

POLYHYMNIa



The Muse of Sacred Song

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A concert of our favorite motets

Saturday, November 14, 2009
The Church of Saint Ignatius of Antioch
8 PM

Loquebantur variis linguis
If ye love me
Sing Joyfully

Thomas Tallis (1505-1585)
Thomas Tallis
William Byrd (1540-1623)

Eterne laudis lilium

Robert Fayrfax (1464-1521)

Magi veniunt
Tota Pulchra
Pater peccavi
Regina Cœli

Jacobus Clemens non Papa(c.1510-1556)
Nicolas Gombert (c.1495-1560)
Thomas Crecquillon (c.1505-1557)
Pierre de Manchicourt (c.1510-1564)

Regina Cœli

Nicolas Gombert

Intermíssion

Angeli, archangeli

Heinrich Isaac (c. 1450-1517)

Victimae paschali laudes
O quam suavis est

Adrian Willaert (c. 1490-1562)
Giovanni Gabrieli (1544-1612)

Tota pulchra
O Magnum mysterium
Ave Regina Cœlorum

Francisco Guerrero (1528-1599)
Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548 -1611)
Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla (c.1590-1664)

Ego flos campi

Jacobus Clemens non Papa

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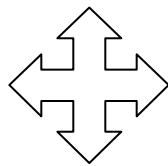
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Polyhymnia, one of New York’s leading early music ensembles, is “an elite group of singers” (The New York Times) who create vibrant, historically informed performances of music from the courts and cathedrals of the Renaissance world. Working with museums and libraries, liturgical historians and educational institutions, Polyhymnia preserves and revives masterworks of the choral literature composed in Europe and the Americas between the years 1450 and 1650. Since 2000, Artistic Director John Bradley has been preparing original editions of music for the ensemble in repertoire ~ including numerous modern premiers of works which have remained unperformed since the 16th century.



Program Notes

*With voices high and low conjoint
With harmony and counterpoint
By all the laws of music moved,
My choir I constantly improved.
But not alone through my intent –
Give thanks to royal encouragement!*

*Georgius Slatkonia, Bishop of Vienna – The Triumphs of Maximilian
Translated by Stanley Applebaum
[, trans. ??????????????](#)*

Fifteen years ago, after a summer at the Amherst Early Music Festival, I gathered together some friends from the festival and from the city. We wanted to experiment with singing some early choral music, and see if anyone would come to a concert. A few actually did, maybe 20 or so. It was a start - the beginning of the project that would and continues to consume my musical life. It is without a doubt the one of the greatest gifts I have ever been given. The singers with whom I have had the honor to work over the years have always supported and inspired me to do better, and they leant their support and enthusiasm in the search for the wonderful, elusive, and captivating moments that are within the great sacred polyphonic works of the Renaissance. The music, its theory and very often the stories *behind* the music, its composers and their patrons are seductive. From the first moment one begins to inhabit the profound melodious architecture of this repertoire there is really no going back.

This evening's concert is a gift to you, presented with our thanks in the form of a feast, both musical and gastronomic, to celebrate the work of a remarkable group of singers, both past and present: We have come a long way from our humble beginnings at St. John's in the Village and our twenty member audience, some of whom journey with us still, and are with us here tonight. We have earned the privilege of being one of the first artists-in-residence here at St. Ignatius of Antioch; we have appeared on concert series' outside of New York, gaining a reputation for musical excellence at the Boston Early Music Festival and other regional events. I want to personally thank the incredible singers I have been privileged to lead over the years, my board of directors, our faithful audience members, our donors, without whom we could not finance our concerts, my family for passing on the musical gene, and my partner Charles, whose unfaltering support has made this pilgrimage all the more joyful.

The music on tonight's program has been selected for no other reason than that it is special to us, each motet chosen by one or more of the singers, and myself. Some of the works heard tonight will be familiar, some not so, but all in our humble opinion are the greatest of the canon of renaissance choral literature. There is no academic component to the program, which may come as a relief to some of you; rather we are offering a rich tapestry of beautiful and multi-hued fibers, woven together with love, and respect - the best of the renaissance – which means “re-birth” by the way. Here's to many more years.

Thank you.

John Bradley, Executive Director

Loquebantur variis linguis, a7 – Thomas Tallis (c. 1505-1585)

Thomas Tallis is the only 16th-century composer to have spent his entire musical career in the chapel royal of a single ruling dynasty; England's fabulous and tumultuous Tudors. From the religious machinations and marital intrigues of Henry VIII, through reformation, restoration, beheadings and benefices, to the opulence of the court of Elizabeth I, he composed music during one of the most volatile and fascinating periods of history. The two contrasting works heard tonight show Tallis at his most heart-wrenchingly simple and magnificently elaborate. It seems fitting to open with his monumental respond *Loquebantur variis linguis*. Set in seven voices, SSATTBB, it is rich in harmony and well endowed with passing harmonic collisions which serve to make its points of resolution all the more satisfying. As its text says “*The apostles spoke with other tongues*” thus it is an ideal concert opener inviting the audience to embark with us on a journey through different musical styles and harmonic vocabularies discovered over our last fifteen years.

℞. Loquebantur variis linguis apostoli, alleluia;
magnalia Dei, alleluia.

℣. Repleti sunt omnes Spiritu Sancto,
et ceperunt loqui.

℞. Magnalia Dei, alleluia.

℣. Gloria Patri et Filio
et Spiritui Sancto.

