

LIONHEART

Lawrence Lipnik, *Countertenor*
John Olund, Michael Ryan-Wenger, *Tenors*
Jeffrey Johnson, Richard Porterfield, *Baritones*
Kurt-Owen Richards, *Bass*

Palestrina: Soul of Rome

This program will be performed without intermission

Deus tuorum militum Ave Maria	Gregorian chant Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525-1594)
Kyrie: Missa in duplicibus minoribus I Gloria: Missa in duplicibus minoribus I	Palestrina Palestrina
Adoramus te Petrus beatus catenarum laqueos Confitemini Domino Tibi Christe splendor Patris	Palestrina Costanzo Festa (1490-1545) Palestrina Festa
Sanctus: Missa in duplicibus minoribus I	Palestrina
O regem caeli Gloriosi principes terrae	Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611) Palestrina
Agnus Dei: Missa in duplicibus minoribus I	Palestrina
Ave Maria Surrexit pastor bonus	Victoria Palestrina
Litaniae de Beata Virgine Maria	Palestrina

Program Notes

If we can speak of a “Roman style” of musical composition, the music of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (ca. 1525 – 1594) may be regarded as its quintessence. No other composer in the history of Western music has had a reputation quite like Palestrina’s: his music has been consistently studied and emulated by composers and theorists for over four hundred years. At a time when the Roman Catholic Church was responding to the Protestant Reformation with reforms of its own, Palestrina satisfied the Church’s desire for music that adorned the liturgy and expressed the sentiment of its texts while declaiming them audibly. Yet his compositions do not lack imitation (in which one voice repeats a figure stated previously in another voice), a characteristic feature of works by the previous generation of composers. In addition to the governing hierarchy of the Church, Palestrina’s music satisfied the most schooled musicians of his day; it combined the inventive, learned style associated with French and Flemish composers with the chordal texture of Italian *falsobordone* – improvised harmonizations of plainchant in which the text can be clearly understood. It is still studied by composers and used by teachers because of its remarkable consistency in the treatment of dissonance, the articulation of cadences, and the ways in which imitation is used. Yet Palestrina’s music is not rigid in its consistency, and always retains an appreciable suppleness.

Polyphonic church music was often conceived as an elaboration of the ancient musical liturgy known as Gregorian chant, and many of the pieces presented in this concert have plainchant models. The chant *Deus tuorum militum* is a typical Gregorian hymn in which each successive verse is set to the same music. The two hymn settings

by Constanzo Festa (ca. 1490 - 1545), *Petrus beatus caternam* and *Tibi Christi splendor Patris*, are examples of the Franco-Flemish style of imitative counterpoint. Since the odd-numbered verses are sung in plainchant and the even verses in polyphony, one can easily compare the original melody to its polyphonic elaboration, in which two voices sing the chant melody in canon (strict imitation) while the surrounding voices sing embellished versions of the tune. Though Festa was Italian, his music has a strong Franco-Flemish character; in part this is because he was a singer in the Sistine Chapel, which was dominated by Northerners and Spaniards who composed in this style.

Like the hymn settings by Festa, Palestrina’s *Ave Maria*, and *Gloriosi principes terrae* are polyphonic elaborations of chants. In *Ave Maria*, for example, fragments of the original chant melody are used in imitative passages in the upper three parts and most of the melody is also heard in the lowest voice, but without the strict treatment of Festa’s hymns. Since Palestrina composed liturgical music almost exclusively, it is difficult to discern clearly the influence of his personal life on his compositions. However, the text and setting of *Gloriosi principes terrae*, which has for its model a chant for the octave of Saints Peter and Paul, could have had a particular resonance for the composer. Its text refers to the martyrs (“... glorious princes of the earth” who “loved each other in life” and “were not separated” in death), but it could also be heard as referring to two of Palestrina’s sons, who died of the plague that afflicted Rome during the decade preceding the work’s publication in 1581.

All five of the Palestrina motets heard tonight were printed in the same 1581

volume. Each bears the rubric *paribus vocibus* – “for equal voices” or voices of the same range. In most of the choirs that performed Palestrina’s music, boys, castrati, or adult male sopranos were available to sing the upper parts. Consequently, the vast majority of his music is scored for a fairly wide range of voices, and women or boys tend to sing the treble parts in modern performances of it. The motets in this concert, however, are lesser-known works appropriately scored for men’s voices. Palestrina’s works are difficult to date or to place in any one context, but it is possible that these works were sung at the Seminario Romano, where Palestrina taught music from 1566 – 1571, in services when boys were not present. The Spanish-born Tomàs Luis da Victoria (1548 – 1611), a student at the nearby Collegio Germanico, may have been one of Palestrina’s students. The two Victoria motets on the program do not have plainchant models.

