

signum
CLASSICS

MUSIC FOR THE
Virgin Mary

CELEBRATING 300
YEARS OF
CHARPENTIER

Concerto delle Donne

MUSIC FOR THE VIRGIN MARY

CELEBRATING 300 YEARS OF MARC-ANTOINE CHARPENTIER (1643-1704)

- | | | | |
|----|---------|------------------------------------|--------|
| 1. | Lebègue | Prélude du cinquième ton (C major) | [1.14] |
|----|---------|------------------------------------|--------|

QUEEN OF HEAVEN

- | | | | |
|----|-------------|--|--------|
| 2. | Charpentier | Antiphon <i>Ave Regina coelorum</i> H.19 (DD, GR, JC, Choir) | [3.07] |
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THE BIRTH OF THE VIRGIN

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|----|-------------|---|--------|
| 3. | Charpentier | Motet <i>Sicut spina rosam</i> H.309 (FN, DD) | [2.26] |
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|----|-------------|--|--------|
| 4. | Charpentier | Motet <i>Gaude felix Anna</i> H.315 (FN, GR) | [1.50] |
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- | | | | |
|----|---------|--|--------|
| 5. | Lebègue | Tierce en taille du deuxième ton (G minor) | [3.22] |
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THE SALUTATION

- | | | | |
|----|--------|---|---------|
| 6. | Nivers | Antiphon <i>Gabriel Angelus</i> (FN, Choir) | [10.00] |
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	Charpentier	Magnificat pour le Port Royal H.81 (DD, GR, FN, Choir)	
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|----|-------------|--|--------|
| 7. | Charpentier | Antiphon <i>Alma redemptoris mater</i> H.21 (FN, GR) | [3.03] |
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THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

- | | | | |
|----|-------------|--|---------|
| 8. | Charpentier | Motet <i>Frigidae noctis umbra totum</i> H.421 | [11.16] |
|----|-------------|--|---------|

In Nativitate Domini N(ost)ri Jesu Christi Canticum
(JC Historicus, FN Angelus, GR, DD, Choir)

- | | | | |
|----|---------|--------------------------------------|--------|
| 9. | Lebègue | Noël: Où s'en vont ces gays bergers? | [2.35] |
|----|---------|--------------------------------------|--------|

A PRAYER TO THE VIRGIN

- | | | | |
|-----|---------------|---|--------|
| 10. | Attrib. Lully | Antiphon <i>Salve Regina</i> (GR, FN, DD) | [7.12] |
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- | | | | |
|-----|--------|--|--------|
| 11. | Nivers | Récit de cromorne du troisième ton (A minor) | [3.24] |
|-----|--------|--|--------|

THE PASSION

- | | | | |
|-----|-------------|--|--------|
| 12. | Charpentier | Sequence <i>Stabat Mater pour les religieuses</i> H.15 (FN, GR, DD, Choir) | [9.09] |
|-----|-------------|--|--------|

13. Nivers Dialogue à deux chœurs du sixième ton (*F major*) [2.26]

THE RESURRECTION

14. Charpentier Antiphon *Regina coeli laetare* H.32 (GR, DD,) [2.38]

THE CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN

15. Charpentier Hymn *Gaudia Virginis Mariae* H.59 (DD, FN, GR, Choir) [3.15]

16. Lebègue Plein Jeu du huitième ton (G major) [2.01]

Total Time [69.00]

CONCERTO DELLE DONNE

DONNA DEAM – SOPRANO (DD) · FAYE NEWTON – SOPRANO (FN) · GILL ROSS – SOPRANO (GR)

WITH SOPRANOS

MIRIAM ALLAN · CAROLINE ASHTON · RACHEL BEVAN · JENNIE CASSIDY (JC)

CHARLOTTE FAIRBAIRN · ANA GABRIELA SCHWEDHELM

DIRECTED BY ALASTAIR ROSS (ORGAN)

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ARTIST NOTE

We recorded this CD in the beautiful church of Notre Dame, Rozay-en-Brie, thirty miles east of Paris, which contains a wonderful organ dating from 1690, played by François Couperin himself. Both the organ and the acoustics of the church proved to be perfect for this music. I wish to thank l'organiste titulaire Mr Philippe Lécossais, Mr Francisque Tranchand, Président de l'Association des Amis des Grandes Orgues Historiques, and Le Père Alain Ruysschaert, Curé de la Paroisse de Rozay-en-Brie for all the help which they gave us in the preparation for this recording.

We could not have recorded this CD at all without the help, hard work and enthusiasm of Jane Gosine, Assistant Professor of Music at the University of Newfoundland and Charpentier scholar. Although I had already edited the *Magnificat pour le Port Royal*, all the other Charpentier pieces in tonight's programme have been edited by Jane. She has also written about the background to this repertoire, biographical notes on Charpentier and descriptions of the pieces. I am very grateful to her. I also want to thank Patricia Ranum, Charpentier scholar, for supplying me with fascinating background information to the music, and for her helpful comments about the programme at the planning stage.