℞. Alleluia

℞. The apostles spoke with other tongues, alleluia;
the wonderful works of God, alleluia.

℣. They were filled with the Holy Ghost,
and began to speak.

℞. The wonderful works of God, alleluia.

℣. Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Ghost.

℞. Alleluia.

If ye love me a4 – Tallis

In his most protestant voice Tallis composed the exquisitely simple *If ye love me*. The contrast between these two emblematic works by this beloved composer reveal the depths of his abilities not only to adapt to the liturgical demands of his time, but his unwavering ability to create great works of art regardless of the form or style. One of the first anthems composed for the Chapel Royal of Edward VI, it was the beginning of a genre of compositional legacy that was to endure for the next 500 years. Tallis' compositions are staples of church repertoire even today, English or Latin, it matters not, but that they survive is remarkable if not miraculous; an enduring legacy from greatest of English church composers.

Yf ye loue me, kepe my commaundementes.
And I wyl praye the father,
and he shal geue you another comforter,
that he maye byde withe you for euer:
euen ye sprete of trueth.

Sing Joyfully a6 – William Byrd (c.1540-1623)

William Byrd, recusant Catholic, romantic writer of pastoral madrigals, inventor of the verse anthem, and favorite of Elizabeth I, remains one of England's most beloved composers. Byrd could and did move freely between Latin and English, but was the first composer writing in English to completely accept English prosody as the moving force behind an elaborate musical line, employing rhythm and word painting in such a distinctive way that even the casual listener can immediately identify the music as his. Interestingly, while his Latin motets drew inspiration from continental models imported by composers such as Philip Van Wilder and Alfonso Ferrabosco, the English pieces are of a completely different nature, and portray a style that is remarkably British. *Sing Joyfully* is a prime example of Byrd's later English anthem writing. For the first time he experiments with divided mean (alto) creating more importance for inner voices. *Sing Joyfully* is believed to have been sung for the christening of Mary, daughter of James I, supported by evidence given in the 'Old cheque book' of the Chapel Royal, where it is mentioned toward the end of the service: '*Then followed a full Anthem (singe joyfullye)*'. This is almost certainly a reference to Byrd's anthem heard here tonight. *Sing Joyfully*, generally agreed to be Byrd's last surviving English anthem, is furthermore the only one of Byrd's anthems to make the extended references to *Jacob* (James I) which play such a prominent part in musical settings dating to his reign.

Sing joyfully to God our strength,
Sing loud unto the God of Jacob!
Take the song, bring forth the timbrel,
the pleasant harp, and the viol.
Blow the trumpet in the new moon,
even in the time appointed, and at our feast day.
For this is a statute for Israel,
and a law of the God of Jacob.

Eterne laudis lilium a5 – Robert Fayrfax (1464-1521)

Our Lady is the great allegory of the Church; impregnated by the Holy Spirit, the inviolate bearer of Christ, present at the crucifixion and, although not mentioned in the Gospels, presumably a witness to the resurrection. The flowering of art, music, and poetry composed in praise and honor of the Virgin were central to the world into which Robert Fayrfax was born and lived. Fayrfax, recipient of the first doctorate in Music from Oxford, royal favorite, composer and singer of the Chapel Royals of both Henry VII and Henry VIII, was a contemporary of both John Taverner and Robert Cornysh. It was however in his capacity as chapel master at the great abbey of St. Albans that he received the commission for *Eterne laudis lilium*. The account books of Saint Alban's Abbey show that on March 20, 1502, Elizabeth of York (wife of Henry VII and mother of Henry VIII) paid "to Robert Fayrfax for setting an Anthem of oure lady and Saint Elizabeth – 20s [shillings]." The text of the motet is a typical Marian votive anthem, interesting in this particular case, because the singers have the unique opportunity to sing some unusual and in fact probably fictitious names of Mary's ancestors. Mary's family lineage was of great interest to the medieval church: through her ancestry, theologians of the time explained, or invented, the royal line of David. Much attention is paid to Mary's life and lineage, in apocryphal books like the *Protevangelium* of James, *The Gospel of the Nativity of Mary*, as well as in the *Legenda Aurea – Lives of the Saints* – compiled by Jacques de Voraigne in the 13th-century. It is here that mention is made that Jesus' Davidic line must come through Mary's ancestors, not as is said in the Gospels, through Joseph's. But many questions remain unanswered. Perhaps it is for this reason that the fascination has endured unwavering for 1800 years. Osborn Bokenham, a monk and poet who flourished in the mid-15th-century, composed a number of devotional poems about various saints, and in a poem to Saint Anne, the mother of Mary, you will notice a similar emphasis on genealogy, as well as some now familiar names, as written by the unknown poet of the text for Fayrfax' motet.

*Ferst of hyr nobyl and royal kynrede,
Conveyede from David down lyneally;
Of perfyht levynge also; and fynally*

*Of plenteuous fruht; and Ysachar hyr fadyr
Was clepyd, and Nasaphath hyht hyr modyr.*

Fayrfax inserts a nod to his patroness in two ways: the first is the acrostic in which the first letter of each line spells out *Elisabeth Regina Angliae*, and by setting the name Elizabeth in each of the five voice parts in turn, in the middle of the duet section, where is impossible to miss. Musically, the motet contains all the required ingredients for a stirring and emotional Tudor masterpiece. Set in two distinct sections, florid *solis* sections are followed by grand *tuttis* that wash over the listener in waves of increasing size until the motet is brought to a close by a typically British “Amen”. In the music of the Renaissance and beyond nowhere else is the setting of a single word so consistently and elegantly addressed. From the protracted amen’s of the Tudor composers to verse anthems composed during the reigns of Elizabeth and the Stuarts, to the famous ending chorus of *Messiah*, simply stated, no one does it better than the Brits.

