

Gombert – Missa: Media Vita

Nicholas Gombert – Kyrie, *Missa Media Vita*

Nicholas Gombert – Gloria, *Missa Media Vita*

Lauda – Amor dolçe sença pare

Josquin – Domine, ne in furore tuo

Lauda – Jesu Christo glorioso

Nicholas Gombert – Salve Regina

Nicholas Gombert – Credo, *Missa Media Vita*

INTERVAL

Josquin – Illibata Dei virgo

Nicholas Gombert – Sanctus, *Missa Media Vita*

Lauda – Ave Regina gloriosa

Nicholas Gombert – Quam pulchra es

Lauda – Or piangiamo

Nicholas Gombert – Agnus Dei, *Missa Media Vita*

Josquin – Nymphes des Bois

One of the unfortunate effects of the traditional Josquin-centered historiography has been the comparative neglect of not only Josquin des Prez's contemporaries but also of the next generation of composers. One such composer whose genius has only recently been fully acknowledged is **Nicolas Gombert** (c.1495-c.1560), who can now be seen as one of the leading figures of the generation between Josquin and Palestrina.

Gombert was probably born in southern Flanders and was, according to Hermann Finck's *Pratica musica* (1556), taught by Josquin (if this is true it would probably have been during Josquin's last years in Condé). In 1526 Gombert joined the chapel choir of Emperor Charles V in Spain, and by 1529 was its *maître des enfants*. His position at the most prestigious court in Europe allowed him to travel throughout the continent with the Imperial entourage and, as a result, his reputation spread. It seems that Gombert served unofficially as a court composer and his compositions were printed by all the major European publishers; his fame was such that the Venetian firms of Scotto and Gardane issued collected editions of his motets. However, in about 1540, his career was halted when he was sentenced to the galleys for gross indecency with a choirboy. He earned his release and finished his career as canon at the Cathedral of Tournai.

Gombert's compositions are entirely vocal, some for ensembles of up to twelve parts. His contrapuntal language is based on that of Josquin, but taken to the next level of complexity. Imitation is used even more consistently than did Josquin, and Gombert's vocal textures are often densely packed and the individual lines are characterised by an avoidance of rests. A substantial number of Gombert's compositions survive, including eleven masses, over 160 motets, 60 secular chansons, and a set of eight Magnificats (one in each mode). This recording presents a number of the motets (4–6 voices) interspersed between the movements of a five-voice mass.

Missa Media Vita is a five-voice parody mass based on Gombert's own six-voice motet. Each movement begins with the initial material of the pre-existent motet and each employs the close of the model together with numerous passing references to the motet along the way. The final *Agnus Dei* follows the long-established tradition of adding an

extra voice (an extra bass in this instance) and this gave Gombert the opportunity to include some internal canonic passages. *Media vita in morte sumos*, the six-voice motet that provided the material for Gombert's mass, was first published in the motet anthology *Primus liber cum sex vocibus. Mottetti del frutto a sei voci* (Antoine Gardane, Venice, 1539), and is a setting of the *Nunc dimittis* antiphon for the third Sunday in Lent.

The four-voice Marian motets, *Quam pulchra es* and *Salve Regina*, from the first (1539) and second (1541) books of four-voice motets respectively, are included as a contrast. *Salve Regina* uses the pre-existent plainsong melody throughout but it is not limited to one voice as a *cantus firmus*, rather it provides melodic material for imitation points in all parts. The move from *cantus firmus* to 'paraphrase' technique may be seen as one of the progressive features of the post-Josquin generation.

Jonathan Wainwright

There are three works in this programme by Gombert's supposed master, *Domine ne in furore tuo, Illibata Dei virgo* and *Nimphes des bois*. This last piece, also known as the *Déploration on the death of Ockeghem*, was written as a tribute to this great composer who died on 6 February 1497. The *cantus firmus* quotes the introit from the Mass for the Dead and various other composers, including Brumel, Compère and Josquin himself, are exhorted to mourn their "bon père".

Josquin's 5 part motet *Illibata Dei virgo* is a curiosity in that the initial letters of the first twelve lines form an acrostic on the composer's own name: JOSQUIN Des PREZ. It seems possible that there are further word puzzles in the second part of the motet which may refer to Josquin's time as Provost of the collegiate church of Notre Dame de Condé, a post in which he served from 1504 until his death in 1521.

The lauda was a common musical form in late medieval Italy. Companies or confraternities of laudesi would meet daily for services of which the laude formed a large part. In these sacred songs a soloist would sing the verses in alternation with the congregational singing of the refrains. Of the hundreds of collections of laude which must have existed only two, the Florence Laudario and one from Cortona, survive with musical notation.

Kyrie, eleison
Christe, eleison
Kyrie, eleison

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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, Iesu 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.
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus,
tu solus Altissimus, Iesu Christe, cum Sancto Spiritu:
in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen.

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Amor dolçe sença pare
Se tu Cristo per amare.

Amor, sença cominciança
Se tu padre insembiança;
In trinità per amança
Filio et spiritu regnare.

Amor grande for misura
Di cui nulla creatura
Puote avere in sè natura,
di te amar si sa scusare.

