Usualis*. ***Ave maris stella*** (contrassegnato *festis Beatae Virginis*) era un tale punto fermo del repertorio mariano che ai tempi di Palestrina il canto era già stato più o meno standardizzato. Oggi esistono varianti minori rispetto a quella in *Liber Usualis*, ma la versione che Palestrina impiega è facilmente confermata dalla polifonia: in molti inni del tempo solitamente il canto è chiaramente delineato nella voce del

tenore. Egli usa la più popolare versione di *Ave maris stella*, che inizia con una quinta ascendente. Palestrina aggiunge una voce di tenore per il settimo e ultimo verso nel canone, all'ottava inferiore insieme al soprano.

In diebus illis (per quattro voci, contrassegnato come *In die Sanctae Mariae Magdalenae*) fu pubblicato per la prima volta da Palestrina nel 1564. Il mottetto racconta la storia della peccatrice nella casa di Simone il Lebbroso, che unge i piedi di Gesù con un unguento preso da un contenitore di alabastro. Essa non è nominata nel testo, ma nel XVI secolo si riteneva si trattasse di Maria Maddalena. Una più tarda interpretazione del brano del Vangelo portò ad identificare il personaggio con un'altra donna, anch'essa possibilmente di nome Maria.

Allo stesso modo, per la festa di Santa Maria Maddalena del 22 luglio, il testo di *Beatae Mariae Magdalenae* contiene

un altro esempio della confusione causata dalla presenza di varie Marie nella narrativa del Vangelo. Qui Maria Maddalena è erroneamente confusa con Maria di Betania, la sorella di Lazzaro, che notoriamente Gesù riportò in vita a quattro giorni dalla sepoltura. Palestrina ci regala una musica finemente cesellata in risposta alle parole, messe in scena con la sua combinazione prediletta, a cinque voci con due tenori.

Naturalmente ci sono molte donne, oltre a quelle citate nella narrazione biblica, che ebbero un ruolo importante nella vita della prima chiesa cristiana. Alcune furono santificate, e i compositori le celebrarono in musica. Santa Barbara, donna greca del terzo secolo, era un esempio di virtù verginale, ricompensata con un posto in paradiso, martirizzata per aver mantenuto la sua fede cristiana con fermezza anche di fronte alla persecuzione pagana subita ad opera di suo padre tra gli altri. Nonostante la sua storia sia considerata oggi

completamente immaginaria, essa rimane annoverata tra i santi cristiani. La dinastia dei Gonzaga, che governò Mantova dal XIV al XVII secolo, la adottò come Santa Patrona. Palestrina scrisse due mottetti in sua lode, entrambi pubblicati nel 1572, e ciò non sorprende in quanto egli aveva mantenuto uno stretto contatto con i Gonzaga nel corso di molti anni. Nel 1578 il Duca Guglielmo Gonzaga commissionò a Palestrina diverse messe, composte su canti della liturgia mantovana, che era sopravvissuta alla standardizzazione del Concilio di Trento. Nel 1538 Palestrina intraprese con Guglielmo una trattativa, seppur poi senza esito, riguardante la possibilità di trasferirsi a Mantova come maestro del coro. *Beata Barbara* è per sei voci, in due parti, in forma ABCB. Seppur meno nota della popolare *Gaude Barbara*, a cinque voci, questa è ugualmente raffinata e meriterebbe esecuzioni più frequenti.

I ventinove mottetti su versi dal *Canto dei Cantici* ci riportano alla più importante

delle donne bibliche, Maria la madre di Gesù. Questi brani sono, insieme al libro di madrigali di Palestrina, in qualche modo anomali nel contesto della sua produzione. Non sono liturgici, nonostante lo potrebbero essere e venissero cantati durante le funzioni, ma la loro funzione principale era d'essere usati dalle persone comuni, in devozioni occasionali, pubbliche o private, per la pratica di esercizi spirituali incoraggiati da notabili quali San Filippo Neri e da varie confraternite religiose. Questi mottetti erano indubbiamente molto popolari ed economici, a giudicare dalle undici ristampe pubblicate fino al 1613.