MUSIC FOR THE VIRGIN MARY

CELEBRATING 300 YEARS OF MARC-ANTOINE CHARPENTIER (1643-1704)

"when you sing... you are in the presence of the Angels and God himself..."

(Mère Agnès, Port-Royal)

Reciting the Divine Office was central to the life of a contemplative nun, and at many convents musical instruction was a regular part of daily life. On major feast-days, it was customary to sing, rather than simply recite, the Offices of Matins and Vespers. Throughout the seventeenth century, there are references to nuns singing the Offices, as well as singing motets during the Mass and at the popular devotional service of *Salut* (or Benediction). This is witnessed, not only in descriptions from the period, but also in the extensive repertory of sacred music known to have been composed for women's voices by seventeenth-century composers such as Charpentier, Clérambault, Couperin, Lully and Nivers.

There was a dichotomy in elevated seventeenth-century French society: on the one hand, there was the pomp and ceremony of Court, marked by frivolity and artificiality; on the other hand, there was incredible religious fervour found in the convents and other religious establishments, at which members of Court society spent many hours of each day in pious devotion. These noblewomen balanced the life of luxury and attention to social obligations at Court, with a life of prayer, devotion and service. The Guise princesses, for whom Charpentier worked during the 1670s and 1680s, epitomise the devout noblewoman, fulfilling both their worldly and their religious duties on a daily basis. They were particularly devoted to worship of the Virgin and the Infant Jesus which is reflected in the numerous pieces composed by Charpentier in honour of the Virgin Mary – some of which are recorded here.

The religious practices of convents within Paris differed widely depending on the Order, and this affected the type of music used within the establishment. In keeping with Counter-Reformation ideology, emphasis was placed on devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and the penitential rites, as well as the veneration of saints. Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament was seen in the popular evening service of *Salut* at which the Host was venerated, and hymns, litanies and motets were sung. Motets were also sung during the services held by the confraternities of the Virgin.

Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643-1704)

Marc-Antoine Charpentier was born in Paris – the son of Louis Charpentier, a well-respected copyist and calligrapher whose influence is evident in Charpentier's beautifully preserved autograph manuscripts. The contents of this remarkably rich and well-organised corpus of music reflect the great diversity of styles and genres found within Charpentier's works, ranging from simple settings of hymns composed for unaccompanied solo voice to works of great complexity and virtuosity for soloists, double choir and double orchestra. No other French composer of the period left such a wide variety of types and styles of composition. Indeed, Charpentier was described by a contemporary, Titon du Tillet, as "one of the most scholarly and industrious musicians of his time". In this recording, the focus is on the sacred works that Charpentier composed for two and three solo women's voices.

Charpentier spent his formative years in Rome during the late 1660s – an experience that was to have a profound effect on the composer's stylistic development, and a long-lasting impact on the way in which his music was received. Although it is not known exactly how long, nor with whom Charpentier spent his time in Italy, he clearly absorbed fundamental elements of the Italian style and adopted them as his own. While in Rome, Charpentier would doubtless have spent time visiting the many churches and chapels that were renowned for their music. Here Charpentier would have become familiar with the music of composers such as Carissimi, Rossi, Foggia and Graziani. (Concerto delle Donne's recording of cantatas and motets by Carissimi is available on the Signum label SIGCD040 *Piangete*). He carefully copied out Francesco Bernetta's *Missa Mirabiles*, accompanied by a series of comments entitled "Remarks on 16-part Italian masses", and he was instrumental in bringing the genre of the 'oratorio' to France. Charpentier's own 'oratorios' (or more correctly, dramatic motets) offer rare, though not unique, examples of the genre in French music of this period and demonstrate Charpentier's fusion of French and Italian influences.

On his return to Paris in the early 1670s, Charpentier maintained close ties with Italy through his early employers, the wealthy and politically prominent Guise family and the powerful Jesuits. In April 1683, perhaps ambitious for a Court appointment, and having already composed a number of works for the King's eldest son, the Dauphin, Charpentier entered a contest being held at the Palace of Versailles to choose four new directors of music for the Chapel Royal – each to serve quarterly, filling the positions vacated by Du Mont and Robert, who after 20 years of royal service were retiring. However, according to the popular and highly influential periodical, the *Mercury Galant*, Charpentier became ill and was forced to withdraw from the competition. In recognition of Charpentier's talent and in compensation for his required withdrawal (perhaps initiated by a jealous and suspicious Lully), the King granted him a pension. He was the only composer to receive such a pension. During the late 1680s, Charpentier was appointed as Director of Music at the Jesuit Church of St Louis – a church surrounded by the sumptuous mansions of the Marais district and drawing on a congregation largely comprising Paris' social elite. On the 28th June 1698, Charpentier was appointed to the prestigious position of Master of Music at the Sainte-Chapelle – a position he held until his death on 24 February 1704.

