

**NEW RELEASE**



**Missa Ave maris stella**  
Cappella Pratensis / Stratton Bull

**CLASSICAL**  
CC72632 - SACD  
0608917263220  
Challenge Classics

**release dates:**  
Benelux: 17/02/2014  
Germany: 28/02/2014  
Other: 17/02/2014

**Composers:**

Josquin Desprez

**Artists:**

Cappella Pratensis

**Description:**

The music of Josquin Desprez is performed, recorded, and studied more than that of any other composer of the Renaissance. Although his numerous Masses and motets are now more than 500 years old, they have entered our modern musical museum of masterpieces, heard in concerts and on recordings as independent works of art. Through superlative craft and sublime beauty, this music transcends its time and place, and its original function as sacred music.

But just as a stunning Renaissance altarpiece becomes even more impressive and meaningful when restored to its original place in the sacred space it was made to adorn, so the sacred polyphony of the period gains in beauty and meaning when heard within the ritual framework it once enhanced. That ritual framework told sacred stories – of Christ, his mother, and the saints – primarily through plainsong and recitation. For special occasions, in institutions able to support highly trained singers, sacred polyphony added special lustre.

This recording aims to recapture a sense of the ceremonial context that would have surrounded Josquin's sacred polyphony in a place where he sang and composed and where his music continued in use long after he left. That ritual context is the Saturday Mass for the Blessed Virgin during Advent, a liturgy focused on the Annunciation story; that place is the Sistine Chapel in Rome. The Missa Ave maris stella was copied into a Vatican choirbook for the use of the papal singers no later than 1507.

In order to approach closer to the original performance practices of the papal chapel, Cappella Pratensis here sings whenever possible from scale copies of the very books used by the papal chapel, reading from the square notation of the chant sources and the mensural notation of the polyphonic manuscripts. Like the papal singers, they gather around one large music stand, led not by a conductor standing before the group but rather by the maestro di cappella who sings in their midst. Here, as then, the ensemble is all male, with adult falsettists singing superius and altus lines (there were no boys in the papal chapel), and the number of singers is small, here just two to a part, with duo and trio sections taken by solo voices. In light of the fact that most papal singers in this period were native French-speakers, the Latin of Josquin's polyphony as well as the Proper plainsongs is sung with a French accent; the celebrant's recitations are pronounced with an Italian accent, imagining an Italian cleric presiding. Cappella Pratensis here approaches the chant as the expert papal singers trained in mensural notation likely did, responding to the mensural implications of the square notation.

**USP:**

Cappella Pratensis— literally 'Cappella des prés' – , the Dutch-based vocal ensemble, champions the music of Josquin Desprez and the polyphonists of the 15th and 16th centuries.

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**tracks:**

CD 1

1. Hymnus: Ave maris stella (07:05)
2. Introitus: Rorate celi (02:20)
3. Missa Ave maris stella - Kyrie (02:41)
4. Missa Ave maris stella - Gloria (04:52)
5. Graduale: Tollite portas (04:12)
6. Alleluia: Ave Maria (02:27)
7. Missa Ave maris stella - Credo (07:04)
8. Offertorium: Ave Maria (01:59)
9. Motet: Mittit ad virginum (07:33)
10. Prefatio ( polyphonic responses) (03:34)
11. Missa Ave maris stella - Sanctus (07:30)
12. Pater noster ( polyphonic respond) (01:12)
13. Missa Ave maris stella - Agnus Dei (04:08)
14. Communio: Ecce virgo (00:42)
15. Motet: Missus est Gabriel angelus (03:09)

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**JOSQUIN DESPREZ**

**Missa Ave maris stella**

Celebrating the Annunciation in Renaissance Rome

**Cappella Pratensis**

**Stratton Bull**

- [1] **Plainchant/Guillaume Dufay/Josquin Desprez/Anonymous** Hymnus: Ave maris stella
- [2] **Plainchant** Introitus: Rorate celi
- [3] **Josquin Desprez** Missa Ave maris stella - Kyrie
- [4] **Josquin Desprez** Missa Ave maris stella - Gloria
- [5] **Plainchant** Graduale: Tollite portas
- [6] **Plainchant** Alleluia: Ave Maria
- [7] **Josquin Desprez** Missa Ave maris stella - Credo
- [8] **Plainchant** Offertorium: Ave Maria
- [9] **Josquin Desprez(?)** Motet: Mittit ad virginum
- [10] **Plainchant/Anonymous** Prefatio
- [11] **Josquin Desprez** Missa Ave maris stella - Sanctus
- [12] **Plainchant/Anonymous** Pater noster
- [13] **Josquin Desprez** Missa Ave maris stella - Agnus Dei
- [14] **Plainchant** Communio: Ecce virgo
- [15] **Josquin Desprez** Motet: Missus est Gabriel angelus

complete track information inside booklet



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