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Domine ne in furore tuo arguas me neque in ira tua corripas me.
Quoniam sagittae tuae infixae sunt mihi et confirmasti super me manum tuam.
Non est sanitas carni meae a facie irae tuae: non est pax ossibus meis a facie
peccatorum meorum.
Miser factus sum et curvatus sum usque in finem: tota die contristatus ingrediebar.

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Jesu Christo glorioso,
A te sia laude e çechimento,
Ke per noi surreximento

Facesti victorioso.

Victorioso el terço die
Facesti surreximento;
Per unger le tre Marie
Lo tuo corpo al monumento
Andar cum pretios'unguento:
L'angel dixit « Non è quie;
In Galilea, ké surrexiò,
Voi prederà gratioso ».

Pensosi fra lor essendo,
L'apparebe'l signor verace;
Dixit « Non andate temendo
De me, k'io non so' fallace.
Sempre aviate in fra voi pace,
Et cercate le kiavadure,
Ke le mente aviate pure:
Di me ogn'om sia copioso ».

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Salve regina misericordiae, vita dulcedo et spes nostra, salve. Ad te clamamus exules,
filii Hevae. Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes in hac lacrimarum valle.
Eia ergo, advocata nostra, illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte. Et Iesum
benedictum fructum ventris tui, nobis post hoc exilium ostende, O clemens, O pia, O
dulcis virgo Maria.

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Credo in unum Deum,
Patrem omnipotentem,
factorem caeli et terrae,
visibilium omnium et invisibilium.
Et in unum Dominum Iesum Christum,
Filium Dei unigenitum,
et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula.
Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,
Deum verum de Deo vero,
genitum, non factum, consubstantialem Patri:
per quem omnia facta sunt.
Qui propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem descendit de caelis.
Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto
ex Maria Virgine,
et homo factus est.
Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato;
passus et sepultus est,
et resurrexit tertia die,
secundum Scripturas,
et ascendit in caelum,

sedet ad dexteram Patris.
Et iterum venturus est cum gloria, iudicare vivos et mortuos,
cuius regni non erit finis.
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 exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum,
et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

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Illibata Dei virgo nutrix,
Olimpi tu regis o genitrix,
Sola parens verbi puerpera,
Que fuisti Eve reparatrix,
Viri nephas tuta mediatrix,
Illud clara luce dat scriptura.
Nata nati alma genitura,
Des ut leta musorum factura
Prevaleat ymis et sit ave,
Roborando sonos ut guttura
Efflagitent, laude teque pura
Zelotica arte clament Ave.

Ave virginum decus hominum
Coelique porta,
Ave liliium, flos humilium
Virgo decora.
Vale ergo, tota pulchra ut luna electa
Electa ut sol, clarissima gaude.
Salve tu sola cum sola amica,
Consola la mi la canentes in tua laude.
Ave Maria, mater virtutum,
Veniae vena, ave Maria,
Gratia plena, dominus tecum,
Ave Maria, mater virtutum.
Amen.

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

Ave, regina gloriosa,
Piena d'ogne consolança.

Ave, pulcra margarita,
Splendida luce clarita;
Fresca rosa et aulorita,
Nostro gaudio et alegrança.

Ave, regina dorata,
Virgene madre beata;
Poi ke fosti salutata,
Madre se' de gran pietança.

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Quam pulchra es et quam decora carissima in deliciis!
Statura tua adsimilata est palmae et ubera tua botris.
Caput tuum ut Carmelus.
Collum tuum sicut turris eburnea.
Veni dilecte mi egrediamur in agrum,
videamus si flores parturierunt, si floruerunt mala punica:
tibi dabo ubera mea.

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Or piangiamo, che piange Maria,
in questa dia sovr'ogna dolente.

Si doloros'a la croce piange,
tutta s'infrange guardando lo suo amore;
e tempestosa battaglia la tange:
ben mille lance pare che senta al core.
Con grande dolore l'alta imperadrice
piangendo dice, lui così vegente:

"A cui rimango da ch'io t'ò perduto?
Al core venuto m'è si grande coltello,
laxa, c'ora piango lo dolze saluto
annuntiato da san Gabriello;
si grande flagello lo dolzore del parto!

Se mi diparto morro di presente.
"Vegiami sola, figliuolo, di te, madre,
confitto in quadre, di sangue vermiglio;
sposa et figliuola di te, dolce padre;
da gente ladre mi se' tolto, figlio.
A cui m'apiglio? Lassa, tapinella
una donzella cosi rimanente."

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

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Nymphes des bois, déesses fontaines chantres experts de toutes nations,
Changez vos voix tant claires et hautes en cris tranchants et lamentations.
Car Atropos, très terrible satrappe, a votre Okeghem attrapé en sa trappe,
Vray trésorier de musique et chef d'oeuvre, doct, élégant de corps et non point
trappé;
Grant dommage et que la terre le couvre.
Accoutrez vous d'habits de deuil: Josquin, Pierson, Brumel, Compère,
Et plourez grosses larmes d'oeil: perdu avez votre bon père.
Requiescant in pace. Amen.

Requiem aeternam dona eis, domine: et lux perpetua luceat eis. Requiescant in pace.
Amen.