I tre mottetti di questa serie qui presentati sono il 19, 20 e 21, *Adiuvo vos filiae Ierusalem, Caput eius aureum optimum* e *Dilectus meus descendit in hortum suum*. Tutti sono composti per le consuete cinque voci, questa volta con due alti invece dei due tenori. Si tratta di intima musica vocale da camera, presentata in uno stile semplice, senza

pretese di complessità e virtuosismo, eppure non fuori luogo se cantate da un grande coro in una cattedrale. In questi brani Palestrina dimostra quale varietà e intensità di sentimento possa essere espressa con i più semplici espedienti. Il mottetto ***Susanna ab improbis senibus***, che Palestrina pubblicò per la prima volta nel 1575, è come *Beata Barbara*, per sei voci con due soprani e due tenori, una combinazione brillante e riccamente sonora. Susanna era un'altra donna che scelse una vita di virtù, ma non di castità, in quanto era sposata. Può darsi che essa pure, come Barbara, sia un personaggio immaginario inteso a personificare una favola morale e didattica. La sua complessa storia è riportata negli Apocrifi della tradizione protestane, e compare come appendice al Libro di Daniele nella Vulgata. Si tratta di un esempio di difficile frangente morale, apparentemente insolubile, dal quale Susanna viene salvata solo grazie alla sua fiducia nella bontà del Signore. Quando ella pare condannata, il saggio intervento di un

giovane di nome Daniele, probabilmente lo stesso profeta, la strappa dalle fauci della morte. La sua storia, con il suo dilemma morale di origine sessuale, la fa apparire più umana di Santa Barbara. Susanna fu più volte scelta da vari artisti (Van Dyck, Rembrandt, Gentileschi, Tintoretto, Rubens e altri ancora) probabilmente in parte per l'opportunità di ritrarre un voluttuoso nudo femminile, ma forse anche per la sua umana fragilità e vulnerabilità. Nel 1749 Handel compose un Oratorio su questa stessa storia dei tempi dell'esilio Babilonese. La versione di questa lunga narrativa, che Palestrina scrive per sei voci, è magistrale nel mantenere acceso l'interesse per tutta la sua durata, fino al gioioso tempo ternario della conclusione che celebra il risparmiare di sangue innocente.

Veni sponsa Christi, pubblicata nel 1564 e contrassegnata *In festo virginum*, era parte del repertorio liturgico consueto, musicata da molti compositori. La musica di Palestrina, per quattro voci, è semplice

e di stile intimo, così come i suoi 29 mottetti del Cantico dei Cantici. Il canto piano è memorabile e inconfondibile nelle sue linee melodiche (intervalli di terza ascendente e discendente all'inizio). Sulla stessa melodia Palestrina scrisse una messa per quattro voci.

Cinque delle messe di Palestrina prendono come materiale tematico gli storici canti della grande Antifona mariana *Ave Regina caelorum*, *Regina caeli* (2), *Alma Redemptoris Mater* e *Salve Regina*. Tutte furono date alle stampe tra il 1599 e il 1601, eccetto per la *Missa Salve Regina* che rimase in forma di manoscritto fino alla pubblicazione nella Edizione Completa di Haberl nel 1887. ***Missa Ave Regina caelorum***, per quattro e cinque voci, è scritta in uno stile piuttosto semplice, rendendola adatta per una vasta gamma di funzioni mariane in chiese grandi e piccole. Tipicamente Palestrina scrive due Osanna, un paio di brevi frasi in tempo binario e sezioni separate e più estese nel consueto rapido

tempo ternario. *Agnus Dei II* si espande a cinque voci con un canone tra il tenore e il secondo alto ad un intervallo di quinta, dando una soddisfacente conclusione a questa raffinata messa.

I compositori rinascimentali di musica da chiesa ovviamente riservavano una larga parte della loro produzione alle varie celebrazioni, liturgiche e non, della Beata Vergine Maria, e infatti Palestrina non fu un'eccezione in questo senso, dedicandole alcune delle sue migliori composizioni. Basti pensare al suo *Stabat Mater* per otto voci, spesso eseguito ed ammirato ai suoi tempi quanto oggi. Ma Palestrina ha ben servito anche altre donne della storia cristiana, se non in gran quantità certamente con musica di grande varietà e della più alta qualità, come dimostrano i brani qui presentati.

Martyn Imrie

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Italian Translation

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TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

1 Angelus Domini descendit de caelo

*Angelus Domini descendit de caelo,
et accedens, revolvit lapidem,
et super eum sedit.*

Et dixit mulieribus: Nolite timere.