Charpentier's lack of a Court appointment may have had a detrimental effect on the way in which his music was preserved and how history until recently perceived him, but it had positive effects on his stylistic development. Free from the artistic constraints of a highly stylized and restrictive Court, and supported by patrons early in his career who were sympathetic to an Italian aesthetic, Charpentier embraced influences from both France and Italy to create a musical style quite distinct from that of his contemporaries – a style that emphasized the union between rhetoric and music.

Charpentier composed over 100 sacred works for women's voices – some of which identify the names of the original singers, including the names of nuns. In addition to providing sacred music for his regular employers, Charpentier composed music for the Cistercians of the Port-Royal de Paris and the Abbaye-au-Bois, the Benedictines of the Abbaye of Montmartre (at which Mile de Guise's sister was the Abbess), and he almost certainly composed music for the Carmelites of the rue du Bouloir or the Grand Couvent in the rue Saint-Jacques where the Guise princesses regularly attended services, often as part of Queen Marie-Thérèse's entourage.

Many of the Parisian convents and churches hired professional musicians, both men and women, to perform at religious services. The seventeenth-century writer Lecerf de la Viéville made some disparaging remarks about this practice, noting that on occasions it was necessary to pay for a seat in the Church, just as at the Opéra, and that he had even heard applause at some of the services. Lecerf also criticised the singers' outrageous attire, their constant turning around, laughing and even sniffing tobacco during the services. He notes that

"one hires singers who sing a *Leçon* on Good Friday or a solo motet for Easter behind a curtain that they draw apart from time to time to smile at their friends among the listeners." (Lecerf, *Comparaison de la musique italienne et de la musique française*, 1705-1706)

Certainly, performances at many of the convents were regarded as great musical attractions – a fact reflected by the number of comments found in the *Mercury Galant* and the *Gazette de France* which recount visits by members of the nobility and royal family to musical performances at

convents in Paris. There are contemporary references, for example, to the crowds that were attracted to the Abbaye-au-Bois by the excellent quality of the music, including works by Charpentier (*Mercure Galant*, April 1680). Similarly, the Abbaye de Montmartre was renowned for the quality of the singing during celebrations of the liturgy.

Charpentier's association with the convent of the Port-Royal, where the composer's sister, Marie de Sainte-Blandine Charpentier, was a nun, resulted in at least seven compositions of which two are recorded here. From an early age, aspiring nuns at the convent of the Port-Royal were taught to sing chant each day. The chant books show ornament signs over the chant notation, indicating that the nuns were familiar with simple ornamentation, used to emphasise the melodic shape and make more sense of the text. The voices of the nuns at the Port-Royal were described in an eighteenth-century account as "sweet, distinct, articulate, harmonious, touching, moving [listeners] to tears, and at the same time, filling their hearts with joy and consolation." Similarly, in a description dating from 1678, the beautiful singing of the nuns was said to "pierce the heart" and nuns who joined the Order with "artificial and worldly voices" were prohibited from singing for three or four months, but instead had to listen in order to transform their voices to produce a "tone of intelligence and an expression so faithful to the pronunciation that their chant was effectively a true prayer" (C. Davy-Rigaux, "L'Oratoire, Port-Royal et la Réforme du Chant" *Chroniques de Port-Royal*, 2001) In the letters of Mère Agnès, as well as in other accounts, there are repeated references to the nuns singing like angels.

The musical setting of the poignantly beautiful *Stabat mater* (H. 15) is one of the simplest of the seven works by Charpentier for the Port-Royal. Each of the ten verses is sung to the same music, alternating a solo voice with a unison chorus. The writing is syllabic throughout, with simple ornamentation on stressed syllables, and a narrow vocal range.

The *Magnificat* (H. 81), like the two psalm settings that Charpentier composed for the Port-Royal, is written for three solo voices which alternate with a *fauxbourdon* chorus for four high voices. The three soloists are named as 'Mlle Dufresnoy (perhaps a boarder within the convent), Mère Saint-Bernard, and Mère Sainte-Agathe.' In the *fauxbourdon* passages, the voices move in parallel motion: the top line

sung by two nuns, the second line sung by one nun, and the third and fourth lines sung by a divided chorus. Here, Charpentier contrasts the style of writing for the simple chorus with the more florid writing for solo voices. Even in the *fauxbourdon* sections, however, Charpentier uses expressive harmony to provide musical interest.

The remaining works by Charpentier cannot be linked directly to specific convents but may have been performed at convents or within the churches and chapels with which Charpentier was associated.

Charpentier's *petits motets* reveal the composer's penchant for the Italian style. While the dissonant harmonies and often tortuous melodic lines are one aspect of the Italianisms so beloved of the composer, the use of a refrain (such as in *Sicut spina rosam* and *Gaude felix Anna*), the exuberant swirling melismatic writing for the voices, often in close imitation or in parallel thirds and sixths heard in all the motets, and the use of the genre of 'oratorio' or dramatic motet (*In Nativitate Domini* *Nostri Jesu Christi Canticum*, 'Frigidae noctis umbra totum') are also features of an Italianate style.