Eterne laudis lilium, O dulcis Maria, te
Laudat vox angelica, Nutrix Christe pia.
Iure prolis glorie detur harmonia
Salus nostre memorie omni agonia.
Ave radix, flos virginum, O sanctificata.
Benedicta in utero materno creata.
Eras sancta puerpera et inviolata,
Tuo ex Ihesu filio virgo peramata.
Honestis celi precibus virgo veneraris.

*O lily of unceasing praise, O sweetest Mary,
angel voices exalt you, Christ’s devoted nurse.
By the rule of your offspring comes the harmony of
glory, salvation by all the striving of our memorial.
Hail root and bloom of maidens, made to be holy;
you were created blessed in your mother’s womb.
You were a holy mother Maiden of heaven you are
worshipped with a heartfelt prayer.*

Regis excelsi filii visu iocundaris.
Eius divino lumine tu nusquam privaris.
Gaude sole splendidior virgo singularis.
Issachar quoque Nazaphat nec non Ismaria.
Nati ex Iesse stipite qua venit Maria,
Atque Maria Cleophae sancta Zacharia,

*You joy to see your son the king most high. Nowhere is
his heavenly splendour separate from you; rejoice, O
virgin unique, more glorious than the sun. Issachar
also, Nazaphat and Ismaria, offspring of the root of
Jesse whence came Mary, and Mary wife of Cleophas
blessed Zachariah,*

A qua patre Elizabeth, matre Sophonia
Natus et Dei gratia Iohannes Baptista.
Gaudebat clauso Domino in matrice cista.
Line ex hoc genere est evangelista
Iohannes. Anne filia ex Maria ista
Est Iesus Dei filius natus in hunc mundum.

*With whom as father Elizabeth, whose mother was
Sophonia, was mother to John the Baptist, by the
grace of God. She rejoices at the Lord, enclosed
within her maternal treasury. Of this seed came John
the Evangelist. Of Mary daughter of Anne was Jesus
Christ born into the world.*

Cuius cruoris tumulo mundatur in mundum;
Conferat nos in gaudium, in evum
Iocundum, qui cum patre et spiritu sancto
Regnat in unum. Amen

*By the shedding of his blood the world is purified, he
transports us to bliss, and age of joyfulness, who
reigns together with the Father and he Holy Spirit.
Amen.*

Magi Veniunt a4 – Jacobus Clemens non Papa (c.1505-155/6)

Jacobus Clemens non Papa belongs to the middle group of Franco-Flemish composers, one which includes three other composers on this evening’s concert; Nicolas Gombert, Thomas Crecquillon and Pierre de Manchicourt. This period of Franco-Flemish composition, the generation after Josquin is known for dense texture, lush polyphony and pervasive imitation. Little is known of Clemens’ background, but he certainly came from somewhere in modern Belgium or the Netherlands. We first hear of him in the 1530’s, when his works appeared in one of Parisian publisher Pierre Attaignant’s collections of *chansons*. Between March, 1544 and June, 1545 he worked as *succentor* at the cathedral at Bruges and shortly thereafter he began a business relationship with Tylman Susato, the renowned publisher of Antwerp, which was to last for the rest of his life. From 1545 until 1549 Clemens was choirmaster to Philippe de Croy, Duke of Aerschot, one of Charles V’s greatest generals, who was Clemens’ connection to the

imperial court. He left an impressive body of music, much of which survives, including 15 mass settings, 233 motets, two complete magnificat cycles, 100 *chansons*, and the *Souterleidekens*, a cycle of psalms in Flemish.

There are several theories regarding the origin of the epithet "non Papa". One suggests that Susato coined it to distinguish him from Pope Clement VII—"Jacob Clemens—but not the Pope." Another source states that it was meant to distinguish him from Jacobus Papa, A Flemish poet. But neither theory holds much real weight, the Pope died before Clemens published anything and the poet was a stretch. Details about his death are not known, but he probably died in 1555 or 1556. The 1558 text in Jacobus Vaet's *Continuo lacrimas*, an elegiac motet on Clemens' death, suggests that he met a violent end, though if this is true, the circumstances are not given.

Of the three four-voice motets on the program, the most elaborate is *Magi veniunt*, published posthumously by Pierre Phalèse in 1559, is a masterfully constructed, episodic account of the visitation of the Magi. Though he uses texts from office responds for both section, neither is in the correct form, suggestion an extra-liturgical use. Interestingly, the texts are set in reverse order, but the alleluia at the end of the *secunda pars* leads one to believe that this was not an editorial mistake. In both sections, the text begins with a line of exposition followed by the words of the Magi themselves. This choice allows for an intrinsically dramatic composition. Particularly eloquent, is the settings of *Rex Judaeorum* and *cuius stellam vidimus*. Interesting in terms clarity of text underlay is the setting of the gifts *aurum, thus et myrrham*—gold, frankincense and myrrh—and the subsequent vibrant Alleluia.

Magi venienut ab oriente Jerosolimam quaerentes et dicentes. "Ubi est qui natus est Rex Judaorum cuius stellam vidimus et venimus cum muneribus adorare Dominum."