*Scio enim quia crucifixum quaeritis,
iam surrexit.*

*Venite, et videte locum
ubi positus erat Dominus. Alleluia.*

*Et introeuntes in monumentum,
viderunt iuvenem sedentem in dextris,
coopertum stola candida,
et obstupuerunt:*

qui dixit illis: Nolite timere.

*Scio enim quia crucifixum quaeritis,
iam surrexit.*

*Venite, et videte locum
ubi positus erat Dominus. Alleluia.*

The Angel of the Lord came down from heaven
and approaching, he rolled back the stone
and sat upon it.

And he spake thus to the women: Fear not.
For I know the crucified one you seek
has risen.

Come and see the place
where the Lord was put. Alleluia.

And going into the tomb,
they saw a young man sitting on the right,
dressed in a white robe;
and they were astonished.

And he said to them: Fear not.
For I know the crucified one you seek
has risen.

Come and see the place
where the Lord was put. Alleluia.

2 Ave maris stella

1. *Ave maris stella,
Dei Mater alma,
Atque semper Virgo,
Felix caeli porta.*

2. *Sumens illud Ave
Gabrielis ore:
Funda nos in pace,
Mutans Evae nomen.*

3. *Solve vincla reis,
Profer lumen caecis,
Mala nostra pelle,
Bona cuncta posce.*

4. *Monstra te esse matrem:
Sumat per te preces,
Qui pro nobis natus,
Tulit esse tuus.*

5. *Virgo singularis,
Inter omnes mitis,
Nos, culpae solutos,
Mites fac et castos.*

1. Hail, star of the sea,
bountiful Mother of God
and eternal Virgin,
happy gateway to heaven.

2. By that 'Ave'
from the mouth of Gabriel,
establish us in peace,
changing Eve's name around.

3. Throw off the bonds,
bring light to the blind,
banish our ills,
intercede for all good things.

4. Show thyself a mother,
let Him receive our prayers through thee,
He who was born for us
and is called thy son.

5. O peerless Virgin,
gentle above all others,
make us, freed from sin,
meek and pure.

6. *Vitam praesta puram,
Iter para tutum:
Ut videntes Jesum,
semper collaetemur.*

7. *Sit laus Deo Patri,
Summo Christo decus,
Spiritus Sancto,
Tribus honor unus. Amen.*

6. Through thy perfect life,
protect our way
that, seeing Jesus,
we may rejoice always.

7. Praise to God the Father,
glory to Christ on high,
and to the Holy Spirit,
honour Three in One. Amen.

[3] In diebus illis

*In diebus illis,
mulier quae erat in civitate peccatrix,
ut cognovit quod Jesus accubuit
in domo Simonis leprosi,
attulit alabastrum unguenti:
et stans retro secus pedes Domini Jesu,
lacrimis coepit rigare pedes eius,
et capillas capitis sui tergebat:
et osculabatur pedes eius,
et unguento ungebat.*

In those days,
a woman that was in the city, a sinner,
when she knew that Jesus sat at meat
in the house of Simon the leper,
brought an alabaster box of ointment;
and standing behind at the feet of the Lord Jesus,
she began to wash His feet with tears,
and wiped them with the hair of her head;
and kissed His feet,
and anointed them with the ointment.

[4] Beatae Mariae Magdalenae

*Beatae Mariae Magdalenae, quaesumus
Domine suffragiis adiuvemur,
cuius precibus exoratus
quatriduanum fratrem,
vivum ab inferis resuscitasti.*

May the prayers of the Blessed Mary Magdalene
help us, O Lord:
for it was in answer to them
that Thou didst call her brother back
from the grave to life after four days.

[5] Beata Barbara

*Beata Barbara,
ad locum certaminis ducta,
genibus flexis,
inclinato capite martyrii,
consummationem accepit.
Gloriosam mortem,
magis quam odibilem vitam
complexens,
voluntarie, praeibat ad supplicium,
genibus flexis,
inclinato capite martyrii,
consummationem accepit.*

Blessed Barbara,
led to the place of strife,
with bended knee,
head inclined for martyrdom,
she accepted her fate.
Embracing a glorious death,
better than a hateful existence,
she went forward,
voluntarily kneeling in supplication:
with bended knee,
head inclined for martyrdom,
she accepted her fate.