The text for the 'oratorio' *In Nativitate* is an adaptation of words from the Gospel of St Luke (chapter 2: 8-16) that recount the nativity story in which the Angel appears telling the shepherds about the birth of Jesus and the shepherds respond by hurrying to Bethlehem to honour the Christ Child and Virgin Mother. Charpentier's setting conveys both the sense of hushed expectancy and of simple joy.

Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687)

The Florentine-born French composer Jean-Baptiste Lully is most commonly associated with the splendours, the grandeur, and the magnificence of the Court and Chapel at the Palace of Versailles. As Court favourite, Lully enjoyed a life that revolved closely around the King and his entourage. Although Lully's best-known sacred music comprises the *grands motets* written for use at the King's Mass, Lully also appears to have left a collection of more intimate *petits motets*. Little is known of the history of these works for solo voices: there are no dates for the works in the manuscript sources, there are no accounts of performances of the music from the period, and even the attribution of these works to Lully

has been much debated. One source (André Danican Philidor's catalogue of music, 1729) suggests that Lully's *petits motets* were written for use at the convent of the Filles de l'Assomption in the rue Saint-Honoré in Paris which was renowned for the quality of its music.

Lully's *Salve Regina* is scored for three treble voices and continuo. The writing, like that found in the other *petits motets* is highly Italianate – sharing much in common not only with the music of Italian composers such as Carissimi, Foggia and Graziani, but also with the writing of Lully's rival, Charpentier.

From 1664 until his death **Nicholas-Antoine Lebègue** (c.1631-1702) was organist at St Merry in Paris. In 1678 he was appointed *organiste du Roi*.

Guillaume-Gabriel Nivers (c.1632-1714) held three organist positions, the church of Saint Sulpice (from 1651), the royal convent of Saint-Louis de Saint-Cyr (from 1686), and the royal chapel of Versailles.

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MUSIC SOURCES

Charpentier

Ave regina cœlorum

Sicut spina rosam

Gaude Felix Anna

Alma Redemptoris Mater

Stabat Mater pour les religieuses

Regina coeli laetare

Gaudia Virginis Mariae

Frigidæ noctis umbra totum

Magnificat pour le Port Royal

Attrib. Lully

Salve Regina

Lebègue

Prélude du cinquième ton

Tierce en taille du deuxième ton

Plein Jeu du sixième ton

Noël: *Où s'en vont ces gays bergers?*

Nivers

Gabriel Angelus

Récit de cromorne du troisième ton

Dialogue à deux choeurs du sixième ton

Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Autograph manuscript ed. C Jane Gosine

Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Autograph manuscript ed. C Jane Gosine

Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Autograph manuscript ed. C Jane Gosine

Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Autograph manuscript ed. C Jane Gosine

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Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Autograph manuscript ed. C Jane Gosine

Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Autograph manuscript ed. C Jane Gosine

Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. King's Music ed. Clifford Bartlett

Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Autograph manuscript ed. Alastair Ross

Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Autograph manuscript ed. Alastair Ross

Les Pièces d'Orgue (Premier Livre), Paris 1676

Les Pièces d'Orgue (Premier Livre), Paris 1676

Les Pièces d'Orgue (Premier Livre), Paris 1676

Troisième Livre d'Orgue, Paris 1685

Antiphonarium romanum juxta brevium, Paris 1696

Troisième Livre d'Orgue des huit tons de l'église, Paris 1675

Troisième Livre d'Orgue des huit tons de l'église, Paris 1675

Des Grandes Orgues de Rozay-en-Brie **Un des plus beaux fleurons du patrimoine organistique français**

Toutes les personnalités faisant autorité dans le monde de l'orgue, sont unanimes pour situer le grand instrument baroque de Rozay parmi les six plus remarquables du patrimoine français. Le regretté Pierre Cochereau, illustre titulaire du Grand Orgue de Notre Dame de Paris, déclarait lors de sa venue en 1976 : «Après restauration, l'orgue de Rozay sera le meilleur instrument d'Ile de France...». Notre pays compte environ 7500 instruments, et l'un des six plus marquants se trouve à ... Rozay, faisant de la ville une héritière privilégiée de plus de trois siècles d'histoire.

Ce magnifique témoin de la facture française du XVII^{ème} siècle nous est miraculeusement parvenu dans sa quasi intégralité. Après avoir échappé au pillage lors de la révolution il fut, à plusieurs reprises, sauvé de justesse de la destruction par le feu. Ce destin peu banal nous donne aujourd'hui, le bonheur de pouvoir l'entendre sonner tel qu'a pu le faire Bossuet lors de ses visites à Rozay. Il se distingue d'autre part par le fait qu'il n'a connu qu'une seule restauration en 300 ans, ayant ainsi été préservé d'aménagements douteux pour être mis au goût du jour, très à la mode au 19^{ème} siècle. C'est en 1996 que le Maître facteur d'orgue Yves Cabourdin, lui a redonné par un travail minutieux et passionné ses splendeurs originelles.