In addition to polyphonic settings of hymns and other chants used for specific feasts, Palestrina also composed settings of the mass Ordinary, the chants that have the same text in each daily mass. He composed masses for use in the churches that employed him – the Sistine Chapel (from which he was removed because he was married), St. John Lateran, Santa Maria Maggiore, and St. Peter’s – but he also received commissions from elsewhere. He seems to have been a flexible composer interested in pleasing his patrons. In a letter dated 2 February 1568 to Guglielmo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, Palestrina wrote: “I beg you to let me know how you prefer [mass settings]: whether long or short or composed so that the words may be understood.” Although Palestrina never lived in Mantua, Duke Gonzaga became one of his most important patrons.

Eleven masses by Palestrina survive in manuscripts at the Church of St. Barbara in Mantua, and it is presumed that these were commissioned by Duke Gonzaga. The

Missa in duplicibus minoribus I (Mass for lesser second-class [feast]) is one of them. These masses are based on plainchant that was specific to St. Barbara’s liturgy and performance practices, and the title of this work indicates that its plainchant models were not intended for a high feast day. Nonetheless, it is a sumptuous setting for five voices in which portions of the chant models are used as subjects of imitation. Occasionally the melodies are heard in long note values in one of the voices. A distinctive feature of the performance practices at St. Barbara was the alternation of phrases of plainchant with polyphony in the Ordinary of the mass. This kind of alternation was not unusual in settings of hymns (as in those by Festa) or canticles such as the *Magnificat*, but was seldom used in the mass Ordinary, which was either chanted in its entirety or sung polyphonically. As with the Festa hymns, this practice affords the listener the opportunity to hear the original chant alongside its polyphonic elaboration.

Palestrina’s six-voice setting of the *Litaniae de Beata Virgine Maria* (Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary) was written for services in honor of the Virgin at St. Peter’s. It contrasts one group of three voices with another in double-choir fashion. An important aspect of this piece (and most others on this program) is Palestrina’s characteristically subtle use of suspended dissonances: from moment to moment, one voice will remain fixed on a pitch that other voices have left behind for a different harmony; the resulting dissonance shimmers briefly before the dissonant voice joins the others on the new chord. Palestrina thickens the texture sparingly, so that when all six voices sing together the declamation of the text seems particularly forceful.

In contemplating the breadth and richness of the sixteenth-century Roman polyphony heard on this program, it is important to remember that Gregorian chant was used to celebrate most services and was

only occasionally elaborated with polyphony. Although the legend that Pope Gregory (reigned ca. 590 – 604) compiled the Gregorian repertory is probably not true, the chant most likely did emerge out of an oral tradition first practiced in Rome. Despite the Roman origins of the chant, polyphonic elaboration of it had never been dominated by Roman composers before Palestrina. Because of concerns about the intelligibility of liturgical texts, the Council of Trent threatened to forbid polyphony in Catholic services. A persistent but unlikely legend reports that a performance of Palestrina's most famous work, the *Missa Papae Marcelli*, convinced the Council of the possibility of comprehensible text-setting in sacred polyphony. Although the Council did vote in 1563 to continue allowing polyphony in services, it is unclear whether it was Palestrina who effectively saved counterpoint from being forbidden in liturgical practice. It is clear that his reputation was well-established toward the end of his life. His musicianship was so highly regarded by the papacy that he was entrusted with the responsibility of revising the entire corpus of liturgical chant. Though Palestrina did not live to see its completion, his respect for the liturgy was such that he may well have seen his task of revising plainchant as the true "rebirth" of Roman musical style.

Eric Rice



Texts and Translations

Deus tuorum militum

Deus tuorum militum
Sors et cornona, prameium:
Laudes canentes Martyris,
Absolve nexu criminis.

Hic nempe mundi gaudia,
Et blanda fraudum pabula
Imbuta felle deputans,
Pervenit ad caelestia,

Poenas cucurrit fortiter,
Et sustulit viriliter:
Fundensque pro te sanguinem,
Aeterna dona possidet.

O hoc precatu supplici
Te poscimus piissime:
In hoc triumpho Martyris,
Dimitte noxam servulis.

Laus et perennis gloria
Patri sit, atque Filio,
Sancto simul Paraclito,
In sempiterna saecula. Amen.

Ave Maria, gratia plena

Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Dominus tecum,
benedicta tu
in mulieribus
et benedictus fructus
ventris tui
Jesu.
Sancta Maria,
Regina coeli,
dulcis et pia,
O Mater Dei,
ora pro nobis peccatoribus
ut cum electis
te videamus.