SONG OF SONGS ~ nos. 19-21

[6] Adiuro vos filiae Ierusalem

*Adiuro vos filiae Ierusalem,
si inveneritis dilectum meum,
ut nuntietis ei quia amore langueo.
Qualis est dilectus tuus ex dilecto,
O pulcherrima mulierum?
Qualis est dilectus tuus ex dilecto,
quia sic adiurasti nos?
Dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus,
electus ex milibus.*

I charge you, daughters of Jerusalem,
if you find my beloved,
that you tell him I languish with love.
What is thy beloved more than another,
O thou most beautiful of women?
What is thy beloved more than another,
that you so charge us?
My beloved is white and ruddy,
chosen from thousands.

[7] Caput eius aurum optimum

*Caput eius aurum optimum.
Comae eius sicut elatae palmarum,
nigrae quasi corvus.
Oculi eius sicut columbae super
rivulos aquarum,
quae lacte sunt lotae,
et resident iuxta fluentia plenissima.*

His head is as the finest gold.
His locks are as the tops of palms,
black as the raven.
His eyes are as of doves by
the water brooks,
eyes washed with milk,
there by the bursting streams.

[8] Dilectus meus descendit in hortum suum

*Dilectus meus descendit
in hortum suum, ad areolam aromatum,
ut ibi pascatur in hortis,
et lilia colligat.
Ego dilecto meo, et dilectus meus mihi,
qui pascitur inter lilia.*

My beloved is gone down
into his garden to the beds of spices,
as there to feed in the gardens,
and to gather lilies.
I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine,
he who feeds among the lilies.



[9] Susanna ab improbis senibus

*Susanna ab improbis senibus obsessam
se videns, qui forma eius capti eam, nisi
sibi obsequeretur adulterii se accusaturos
minitabantur, ingemuit et ait:
Angustiae mihi sunt undique.
Si enim hoc egero, mors mihi est.
Si autem non egero,
non effugiam manus vestras.
Sed melius est mihi in manus vestras
absque opere incidere,
quam peccare in conspectu Domini.*

Susanna, seeing herself beset by the old men,
and a captive, unless she submitted to the
accusation of adultery with which they
threatened her, sighed and said:
I am straitened on every side:
for if I do this thing, it is death unto me;
and if I do it not,
I shall not escape your hands.
It is better for me to fall into your hands,
and without doing it,
than to sin in the sight of the Lord.

*Postquam autem falso eorum testimonio
damnata est, cum innocentiae
suae paratum sibi supplicium videret,
exclamavit et dixit:
Deus aeternae,
qui absconditorum es cognitor,
tu scis, quoniam falsum testimonium
tulerunt contra me. Et ecce morior:
cum nihil horum fecerim,
quae isti malitiose composuerunt adversum
me. Exaudivit autem Dominus vocem eius,
et salvatus est sanguis innoxius in die illa.*

10 Veni sponsa Christi

*Veni sponsa Christi,
accipe coronam, quam tibi Dominus
praeparavit in aeternum.*

When she was then found guilty by their false
testimony, and in her innocence
saw punishment being prepared,
then she cried out and said:
O everlasting God,
that knowest all things hidden away,
You know they have borne false witness
against me, and behold, I must die;
whereas I have done none of these things,
which these men have maliciously forged
against me. And the Lord heard her voice,
and her innocent blood was saved that day.

Come, bride of Christ,
receive the crown which the Lord has
prepared for you in eternity.

MISSA AVE REGINA CAELORUM

11 Kyrie

*Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.*

Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.

12 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.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.*

Glory be to God on high.
And on earth peace to men of good will.
We praise Thee, we bless Thee,
we worship Thee, we glorify Thee.
We give thanks to Thee
for Thy great glory.
Lord God, heavenly King,
God the Father almighty.
O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ.
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.
Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy upon us.

*Quoniam tu solus Sanctus,
tu solus Dominus,
tu solus Altissimus Jesu Christe.
Cum Sancto Spiritu
in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.*

For Thou only art holy,
Thou only art the Lord,
Thou only art the most high, Jesus Christ.
With the Holy Spirit
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

13 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;*

I believe in God
the Father almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds.
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by Whom all things were made.
Who for us men,
and for our salvation,
came down from heaven.
And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost
of the Virgin Mary and was made man.
And was crucified also for us
under Pontius Pilate.