Conservés à près de 95%, sa mécanique, ses tuyaux et son buffet font de cet orgue, classé monument historique, une rareté d'une inestimable valeur. De plus, il est à notre connaissance le seul instrument français à posséder ses trois claviers d'origine en état d'être joués et, qui plus est, ont été parcourus par les doigts de la dynastie des Couperin.

The Great Organ of Rozay-en-Brie **One of the most beautiful examples of the French organ heritage**

All the authorities of the organ world are unanimous in placing the great baroque instrument of Rozay in the top six in french organ heritage. The late Pierre Cochereau, noted patron of the Great Organ of Notre Dame de Paris, declared in 1976 : « After its restoration, the organ at Rozay will be the best instrument in the Ile de France. Our country has about 7500 instruments, and one of the most striking is found at...Rozay, making the town a privileged successor to more than three centuries of history.

This magnificent example of French 17th century craftsmanship has miraculously survived almost intact, having escaped being pillaged during the revolution and barely saved from fire on several occasions. Such luck brings us today the fortune of being able to hear it ring out just as Bossuet would have made it do in the 18th century. In other ways it distinguishes itself in that it has only been restored once in the last 300 years, having been spared dubious conversions to be brought in line with the tastes of the day, a practice very much in vogue in the 19th century. It was not until 1996 that the Master organ builder Yves Cabourdin, through meticulous and impassioned work returned it to its original splendour.

Almost 95% preserved, its mechanical parts, pipes and case make this organ, classed as a historic monument, a priceless rarity. What is more, to our knowledge it is the only french instrument which still has its original keys in playable condition, on which the fingers of the Couperin dynasty should have run.

1er clavier Positif	2ème clavier Grand orgue	3ème clavier Récit	Pédalier à la française	Divers
Bourdon 8'	Montre 8'	Cornet V	Flute 8	Tremblant doux
Montre 4'	Bourdon 8'		Flute 4'	Tremblant fort
Doublette	Prestant		Trompette 8'	Vielle
Nazard	Flute 4'		Clairon	Rossignol
Tierce	Doublette			Clochette
Fourniture III	Basse de nazard			
Cymbale II	Dessus de nazard			
Cromorne	Basse de tierce			
	Dessus de tierce			
	Fourniture III			
	Cymbale III			
	Cornet V			
	Basse de trompette			
	Dessus de trompette			
	Clairon			
	Voix humaine			

Maître facteur d'orgue : restauration terminée en 1996
Yves Cabourdin (Manufacture Provençale d'Orgues)

Technicien Conseil : **Jean-Pierre Decavele**

Diapason
 Environ 392 Hz à 15° sur le 3° la

Pression
 80 CE

Tempérament
 Mésotonique modifié comportant :
 7 quintes diminuées de 1/5 de comma pythagoricien
 3 quintes justes
 2 quintes du loup augmentées de 1/5 de C.P.

Accouplement G.O. et positif à tiroir

Pas de tirasse

Pédalier :
 de 30 notes à la française (de UT à FA) avec
 ravalement des quatre jeux de pédale sur
 le UT # grave

Jeux neufs :
 Voix humaine
 Flute 4' de pédale

TEXTS

Lebègue **Prélude du cinquième ton (C major)**

Organ

Charpentier *Ave regina cælorum*

Ave regina cælorum,
Ave domina angelorum.
Salve radix, salve porta,
ex qua mundo lux est orta.

Gaude Virgo gloriosa,
Super omnes speciosa.
Vale, o valde decora,
et pro nobis Christum exora.

Charpentier *Sicut spina rosam*

Sicut spina rosam genuit
Judea Mariam.
Canite, fideles chori, et alternantibus
modulis carmina dulcisona miscete.
Nam ad nutum nostrum
et Domini ditantis honorem.
Sicut spina...

Charpentier *Gaude Felix Anna*

Gaude felix Anna
quae concepisti prolem
quae paritura erat mundi salvatorem.

Gaude felix Anna
mater magnae prolis ex te processit
rutilans stella summi solis.

Hail, O Queen of Heaven enthroned,
Hail, by angels Mistress owned.
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.

Just as a thorn-bush has brought forth a rose,
so Judaea has brought forth Mary.
Sing, faithful choirs, and with alternating strains
mingle sweetly-sounding songs.
For it is for our pleasure
and the honour of a Lord who enriches.
Just as a thorn-bush...

Rejoice, fortunate Anna,
who conceived an offspring
who was to beget the world's Saviour.

Rejoice, fortunate Anna.
The mother of a great offspring has proceeded from you,
(she who is) a glowing star of the brightest sun.

Gaude felix Anna
genetrix Mariae quae Deum virgo peperit
et es mater Mariae.

Gaude felix Anna
quae sola meruisti
ut esses mater virginis matris Jesu Christi.