The wise men came from the east to Jerusalem inquiring and saying, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews, whose star we have seen? We have come with gifts to offer the Lord."

Magi videntes stellam dixerunt ad invicem: "Hoc signum magni regis est eamus et in quiramus eum et offeramus ei munera aurum thus et mirrham." Alleluia.

The magi, seeing the star, said to each other: "This is the sign of a great king. Let us go and ask after him and offer him gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh." Alleluia.

Tota Pulchra a5 – Nicolas Gombert (c.1490-1565)

Nicolas Gombert was born in Southern Flanders, possibly in Le Gorgue, in the last years of the 15th-century. There is evidence from a number of sources that he was a pupil of Josquin Des Près at Condé sur L'Escaut, likely during the composer's retirement there beginning in 1515. Imperial records show that he was a singer in Charles V's imperial chapel beginning in 1526, and was listed in the chapel records as *magister puerorum*, the teacher of singing to the choirboys in 1529. His duties included the musical direction, education and care of the boy singers, and both he and the *Capilla Flemenca*, the Flemish singers, traveled extensively with the emperor throughout the empire, singing at various state occasions. In the 1530's Gombert took priestly orders, and was eventually granted benefices at several cathedrals, including Kortrijk (Courtrai) Lens, Metz, Béthune, ultimately retiring to Tournai. He remained in the Imperial Court Chapel until sometime between 1537 and 1540. Gombert apparently attempted to cultivate a relationship with Ferrante Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, and captain to Charles V, revealed in a letter, which likely accompanied the delivery of a motet sent on June 3, 1547. This letter, the only surviving example of Gombert's autograph, is in the collection at the Morgan Library in New York. Gombert was highly regarded by his contemporaries and his works were included in anthologies produced by most of the major European printing houses. In Paris, Pierre Attaignant published his masses and early motets, while Venetian publishers Scotto and Gardano published collections entirely devoted to his motets beginning in 1539. His works continued to be performed long after his death, and remained in the repertoire of many musical institutions for several generations. Gombert was controversial., Heinrich Glarean, a music theorist of the Josquin generation, felt that the new innovations of the pervasive style in general and of Gombert in particular had declined and degenerated, leaving little but musical anarchy. But, , Herman Finck, like most of Gombert's contemporaries, was luxuriating in the textures and density of his rich and hypnotic compositions. saying: [*Gombert*] *composes music entirely different from the past. For he avoids rests, and his composition abounds in both full harmonies and imitations.*

Motets with texts from the biblical Song of Songs such as *Tota pulchra*, included in an extensive collection published in Venice in 1539, were popular with renaissance composers. The texts found in antiphons for the offices of the Blessed Virgin, the verses of the Song of Songs mixed and matched. Each contain specific references traditionally associated with the veneration of the Virgin, some strangely, at least to modern ears, erotic discussions of breasts and lips intermingled with references to crowning, flowers, and purity – “*there is no spot in thee*”.

Tota pulchra es amica mea,
et macula non est in te.
Veni de Libano, columba mea.
Veni coronaberis

*Thou art fair my love;
there is no spot in thee.
Come with me from Lebannon, my dove,
Come that thou might be crowned.*

Pater peccavi a8 – Thomas Crecquillon (c.1505-1557)

We know nothing at all about Thomas Crecquillon, until he appears in the records of the imperial chapel of Charles V in 1540 and the entirety of his known career was spent in the service of the emperor. In imperial records he is mentioned as *maistre de la Chapelle* three times and apparently succeeded Adrian Thibault in 1538. When the chapel was reorganized in 1545 he relinquished his role as *maistre* and became de facto court composer. He traveled widely with Charles on his many journeys as part of the responsibilities of the imperial chapel and was known to have been in Spain from 1541-43 and the German lands from 1545-1548. He very likely died of the plague at Béthune in 1557, when the area was afflicted. He was a loyal member of Charles household and was held in high regard, judging by the by the number of personal commissions from the emperor. He was also an ordained priest and a Master of Arts. We are fortunate that an enormous volume of Crecquillon's work has survived, some 12 masses, over 200 chansons, and 125 motets including two Lamentation cycles. His work was published mainly in anthologies and was printed and disseminated well into the 17th Century. His motets were included by Lassus in the choirbooks of the Bavarian ducal chapel, and in several printed editions circulated in Germany during the last years of the 16th Century.

The heart wrenchingly beautiful *Pater peccavi* contains the most important and heart-rending lines from St. Luke's parable of the Prodigal Son. The indescribable poignancy of the setting of *ex mercenariis tuis* draws the listener into the very essence of this story of sin, repentance and forgiveness. The eight-voice texture allows for some quasi-double choir settings that then join and intertwine in lush imitative part-writing. *Pater peccavi* is one of the pieces that are credited in some sources to Clemens and in others to Crecquillon. Recent scholarly opinions have solved the mystery, based on the earliest known manuscript source, finally crediting Crecquillon as the composer of this monumental work of art

Pater peccavi in coelum et coram te
iam non sum dignus vocari filius tuus.
“Fac me sicut unum ex mercenariis tuis.”

*Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,
And am no more worthy to be called thy son:
make me as one of thy hired servants.*

Quanti mercenarii in domo patris mei
abundant panibus,
ego autem hic fame pereo
Surgam et tibo ad patrem meum, et dicam ei:
“Fac me sicut unum ex mercenariis tuis.”