Kyrie eléison (Mass Ordinary)

Kyrie eléison
Christe eléison.
Kyrie eléison.

O God Thy soldier's crown and guard,
and their exceeding great reward;
from all transgressions set us free,
who sing Thy martyr's victory.

The pleasures of the world he spurned,
from sin's pernicious lures he turned;
He knew their joys imbued with gall,
and thus he reached they heavenly hall.

For Thee through many a woe he ran,
in many a fight he played the man;
for Thee his blood he dared to pour,
and thence hath you for evermore.

We therefore pray Thee, full of love,
regard us from Thy throne above;
on this thy martyr's triumph day,
wash every stain of sin away.

O Christ, most loving King to Thee,
with God the Father, glory be;
like glory, as is ever meet,
to God the holy Paraclete. Amen.

Hail, Mary, full of grace,
The Lord is with you,
blessed are you
among women
and blessed is the fruit
of your womb,
Jesus.
Holy Mary,
Queen of Heaven,
sweet and faithful,
O Mother of God,
pray for us sinners
that with the saints
we may behold you.

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

Gloria in excelsis deo (Mass Ordinary)

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.
Quoniam tu solus sanctus. Tu solus dominus.
Tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe.
Cum sancto spiritu in gloriam dei patris.
Amen.

Adoramus te (for the Office of the Passion)

Adoramus te,
et benedicimus tibi:
quia per sanctam crucem tuam
redemisti mundum.

Petrus beatus catenarum laqueos

(In Vincula Sancti Petri)

1. Petrus beatus
catenarum laqueos,
Christo jubente,
rupit mirabiliter;
Custos ovilis
et Doctor Ecclesiae,
Pastorque gregis,
conservator ovium,
Arcet luporum
truculentam rabiem.
2. Gloria Deo
per immensa saecula,
Sit tibi Nate
decus et imperium,
Honor, potestas
Sanctoque Spiritui:
Sit Trinitati
salus individua
Per infinita
saeculorum saecula.

Glory be to God on high.
And on earth peace to men of good will.
We praise Thee. We bless Thee. We adore
Thee. We glorify Thee.
We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory.
Lord God heavenly King, God the Father
Almightly.
Lord Jesus Christ, only-begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.
Thou Who takest away the sins of the world
receive our prayer.
Thou Who sittest at the right hand of the
Father, have mercy on us. For Thou alone art
holy. Thou alone art the Lord. Thou alone, O
Jesus Christ, art most high.
With the Holy Ghost, in the glory of God the
Father. Amen.

We worship you, O Christ,
and we bless you:
because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.

(for the feast of St. Peter's Chains)

1. At the bidding of Christ,
Blessed Peter [once] most
miraculously burst through
the snares of his bonds.
[Now] Watchman over the sheep
and Doctor of the Church,
as Shepherd of the flock
and Defender of the sheep
he keeps the cruel rage
of the wolves at bay.
2. Glory to God through
all the length of ages,
To you, O Son,
be dignity and might,
and honor and power
to the Holy Spirit:
To the Trinity be
undivided majesty
Through unending
ages of ages.

Confitemini domino (Psalm 117)

Confitemini Domino
quoniam bonus,
quoniam in saeculum
misericordia ejus.

Give thanks to the Lord,
for he is good,
for his mercy
is everlasting.

Tibi Christe splendor Patris

(In Festo S. Michaelis)

(For the Feast of St. Michael)

1. Tibi Christe splendor Patris,
Vita, virtus cordium,
In conspectu angelorum,
Votis voce psallimus;
Alternantes concrepando
Melos damus vocibus.

1. To you, O Christ, splendor of the Father,
our life, our hearts' strength,
in the presence of the angels
we raise our voices in prayer;
back and forth we sing out
the notes of our song.

2. Collaudamus venerantes
Omnes caeli milites,
Sed praecipue Primatem
Caelestis exercitus:
Michaellem in virtute,
Conterentem zabulum.

2. We praise and venerate
all the soldiers of heaven,
but above all the chief
of the heavenly army:
Michael in his strength,
terrifying the devil.

3. Quo custode
procul pelle,
Rex Christe piissime,
Omne nefas inimici:
Mundo corde et corpore
Paradiso redde tuo
Nos sola clementia.

3. With him as guardian,
keep far away,
O Christ, most faithful King,
every wickedness of the devil:
clean of heart and body,
bring us to your paradise
by your loving kindness alone.