Lebègue Tierce en taille du deuxième ton (G minor)

Organ

Nivers *Antiphon Gabriel Angelus*

Gabriel Angelus locutus est Mariae dicens:
Ave gratia plena, Dominus tecum,
benedicta tu in mulieribus.

Charpentier Magnificat pour le Port Royal

Solo (DD)
Magnificat anima mea Dominum:

Choir
Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.

Solo (GR)
Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae.
ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes
generationes.

Choir
Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est:
et sanctum nomen ejus.

Rejoice, fortunate Anna,
mother of Mary who, as a virgin, gave birth to God,
and you are the mother of Mary.

Rejoice, fortunate Anna,
you alone merited
to be the mother of the virgin mother of Jesus Christ.

The Angel Gabriel was sent from God, saying:
Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee,
Blessed art thou among women.

Solo (DD)
My soul doth magnify the Lord:

Choir
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

Solo (GR)
For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden.
For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me
blessed.

Choir
For he that is mighty hath magnified me,
and holy is his name.

Solo (FN)

Et misericordia ejus a progenie in progenies,
timentibus eum.

Choir

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo:
Dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.

Trio (GR, DD, FN)

Deposuit potentes de sede:
et exaltavit humiles.

Choir

Esurientes implevit bonis:
et divites dimisit inanes.

Solo (GR)

Suscepit Israel puerum suum:
recordatus misericordiae suae.

Choir

Sicut locutus est ad Patres nostros:
Abraham et semini ejus in saecula.

Trio (DD, GR, FN)

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto:

Choir

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Charpentier *Alma Redemptoris Mater*

Alma redemptoris Mater,
quae pervia coeli porta manes,
et stella maris, succurre cadenti,
surgere qui curat populo:
tu quae genuisti natura mirante,

Solo (FN)

And his mercy is on them that fear him,
throughout all generations.

Choir

He hath shewed strength with his arm.
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

Trio (GR, DD, FN)

He hath put down the mighty from their seat,
and hath exalted the humble and meek.

Choir

He hath filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he hath sent empty away.

Solo (GR)

He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant
Israel.

Choir

As he promised to our forefathers,
Abraham and his seed for ever.

Trio (DD, GR, FN)

Glorify be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

Choir

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end, Amen.

Loving mother of the Redeemer,
gate of heaven, star of the sea,
assist your people who have fallen
yet strive to rise again.
To the wonderment of nature

tuum sanctum Genitorem,
Virgo prius ac posterius.
Gabrielis ab ore sumens illud ave,
peccatorum miserere.

Charpentier Cantata: *Frigidæ noctis umbra totum* (In Nativitate Domini Nostri Jesu Christi Canticum)

Historicus (JC):

Frigidæ noctis umbra totum orbem tegebat
et pressos curis homines sopor altus habebat.

Pastores autem Judææ vigilabant super
gregem suum. Et ecce Angelus Domini stetit
juxta eos, et claritas Dei circumfulsit et terruit
illos et ait eis angelus.

Angelus: (FN)

Nolite timere, pastores. Ecce enim annuntio vobis
gaudium magnum quod erit omni populo: quia
natus est vobis hodie Salvator vester, Christus
Dominus, in civitate David; et hoc erit signum
vobis: invenietis infantem pannis involutum et
reclinatum in præsepio. Surgite, pastores,
properate, festinate, ite Bethlehem et adorare illum.

Chorus Pastorum:

Surgamus, properemus, festinemus, eamus usque
Bethlehem, et videamus hoc verbum quod
factum est, quod Dominus ostendit nobis.

Historicus:

Euntes autem pastores pervenerunt ad locum ubi
puer natus erat, et intrantes domum invenerunt
Mariam et Joseph et infantem pannis involutum
et positum in præsepio.

you bore your Creator,
yet remained a virgin after as before.
You who received Gabriel's joyful greeting,
have pity on us poor sinners.

Historicus (JC):

The shadows of cold night covered the world
and deep sleep held men oppressed with worry.

Shepherds of Judea were watching their sheep. And
behold, the angel of the Lord stood by them,
and the brightness of the Lord shone round them,
and they were afraid. And the angel said to them:

Angelus: (FN)

Fear not, shepherds. For behold I bring you good
tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.
For unto you is born today your Saviour, Christ
the Lord, in the city of David; and this shall be
a sign unto you: you shall find the babe wrapped
in swaddling clothes lying in a manger. Rise, shepherds,
hurry, go to Bethlehem and worship him.

Chorus Pastorum:

Let us rise, let us hurry, let us hasten, let us go
to Bethlehem and see this thing which has come to pass,
which the Lord has made known to us.

Historicus:

And the shepherds went and came to the place where
the boy was, and entering the house they found Mary
and Joseph and the child wrapped in swaddling clothes
and lying in a manger.

Chorus Pastorum:
Et occidentes adoraverunt eum inculto sed
devoto carmine dicentes.