*How many hired servants of my father's
have bread enough and to spare,
and I perish with hunger!
I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him,
make me as one of thy hired servants.*

Regina Coeli a6 – Pierre de Manchicourt (c.1510-1565)

Pierre de Manchicourt has emerged at last from the shadows and taken his place among of the group of Franco-Flemish composers who dominated the European musical scene during the second third of the 16th-century. His name, now included on a list of luminaries that includes Jacobus Clemens non Papa, Thomas Crecquillon, and Nicolas Gombert, adds to the portrait of those important composers who held prestigious positions during the lives and reigns of Charles V and Philip II. Manchicourt was active in Burgundy and Spain, had many of his motets and chansons published during his lifetime, and was considered one of the most popular composers of his time. The

majority of his works were published by Pierre Attaingnant who included his works in no less than fifteen of his collections. In 1539 Attaingnant devoted an entire volume to his motets, which due to its popularity was reprinted in 1545. By 1600 Manchicourt was largely forgotten.

His setting of *Regina Coeli*, the Marian antiphon designated for Eastertide, is a fairly early work, published in Attaingnant's collection of Manchicourt's motets printed in 1536. One of the great joys of researching this repertoire is uncovering the musical treasures concealed beneath the surface. *Regina* contains an interesting note, written by the composer: *Canon: Sans souspirer ne chantez pointz*. It is believed to instruct the singers to leave out the minim rests and not to sing the dots – known as *pointz* at that time. Though a literal translation might elicit a laugh – one of the Polyhymnia singers thought it was asking the singers not to breath – what actually happens is that with the rests and dots eliminated, the structure of the canon actually reverses position during the course of the motet. The result is a striking syncopated duet between the two highest voices as the rhythmic patterns as the two parts move past one another, while an examination of the score clearly shows the second cantus part overtaking the first cantus.

Regina cœli lætare, alleluia:
Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia,
Resurrexit sicut dixit, alleluia.
Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.

*O Queen of heaven rejoice! alleluia:
For He whom thou didst merit to bear, alleluia,
Hath arisen as he said, alleluia.
Pray for us to God, alleluia.*

Regina Coeli a12, Nicolas Gombert

Gombert's magnificent *Regina Cœli*, was published by Attaingnant in 1535. Gombert deploys his twelve voices as three *cantus two altus*, three tenors and four basses. The motet is not composed, as Manchicourt's treatment of this antiphon is on the *Regina Cœli* chant itself, but rather on the Easter antiphon *Et ecce terræ motus* – “and behold the earth shook”. It is likely that Gombert was familiar with Antoine Brumel's breathtaking twelve-voice mass on the same *cantus firmus*, and this piece could have been written as a companion for a 16th-century performance. Gombert, like Brumel, alternates between passages deploying the full choir with sections in which he creates contrasting and varied combinations of voices. In the passages at which all of the voices are singing at the same time the sensation is quite extraordinary. Typically, Gombert favors the lower voices, and in this motet uses the trebles sparingly as descants that float above the swirling polyphony below. This work is one of the extremely rare instances that the trebles are divided, though he uses massive textures frequently, in his magnificent masses and motets.

Intermission

Angeli, archangeli a6 – Heinrich Isaac (.1450 – 1517)

The first known record of Heinrich Isaac is a 1484 account of his passage through Innsbruck on his way to Florence to work for Lorenzo the Magnificent. While under Lorenzo's employ, he became a member of the *Cantori di San Giovanni*, the group supplying polyphony for cathedral and other local churches in Florence. This group was, not surprisingly, an institution funded and controlled by the Medici. Lorenzo died in 1492, and the Medici lost power in 1497. In that year, Isaac departed Florence to become court composer to Maximilian I in Vienna. He remained in the Emperor's retinue until he retired in 1514 and moved back to Florence, where he died in 1517. He left a wealth of surviving works, far outnumbering those of many of his contemporaries. Equally comfortable composing sacred and secular works, Isaac had an astounding ability to adapt to the musical requirements of whichever cultural or spiritual milieu in which he found himself. Isaac's most important body of work is the *Choralis Constantinus*. It contains over 300 settings of the Mass proper—the music specific to individual feasts and ferias. The largest single body of religious music composed since the 12th Century *Magnus Liber* of Léonin and Pérotin, the *Choralis Constantinus* was not to be matched until William Byrd published his *Gradualia* in 1605.

Angeli, archangeli, composed in Florence around 1490, is typical of Florentine motet composition at the end of the 15th-century. It is clear that Isaac was influenced by his predecessor Guillaume Dufay, and the motet bears similarities in style to other music composed for the cathedral. Though the text is from the office of Matins on the Feast of All Saints, the *cantus firmus* – *Comme femme descomforté*– is a chanson by Binchois with a clearly Marian bent. These secular tunes used as the basis for masses and motets were immediately recognizable to contemporary audiences and could further suggest a possible use for a Marian occasion. The relevance of the choice of *cantus firmus* informs musicologists when proposing the liturgical contexts of renaissance motets. In the case of *Angeli, archangeli*, the polyphony cascades gloriously around the *cantus firmus* line emphasizing as opposed to concealing the source for the work.

Angeli, archangeli, throni et
dominationes, principatus et
potestates, virtutes, cherubim
atque seraphim, patriarche et
prophete, sancti legis doctores,
apostoli omnes, Christi martyres,
sancti confessores, virgins Domini,
anchoritae, sanctique omnes,
intercedite pro nobis.

