



Temple of Chastity

Codex Las Huelgas

Music from 13th century Spain

Mille Fleurs

Mille Fleurs' debut recording for Signum Records is devoted to one of the treasured manuscripts of early music, the *Codex Las Huelgas*.

This impressively large manuscript contains 170 parchment folios of works from the 13th and early 14th centuries, and was discovered by 2 monks, early in the last century, in the royal convent of *Las Huelgas* outside Burgos, Spain. It is very unusual in several ways, encompassing a wide range of musical forms and styles, and being highly organised according to genre, liturgical function and number of voices.

This collection clearly reflects the devotional practices of a medieval Cistercian monastery, but in itself was not designed as a luxury object; rather, it was a pragmatic tool, an anthology to be used as a source of reference or for actual performance. This is an especially intriguing manuscript for music historians, performers and listeners alike.

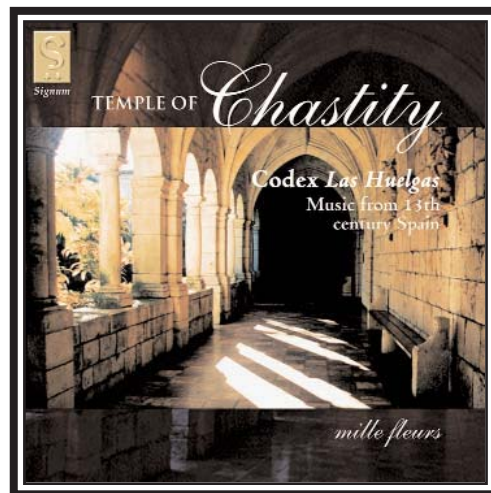
The pieces contained in the *Las Huelgas* manuscript reflect the full range of music set to Latin-text from about 1200 to the first half of the 14th century. French influence is strong, illustrating the repertoire as both international and local, imported and adapted in a continual process of absorption and reinvention.

Mille Fleurs bring a wealth of experience and research to these performances. Some pieces are performed as written; in others the notation provides a starting-point for musical elaboration. These charismatic singers do not believe female early music vocalists should sound like modern choirboys, but instead celebrate their different vocal timbres with each voice's natural personality shining through.

Just as the manuscript is pragmatic and adaptable as regards the notation of its musical repertoire, so the performance approaches adopted and realised on this recording offer variety and flexibility, always respecting the nature of the piece.

One thing is clear: throughout the Middle Ages the walls of the monastery of *Las Huelgas* resounded to the most highly refined and eloquently beautiful musical settings then in circulation in northern Spain.

Please contact Signum Records on +44 (0)870 710 6101 for further information.



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|-----|--|--------|
| 1) | Virgines egregie | [2.11] |
| 2) | Salve, sancta parens / Salve, porta regid / Salve, salus genicum | [1.18] |
| 3) | Surrexit de tumulo | [1.22] |
| 4) | Rosa das rosas (cantiga) | [4.06] |
| 5) | Castitatis thalamum | [2.29] |
| 6) | Benedicamus benigno voto | [3.10] |
| 7) | Catholicorum concio | [2.12] |
| 8) | Alpha bovi et leoni | [1.37] |
| 9) | Veni, redemptor gencium | [2.16] |
| 10) | Audi pontus, audi tellus | [2.36] |
| 11) | Improvisation on Audi pontus | [2.48] |
| 12) | Salve regina glorie | [2.26] |
| 13) | Gaude, virgo, plena Deo | [4.54] |
| 14) | Alpha bovi et leoni | [1.04] |
| 15) | Vella e mininna (cantiga) | [3.40] |
| 16) | Confessorum agoniam | [2.21] |
| 17) | Ex illustri nata prosapia | [1.41] |
| 18) | Parit preter morem | [2.58] |
| 19) | Castrium pudicicie / Virgo viget melius | [2.56] |
| 20) | Como poden per sas culpas (cantiga) | [4.57] |
| 21) | O Maria, virgo regia / Organica cantica | [1.57] |
| 22) | Maria, virgo virginum | [4.35] |

Total running time: [59.38]



Mille Fleurs:

Jennie Cassidy, Belinda Sykes and Helen Garrison
with Jan Walters (harp)

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