4. Gloriam Patri melodis
Personemus vocibus,
Gloriam Christo canamus,
Gloriam Paraclito;
Qui trinus et unus Deus
Exstat ante saecula.

4. We sing our songs
to the glory of the Father,
we chant glory to the Son,
and glory to the Holy Spirit:
[to] this Godhead Three and One,
God from before all time.

Sanctus (Mass Ordinary)

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus
Sabaoth. Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts. Heaven
and earth are full of Thy Glory. Hosanna in the
highest.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the
Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

O regem coeli

(In Festo Natalis Domini)

O Regem coeli,
cui talia famulantur obsequia,
stabulo praeponitur,
qui continet mundum:

Iacet in praesepio,
et in coelis regnat. Alleluia.

Natus est nobis hodie salvator,
Qui est Christus Dominus
in civitate David:

Iacet in praesepio,
et in coelis regnat. Alleluia.

Gloriosi principes terrae

(for lauds on the octave of the feast of
SS. Peter and Paul)

Gloriosi principes terrae:
quomodo in vita sua dilexerunt se,
ita et in morte non sunt separati.

Agnus dei (Mass Ordinary)

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.

Ave maria

Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus,
et benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesus Christus.
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,
ora pro nobis peccatoribus
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

Surrexit pastor bonus (Easter responsory)

Surrexit pastor bonus,
qui animam suam posuit pro ovibus suis,
et pro grege suo mori dignatus est. Alleluia.

(For the Feast of the Birth of the Lord)

O King of Heaven,
served by such great honors:
placed in a stable
which contains the whole world:

He lies in a cradle,
and reigns above the heavens. Alleluia.

There is born to us today a savior,
who is Christ the Lord,
in the city of David:

He lies in a cradle,
and reigns above the heavens. Alleluia.

Princes of the earth:
they loved each other in life,
and in death they were not separated.

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

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

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

Hail, Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with you, blessed are you among
women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb,
Jesus Christ. Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

The good shepherd has risen,
who put away his soul for his sheep,
and for his flock he deigned to die. Alleluia.

Litaniae de Beata Virgine Maria

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.
Ave, dona nobis Jesu, ora pro nobis.
Salve iter para tutum, ora pro nobis.
Gaude, mites fac et castos, ora pro nobis.
Ave, mundi spes, Maria, ora pro nobis.
Salve dulcis, salve pia, ora pro nobis.
Gaude, nostra Coeli via, ora pro nobis.
Ave, parens salve dicit, ora pro nobis.
Vates clausus te cogniscit, ora pro nobis.
Cum in te cor exaltavit, ora pro nobis.
Ave, mater adoranda, ora pro nobis.
Salve, sacra praedicanda, ora pro nobis.
Gaude, felix admiranda, ora pro nobis.
Ave, stellis rutilantior, ora pro nobis.
Luna plena refulgentior, ora pro nobis.
Vero sole quae splendidior, ora pro nobis.
Ave sponsa praelecta, ora pro nobis.
Ab initio benedicta, ora pro nobis.
Virgo et Mater, Dei electa, ora pro nobis.
Regina angelorum, ora pro nobis.
Patriarcharum et Prophetarum, ora pro nobis.
Regina Apostolorum, Martyrum et
Confessorum, ora pro nobis.
Regina Praedicatorum, Virginum et Sanctorum
omnium, ora pro nobis.

Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Lord have mercy.
Christ have mercy.
Lord have mercy.
Hail, grant us Jesus, pray for us. We greet you,
make for us a safe way, pray for us.
Rejoice, make us meek and chaste, pray for us.
Hail, our world's hope, Mary, pray for us.
We greet you, O Sweet One, We greet you, O
Faithful One, pray for us.
Rejoice, our heavenly Way, pray for us.
Hail, parent who gave your blessing. pray for
us. The concealed prophet recognized you,
pray for us. as your heart leapt within you, pray
for us. Hail, Mother worthy of adoration, pray
for us. We greet you, holy one most worthy of
praise, pray for us. Rejoice, O happy,
Admirable One, pray for us. Hail, glowing
redder than the stars, pray for us.
Gleaming brighter than the full moon, pray for
us. [You who are] more splendid than the sun,
pray for us. Hail, spouse chosen above all,
pray for us, blessed from the beginning, pray
for us. Virgin and Mother, Elect of God, pray
for us. Queen of Angels, pray for us. [of]
Patriarchs and Prophets, pray for us. Queen of
Apostles, Martyrs and Confessors, pray for us.
Queen of Preachers, Virgins, and of all the
Saints. pray for us.

-- All translations except
mass ordinary by Thomas Baker