La Chanson des Pasteurs

Solo (GR) and chorus
Salve, puerule,
Salve, tenellule,
O nate parvule,
Quam bonus es!
Tu coelum deseris,
Tu solo nasceris,
Nobis te ut miseris
Assimiles.

Solo (FN) and chorus
O summa bonitas,
Excelsa deitas
Vilis humanitas
Fit hodie.
Aeternus nascitur,
Immensus capitur,
Et rei tegitur,
Sub specie.

Solo (DD) and chorus
Virgo puerpera,
Beata viscera,
Dei cum opera,
Dant filium.
Gaude flos virginum,
Gaude spes hominum,
Fons lavans crimum
Proluvium.

Chorus Pastorum:
And kneeling they worshipped him in uncultured but
devout song, saying:

Solo (GR) and chorus
Hail, little boy,
Hail, tender little one,
O tiny baby,
How good you are!
You have left heaven,
You are born on the earth,
To make yourself the same
As wretched us.

Solo (FN) and chorus
O greatest good,
Highest deity
Has become today
Common humanity.
The eternal is born,
The immense is encompassed,
And is concealed
In the cloak of matter.

Solo (DD) and chorus
Virgin child-bearer,
Blessed womb,
Through the work of God
They give a son.
Rejoice, flower of virgins,
Rejoice, hope of mankind,
Fountain washing
The slurry of sin.

Lebègue Noël: Où s'en vont ces gays bergers?

Organ

Attrib. Lully *Salve Regina*

Salve Regina, Mater misericordiae,
Vita dulcedo et spes nostra salve.
Ad te clamamus exules filii Hevae.
Ad te suspiramus gementes et flentes,
in hac lacrimarum valle.
Eja ergo advocata nostra,
illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte.
Et Jesum benedictum fructum ventris tui
nobis post hoc exilium ostende.
O clemens, o pia, o dulcis Virgo Maria.

Hail holy queen, mother of mercy,
Hail our life, our sweetness and our hope.
To you do we cry poor banished children of Eve,
To you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping
in this valley of tears.
Turn then, most gracious advocate
your eyes of mercy toward us.
And after this, our exile,
Show us the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

Nivers Récit de cromorne du troisième ton (A minor)

Organ

Charpentier *Stabat Mater pour les religieuses*

Solo (FN) Stabat Mater dolorosa
Juxta crucem lacrimosa
Dum pendebat Filius.

Solo (FN) The grieving Mother stood
weeping beside the cross
where her Son was hanging.

Choir Cuius animam gementem,
Contristatam et dolentem,
Pertransivit gladius.

Choir Through her weeping soul,
compassionate and grieving,
sword passed.

Solo (DD) O quam tristis et afflicta
Fuit illa benedicta
Mater Unigeniti.

Solo (DD) O how sad and afflicted
as that blessed Mother
the Only-begotten.

Choir Quae moerebat et dolebat,
Pia Mater, dum videbat
Nati poenas inclyti.

Choir Who mourned and grieved,
the pious Mother,
looking at the torment of her glorious Child.

Solo (GR) Quis est homo qui non fleret,
Matri Christi si videret
In tanto supplicio?

Choir Quis non posset contristari,
Matrem Christi contemplari
Dolentem cum Filio?

Solo (FN) Pro peccatis suae gentis,
Vidit Jesum in tormentis,
Et flagellis subditum.

Choir Vidit suum dulcem natum
Moriendo desolatum,
Dum emisit spiritum.

Solo (DD) Eia Mater, fons amoris,
Me sentire vim doloris,
Fac, ut tecum lugeam.

Choir Fac ut ardeat cor meum
In amando Christum Deum,
Ut sibi complaceam

Solo (GR) Sancta Mater, istud agas,
Crucifigi fige plagas
Cordi meo valide.

Choir Tui nati vulnerati,
Tam dignati pro me pati,
Poenas mecum divide.

Solo (FN) Fac me tecum pie flere,
Crucifixo condolere,
Donec ego vixero.

Choir Juxta crucem tecum stare,
Et me tibi sociare
In planctu desidero.

Solo (GR) Who is the person who would not weep
seeing the Mother of Christ
in such agony?

Choir Who would not be able to feel compassion
on beholding Christ's Mother
suffering with her Son?

Solo (FN) For the sins of his people
she saw Jesus in torment
and subjected to the scourge.

Choir She saw her sweet offspring
dying, forsaken,
while He gave up his spirit.

Solo (DD) O Mother, fountain of love,
make me feel the power of sorrow,
that I may grieve with you.

Choir Grant that my heart may burn
in the love of Christ my Lord,
that I may greatly please Him

Solo (GR) Holy Mother, grant
that the wounds of the Crucified
drive deep into my heart.

Choir That of your wounded Son,
who so deigned to suffer for me,
I may share the pain.

Solo (FN) Let me sincerely weep with you,
bemoan the Crucified,
for as long as I live.

Choir To stand beside the cross with you,
and gladly share the weeping,
this I desire.