*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.
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 baptisma
in remissionem peccatorum.
Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum
et vitam venturi saeculi.
Amen.*

He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again
according to the scriptures;
and ascended into heaven,
and sitteth at the right hand of the Father.
And He shall come again with glory
to judge both the quick and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end.
And I believe in the Holy Ghost
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceedeth from the Father and the Son;
who with the Father and the Son together
is worshipped and glorified;
who spake by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy, catholic
and apostolic Church.
I acknowledge one baptism
for the remission of sins.
And I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

14 Sanctus

*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Osanna in excelsis.*

Holy, Holy, Holy
Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

15 Benedictus

*Benedictus qui venit
in nomine Domini.
Osanna in excelsis.*

Blessed is He that cometh
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

16 Agnus Dei I & II

*Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi:
miserere nobis.*

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

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

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

HARRY CHRISTOPHERS is known internationally as founder and conductor of The Sixteen as well as a regular guest conductor for many of the major symphony orchestras and opera companies worldwide. He has directed The Sixteen choir and orchestra throughout Europe, America and Asia-Pacific, gaining a distinguished reputation for his work in Renaissance, Baroque and 20th- and 21st-century music. In 2000 he instituted The Choral Pilgrimage, a national tour of English cathedrals from York to Canterbury in music from the pre-Reformation, as The Sixteen's contribution to the millennium celebrations. The Pilgrimage in the UK is now central to The Sixteen's annual artistic programme.

Since 2008 Harry Christophers has been Artistic Director of Boston's Handel and Haydn Society; he is also Principal Guest Conductor of the Granada Symphony Orchestra. As well as enjoying a partnership with the BBC Philharmonic, with whom he won a Diapason d'Or, he is a regular guest conductor with the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields. With The Sixteen he is an Associate Artist at The Bridgewater Hall in Manchester and features in the highly successful BBC television series *Sacred Music*, presented by Simon Russell Beale.

Harry has conducted numerous productions for Lisbon Opera and English National Opera as well as conducting the UK premiere of Messenger's opera *Fortunio* for Grange Park Opera. He is a regular conductor at Buxton Opera where he initiated a very successful cycle of Handel's operas and oratorios including *Semele*, *Samson*, *Saul* and *Jephtha*.

He is an Honorary Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, as well as the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, and has Honorary Doctorates from the Universities of Canterbury, Christ Church and Leicester. He was awarded a CBE in the 2012 Queen's Birthday Honours.



Photograph: Marco Borggreve

§ The Sixteen

After more than three decades of worldwide performance and recording, The Sixteen is recognised as one of the world's greatest ensembles. Its special reputation for performing early English polyphony, masterpieces of the Renaissance, baroque and early classical periods, and a diversity of 20th- and 21st-century music, all stems from the passions of conductor and founder, Harry Christophers.

The Sixteen tours internationally giving regular performances at the major concert halls and festivals. At home in the UK, The Sixteen are 'The Voices of Classic FM' as well as Associate Artists of The Bridgewater Hall, Manchester. The group also promotes The Choral Pilgrimage, an annual tour of the UK's finest cathedrals.

The Sixteen's period-instrument orchestra has taken part in acclaimed semi-staged performances of Purcell's *Fairy Queen* in Tel Aviv and London, a fully staged production of Purcell's *King Arthur* in Lisbon's Belém Centre, and new productions of Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse* at Lisbon Opera House and *The Coronation of Poppea* at English National Opera.

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In 2011 the group launched Genesis Sixteen, a new training programme for young singers. Aimed at 18- to 23-year-olds, this is the UK's first fully funded choral programme for young singers, designed specifically to bridge the gap from student to professional practitioner.

§ The Sixteen

SOPRANO

Camilla Harris
Katy Hill
Kirsty Hopkins
Alexandra Kidgell
Charlotte Mobbs
Emilia Morton

ALTO

Ian Aitkenhead *
Daniel Collins
Martha McLorinan **
Kim Porter
Caroline Trevor

TENOR

Simon Berridge
Jeremy Budd
Mark Dobell
George Pooley

BASS

Ben Davies
Eamonn Dougan #
Jimmy Holliday ##
Tim Jones
Rob Macdonald

* tracks 11, 12 & 13 only

** except 11, 12 & 13

tracks 1, 3, 4, 5 & 11-16

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