*Angels, archangels, thrones and
dominations, principalities and
powers, virtues, cherubim and
seraphim, patriarchs and
prophets, holy doctors of the law,
all apostles, martyrs of Christ,
holy confessors, virgins of the Lord,
anchorites, and all saints,
intercede for us!*

Te gloriosus apostolorum chorus,
te prophetarum laudabilis numerus,
te martyrum candidatus
laudat exercitus, te omnes sancti
et electi voce confitentur
unanimes, beata Trinitas, unus Deus.
Amen

*The glorious chorus of apostles,
the praiseworthy number of
prophets, the chosen throng of
martyrs extols you, all saints and
the elect together sing praises to
you, blessed Trinity, single God
Amen.*

Victime paschali laudes a6 – Adrian Willaert (c 1490-1562)

The most important event in the development of the Venetian Style was the appointment of Adrian Willaert on December 12, 1527, as *maestro de cappella* of San Marco where he would remain in for thirty-five years. Willaert was a prominent composer and contemporary of Clemens non Papa, Crecquillon and Gombert. He had studied in Paris with the intention of becoming a lawyer, but soon after his arrival his interests switched to music, an event that was viewed with some trepidation by his father, also a musician, who like many modern parents was less than happy about his son's chosen vocation. Willaert studied with composer Jean Mouton, a member of the French Chapel Royal under Louis XII and François I. Willaert's first Italian appointment was to the house of Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, brother of Alfonso, for whom he went to work on the death of Alfonso in 1520. The patronage of the Farnese seems to have endured even after he was hired by San Marco, as Willaert dedicated his *Muscia Nova*, a collection of motets and madrigals, to the Duke of Ferrara. The transfer from Ferrara to Venice seems to have been amicable; Alfonso is said to have visited the ailing Willaert in 1562. A visit of this nature was an indication of his former patron's respect. Willaert was responsible for developing the *cappella* that endured till the death of Giovanni Gabrieli in 1613. Although he didn't invent *cori spezzati*, he certainly was the first composer to exploit its potential to the fullest. His collection of vesper psalms published in 1555 was the first complete set of office psalms by a single composer and was used for years. Not until Constanzo Porta in 1601 and Monteverdi in 1610 was there a similarly complete collection.

Victime paschale laudes, from *Musica Nova* is impeccably composed with attention to text on a grand scale in 6 voices, It reveals clear indications of the roots of the later Venetian style. Interestingly, the web site of the Basilica de San Marco rather ferociously defends the "Italian-ness" of the later proponents of the Venetian school, practically implying that the Flemish composers were run out of town on a rail. It is the only source that seems to credit the development of the style to the Gabrielis alone. It appears that the pride of Venetians in all things Venetian has survived the test of time. In fact, Willaert *Il divino Adriano*, was much beloved and was known for his kindness and sincerity Willaert was not only a brilliant director and administrator but also an important teacher of the younger generation of Northern Italian composers, including Constanzo Porta, Andrea Gabrieli and Gioseffo Zarlino, the theorist and subsequent *maestro de cappella* at San Marco. Zarlino was a staunch supporter of *prima prattica* (polyphony) in the face of the first flowerings of baroque thought.

Victime paschali laudes
immolent Christiani
Agnes redemit oves:
Christus innocens Patri
reconciliavit peccatores.
Mors et vita duello
confluxere mirando:
Dux vitae mortuus regnat vivus

*The Paschal victim ever praising,
O Christians, bring your sacrifice:
The Lamb the sheep redeemeth:
Sinless Christ, who to the Father
hath sinners reconcil'd.
When death and life together
in conflict were seen to strive:
The Lord of life that died, now reigns alive.*

Dic nobis, Maria,
quid vidisti in via
spulchrum Christi viventis
et gloriam resurgentis
Angelicos testes,
sudarium et vestes.
Surrexit Christus spes mea:
praecedet vos in Galilaeam
Scimus Christum surrexisse a mortuis vere
to nobis victor rex miserere.

*Tell us, Mary,
what thou did'st see along thy way.
"The tomb of the living Christ I saw;
who in his glory rose again
and Angel witnesses,
and sweat-stain'd linen clothes."
Christ, my hope, is ris'n indeed
who goes before thee into Galilee.
We know that Christ hath risen from the grave
Have mercy, O victorious King, and save.*

O quam suavis a 7, Giovanni Gabrieli (1556-1612)

Giovanni Gabrieli is most the familiar of all late 16th century Venetian composers; his works have retained a popularity that typify the style and sound of the music in San Marco at the turn of the 17th century. We know nothing about his early years, but it seems fairly certain that he was taken under the wing of his Uncle Andrea's family at an early age. It was under Andrea's tutelage that he learned music. Like Andrea, Giovanni also spent time in the lavish ducal court chapel of Lassus' patron Albrecht V in Munich, and probably studied with Lassus as well. It is likely that his uncle had some influence that opened this door for the young Giovanni to flourish at the Bavarian court. His exact activities while in Munich are not known, but he remained there until the death of Albrecht in 1579. In 1584, upon the resignation of Claudio Merulo, Giovanni became interim organist at San Marco, and was appointed to the post permanently in January of 1585. For a brief time he and his uncle were the first and second organists until Andrea's death in August of the same year. Giovanni was also a valued teacher and counted Heinrich Schütz among his most famous pupils. In his dedication of *Sacrae Symphonie*, Schütz wrote *At Gabrielius, Dii immortales, quantus vir* (But Gabrieli, Immortal Gods, what a man!).