Solo (DD) Virgo virginum praeclara,
Mihi jam non sis amara:
Fac me tecum plangere.

Choir Fac ut portem Christi mortem,
Passionis fac consortem,
Et plagas recolere.

Solo (GR) Fac me plagis vulnerari,
Fac me cruce inebriari,
Et cruore Filii.

Choir Flammis ne urar succensus,
Per te Virgo, sim defensus
In die iudicii.

(DD, FN, GR) Christe cum sit hinc exire,
Da per matrem me venire
Ad palmam victoriae.

Choir Quando corpus morietur,
Fac ut animae donetur
Paradisi gloria.

Solo (DD) Chosen Virgin of virgins,
be not bitter with me,
let me weep with thee.

Choir Grant that I may bear the death of Christ,
the fate of his Passion,
and commemorate His wounds.

Solo (GR) Let me be wounded with his wounds,
inebriated by the cross
because of love for the Son.

Choir Inflamm and set on fire,
may I be defended by you, Virgin,
on the day of judgement.

(DD, FN, GR) Christ, when it is time to pass away,
grant that through your Mother I may come
to the palm of victory.

Choir When my body dies,
may my soul be granted
the glory of paradise.

Nivers Dialogue à deux choeurs du sixième ton (F major)

Organ

Charpentier *Regina coeli laetare*

Regina coeli laetare, Alleluia.
Quia quem meruisti portare
Resurrexit sicut dixit, Alleluia.
Ora pro nobis Deum. Alleluia.

O Queen of heaven rejoice. Alleluia.
For He whom thou didst merit to bear,
hath arisen as he said. Alleluia.

Charpentier *Gaudia Virginis Mariae* (The joys of the Virgin Mary)

Gaude virgo mater Christi
Quae per aurem concepisti
Gabriele nuntio.

Gaude mater salvatoris
Dum te mater praecursoris
Vocat in hospitio.

Gaude quia Deo plena
Peperisti sine pena
Cum pudoris lilio.

Gaude quia magi dona
Tuo nato ferunt bona
Quem tenes in gremio.

Gaude quia iuxta legem
Obtulisti mundi Regem
In templi sacrario.

Gaude quia tui nati
Quem dolebas mortem pati
Fulget resurrectio.

Gaude Virgo quia misit
Paraclitum quem promisit
Sanctorum collegio

Gaude quae post ipsum scandis
Et est honor tibi grandis
In coeli palatio. Amen.

Rejoice, virgin mother of Christ
who conceived by hearing,
with Gabriel as messenger.

Rejoice, mother of the Saviour,
while the mother of the precursor (John the Baptist)
calls you in hospitality.

Rejoice because, full of God,
you gave birth without pain
with the lily of chastity.

Rejoice because the Magi
bring good gifts for your son,
whom you hold in your arms.

Rejoice because in accordance with the law
you offered the king of the world
in the sanctuary of the temple.

Rejoice because the resurrection of your son,
whom you mourned when he suffered death,
is resplendent.

Rejoice, Virgin, because he sent
the paraclete whom he promised
to the brotherhood of saints.

Rejoice, you who ascend after the master himself,
and you have great honour
in the palace of heaven. Amen.

Lebègue *Plein Jeu du sixième ton* (G major)

Organ

BIOGRAPHY

CONCERTO DELLE DONNE

Concerto delle Donne was formed principally to perform the unique Italian vocal repertoire of the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Its title refers to the three celebrated singing ladies of the court of Duke Alfonso of Ferrara in the 1580s. The Duke was such an enthusiast of the female voice that he gathered together a Concerto delle Donne comprising the finest sopranos of the day, famed throughout Italy for the beauty of their voices and their ability to execute the most elaborate ornamentation. Concerto delle Donne's first CD of cantatas and motets by Carissimi (SIGCD040), was released by Signum Records in March 2003. Over the past two years they have been researching the music of Charpentier, culminating in the recording of this second CD.

Concerto delle Donne's three principal sopranos all sing regularly in early music groups in London as well as performing as soloists in their own right. Donna comes from the USA, where she graduated from Chicago's Northwestern University. Faye read music at the University of Nottingham before joining the postgraduate early music course at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in 1996. Gill began her singing in the Swansea Bach Choir and studied in Cardiff. Alastair has worked for twenty five years as a harpsichordist and organist based in London. He is principal keyboard player with the Academy of Ancient Music. Both Gill and Alastair are increasingly occupied with furthering and encouraging the musical activities of their four talented sons.



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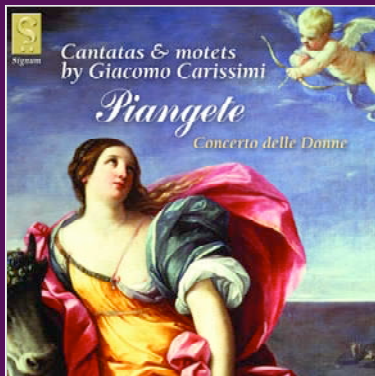
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