Gabrieli's compositions are lush, multi-part oceans of sound. They often use complex syncopated rhythms that when sung or played together create a slow-moving harmonic rhythm perfectly suited to the vast echoic vaults of San Marco. Though Giovanni's music was replaced rather too quickly by that of Monteverdi and the *secunda prattica* (essentially, homophony with continuo), it survived well into the seventeenth century in Germany, espoused by Schutz and Praetorius. The beautiful *O quam suavis*, contrasts long sustained notes with ornamental subdivisions to create changes of mood. Though set for a single choir, the vocal texture expands to seven voices and contracts to as few as three in an interwoven tapestry of musical colors that ending in high sustained notes and then retreating on the words *dimitens inanes*. It is interesting to hear these two Venetian pieces as a set, representing the beginning and the pinnacle of the style. The influences of Willaert are clearly present in the spaciousness of Gabrieli's works.

O quam suavis est, Domine, spiritus tuus:
ut dulcedinem tuam in filios demonstrares,
Pane suavissimo de coelo praestio,
et surientes reple bonis
fastidiosos divites, dimitens inanes.

*Oh, how sweet. Lord, is thy spirit:
That you have showed your goodness among men
With the sweetest bread sent from heaven
Filling those who are hungry with good things,
And sending the disdainful rich away empty*

Tota pulchra es Maria, a6 - Francisco Guerrero (1528 – 1599)

Francisco Guerrero is without a doubt one of the most beloved composers of the Iberian School. Of all the Spanish Renaissance composers, he was the one who lived and worked the most in Spain. His other compatriots Morales and Victoria spent substantial portions of their careers in Italy. Guerrero held posts at Jaen, Málaga and finally Seville. Guerrero left an impressive body of surviving compositions including 18 masses and 150 motets, hymns and other liturgical works as well as a substantial collection of *villancicos*, and secular songs. One of the most travelled of renaissance composers; Guerrero went Italy for a year (1581-1582) where he published two books of his music. After returning to Seville for several years, he made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1589. His adventure included visits to Damascus, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem; on the return trip his ship was twice attacked by pirates, who threatened his life, stole his money, and held him for ransom. His ransom must have been paid, for he was able to return to Spain; unfortunately he had no money, and endured a series of misfortunes including some time spent in debtor's prison; at last his old employer at Seville Cathedral extricated him, and he resumed working for them. His book about his adventurous visit to the Holy Land was published in 1590 and was a popular success. Guerrero died in the plague of 1599 in Seville.

Guerrero's reputation as the quintessential composer of Marian motets is well deserved, and is eloquently revealed in *Tota pulchra es Maria*, published in Venice in 1570. The motet gracefully portrays the character of devotions to Our Lady prevalent in 16th-Century Iberian theology. The use of the Song of Songs, in reference to Mary was commonplace, and the passionate nature of the text reflects the intensity of these devotions. Guerrero's music remained popular for hundreds of years, especially in cathedrals in Latin America. A Magnificat discovered in the 20th-century in Lima, Peru, once thought to be an anonymous 18th century work, turned out to be Guerrero's.

Tota pulchra es Maria,
et macula non est in te.
Veni de Libano, sponsa mea.
Veni de Libano, veni, coronaberis.

*Thou art all fair, Mary
and there is no spot in thee.
Come from Lebanon, my spouse,
come from Lebanon, come, thou wilt be crowned.*

Vulnerasti cor meum,
soror mea sponsa meum.
Vulnerasti cor meum,
in uno oclulorum tuorum,
et in uno crine coli tui.

*Thou has ravished my heart,
my sister, my spouse.
Thou has ravished my heart
with one of thine eyes
and with one hair of thy neck.*

O Magnum mysterium, a 4 Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611)

Victoria was one of the greatest of all the Renaissance composers. He is unique amongst the great in that he wrote no secular material. He was trained as a choirboy in Avila. He moved to Rome as a young man where he was first associated with the Jesuit *Collegio Germanico* before joining the Oratorians. His compositions are found in virtually every collection of music in both the Old and New Worlds. After leaving Rome, Victoria entered the service of the Dowager Empress Maria, sister of Phillip II, at the convent she founded outside Madrid. It was for her that he composed his *Missa pro Defunctis* for 6 voices, for her funeral in 1603.

O magnum mysterium
et admirabile sacramentum,
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum
jacentem in praesepio.
O beata Virgo, cujus viscera meruerunt
portare Dominum Jesum Christum.
Alleluia!

O great mystery,
and wonderful sacrament,
that the animals should see the new-born Lord
lying in a manger.
Blessed is the Virgin whose womb was worthy
to carry our Lord Jesus Christ.
Alleluia.

Ave Regina Coelorum a 8, Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla (c. 1590 – 1664)

Padilla was born in Málaga, Spain, around 1590, and received his early musical training from Francisco Vásquez at the cathedral there. He became *maestro de capilla* at the collegiate church in Jerez de la Frontera in 1612, and was appointed

maestro at the cathedral at Cádiz in 1616. He was ordained priest sometime during that period. It is not known when he emigrated to Mexico, but in October of 1622 Padilla was appointed by the chapter of Puebla Cathedral to the post of *cantor* and assistant to *maestro de capilla* Gaspar Fernández. He was named *maestro* in 1629 upon the death of Fernández, and remained in his post until his death in 1664. For the nearly four decades he worked at the cathedral he educated choirboys, was responsible for the hiring of singers and instrumentalists and, with the patronage of Bishop Juan Palafox y Mendoza, amassed a collection of printed music that was to become the cornerstone of the Palafoxian Library. This library was, and remains to this day, one of the greatest and most complete collections of music in the New World.

Toward the end of his life, Padilla's music was bound and preserved in a volume now known as Puebla Choirbook XV, the source for the *Ave Regina Coelorum*. Padilla was a prolific composer, and Choirbook XV contains a plethora of psalm settings, two for double choir as well as a collection of 4 voice *falso bordone* based settings for vespers, a ferial mass a4 several motets ranging from 4-6 voices, a collection of 6-voice lamentations, and the *turbae* responses from the Saint Matthew Passion, presumably intended to compliment the plainchant narrative. *Ave Regina caelorum* and the mass based on it were likely written for the 1649 dedication of Puebla Cathedral.

Ave Regina cœlorum,
Ave, Domina Angelorum;
Salve, radix sancta,
Ex qua mundo lux est orta.
Gaude gloriosa,
Super omnes speciosa:
Vale, valde decora,
Et pro nobis semper Christum exora.

*Hail, O Queen of Heav'n enthron'd,
Hail, by angels Mistress own'd
Root of Jesse, Gate of morn,
Whence the world's true light was born.
Glorious Virgin, joy to thee.
Lovliest whom in Heaven they see,
Fairest thou where all are fair!
Plead with Christ our sins to spare.*

Ego flos campi a7 - Jacobus Clemens non Papa

In 1550 Clemens was employed as *sanger ende componist* (singer and composer) by the Marian Brotherhood in 's-Hertogenbosch. It was for this community that he composed and dedicated - '*ter eeren onser liever vrouwen*' - the magnificent seven-voice *Ego flos campi* heard this evening. It is unique amongst Clemens' works; the mystical number seven is allegorically associated with the seven joys and sorrows of Mary. The homophonically set phrase "*sicut liliū inter spinas*," taken from the Song of Songs, evokes the Virgin and is the motto of the brotherhood. This magnificent motet has remained in our repertoire since we first performed it in 2004, and one of the very first pieces I edited from a manuscript copy provided by the *Staatsbibliothek* in Vienna. On a personal note, when Polyhymnia was formed, it had always been my intention to be one of the singers. I discovered conductorless was not such a hot idea. But, as we were picking the music for this concert, I wanted to find one piece in which I could sing. *Ego* was the obvious choice. During the rehearsal and earlier performance of this work I was yet again reminded of the ability of these fine singers, and I am honored to perform with them one more time. Thus we end as we began, and with this remarkable motet we conclude our performance. It is, and always will be our very favorite piece.

Ego flos campi et liliū convallium.
Sicut liliū inter spinas
sic amica mea inter filias.
Fons hortorum
et puteus aquarum viventium
quae fluent impetu de Libano

*I am the flower of the field, the lily of the valley.
Like a lily among the thorns,
so is my beloved among women.
Like a garden spring,
like a well of living waters
that flow swiftly down from Lebanon.*

In closing, we hope you enjoy our offering of this evening as much as we have enjoyed bringing it to you. It represents a joyous milestone for all of us, and a departure from our more familiar and formal explorations into this extraordinary music. The past fifteen years have been a journey full of wonder, taking us from the courts of Vienna, to the Sistine chapel, to the cathedrals of England, to Spanish gardens, and to the riches of the New World. Please join us for a celebration immediately following, to eat and drink and rejoice in the legacy that this music represents.

John Bradley

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Upcoming Concerts in 2010

Saturday March 13, 2010, 8PM

Psalmi Davidis Poenitentiales

Orlande de Lassus (1522 ~ 1594)

Pre-concert lecture 7 PM Dr. Andrew Kirkman

In 1563 Lassus composed a cycle of the *Penitential Psalms* ~ the Biblical poetry believed to have been written by King David in penance for his adultery with the beautiful Bathsheba. Lassus' settings of these poignant texts are a towering achievement: one of the greatest cycles by a single composer in history. Commissioned by Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria and jealously guarded, the *Penitential Psalms* were never performed outside of Albrecht's chapel until after his death. Come glimpse behind the tapestried walls of the High Renaissance ducal court at Munich, and hear the sounds that so moved their patron that he kept these works for his own private devotions.

Saturday, May 8, 2010 8PM

Music from the Churches of Rome

Music of Allegri, Anerio, Morales, Palestrina & Victoria

Pre-concert lecture 7 PM Dr. Andrew Kirkman

Cappella Sistina, San Giovanni in Laterano, Santa Maria Maggiore; these names reverberate in our collective memories as the fundamental foundations of the Roman Church. In the years that bridge the 16th and 17th centuries, these remarkable buildings echoed with the sounds of music by such composers as Victoria, Morales, and Palestrina ~ including Gregorio Allegri's celebrated *Miserere mei, Deus*. Come with us as we explore the musical works and traditions of these magnificent edifices, and the remarkable composers who provided the celestial harmonies for their liturgies.

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If you are interested please feel free to introduce yourself to our board president, Judith Wink, or one of the other board members at tonight's reception, or contact us at info@polyhymnia-nyc.org, or 917-838-4636.