

CONVIVIUM MUSICUM

*Song
of
Songs*

MUSIC OF RENAISSANCE SPAIN

CONVIVIUM MUSICUM

CHOIR FOR RENAISSANCE MUSIC

Scott Metcalfe, music director

Song of Songs · Music of Renaissance Spain

Saturday, January 18, 2003 · 7:30 p.m.
Christ Church · Hamilton, MA

Sunday, January 19, 2003 · 3 p.m.
Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lynn · Swampscott, MA

Saturday, February 1, 2003, 8 p.m.
St. Peter's Episcopal Church · Cambridge, MA

Sunday, February 2, 2003, 3 p.m.
St. John's Episcopal Church · Jamaica Plain, MA

∞ performers ∞

Soprano: Cynthia Linkas, Anne Matthews, Mara McMillan,
Ruthie Miller, Debbie Winkler, Laura Yim

Alto: Sarah Gore, Kate Gyllensvärd, Sarah Jackson, Anne Kazlauskas

Tenor: Evan Boudreau, Evan Ingersoll,

Michael McDonald, Matthew Wright

Bass: Chris Chase, Mike Dettelbach, David Halstead,

Matthew Peattie, Joel van Lennep

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Program

I

Congratulami mihi · *Thomas Crecquillon (c.1490-1557)*

II

Missa Congratulami mihi · *Francisco Guerrero (1528-99)*

Kyrie

Gloria

III

Quae est ista · *Guerrero*

IV

Missa Congratulami mihi · *Guerrero*

Credo

V

Vadam et circuibo civitatem · *Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611)*

∞ intermission ∞

VI

Hortus conclusus · *Rodrigo de Ceballos (c.1530-91)*

Tota pulchra es Maria · *Guerrero*

VII

Quam pulchri sunt gressus tui · *Victoria*

Trahe me post te · *Guerrero*

VII

Missa Congratulami mihi · *Guerrero*

Sanctus

Agnus dei

VIII

Vidi speciosam · *Victoria*



Transformations

The Hebrew love poem known as the *Song of Songs* was likely written down sometime in the third century BCE and was admitted to the canon of Hebrew Scripture long after the Torah and the Prophets, probably towards the end of the first century CE. In the two millennia since, it has most often been interpreted by its official guardians as some sort of allegory, mystical, theological, historical, ecclesiastical, or otherwise. Learned commentaries have defined “the subject of the Song variously as the love of God and Israel, Christ and the Church, or Christ and the believer’s soul; the chaste love of the Virgin Mary; the marriage of Solomon and Pharaoh’s daughter, or of the active and passive intellect; the discourse of Solomon with Wisdom; the trials of the people of Israel; or the history of the Church — and that’s only a partial list.” (1) We have much to thank these interpreters for. Besides contributing enormously to scholarship on the history and language of the Song, it is quite likely that only their religious-allegorical view of the Song (boosted by the later editorial ascription of the poem to Solomon, one of Israel’s most famous kings) made possible its inclusion in the canon of Holy Scripture, without which it may have been lost to us forever. But as anyone who reads the poem without an a priori commitment to a religious meaning is bound to see, the Song of Songs is plainly about love between two human beings, a young woman and man in the freshness of their first passion; and specifically about erotic love. As Ariel Bloch and Chana Bloch observe in the introduction to their recent English translation of the Song, this is made obvious by the repeated use of the Hebrew verb *dodim*, “a comprehensive term for lovemaking” (2) with an unambiguously sexual meaning.

For centuries, however, the Song has mostly been read among Jews and Christians alike as a religious work, in the Catholic view referring to love between Christ and the Church, Mary and her son, or the faithful and Mary. In the fourth century CE Jerome transformed the original Hebrew poetry into the Latin prose of the Vulgate Bible, and its intoxicatingly sensuous images eventually found their place in the liturgy of the Church, often freely rearranged, as if the makers of liturgy knew the Song so thoroughly that they didn’t need to refer back to a written original in order to quote it accurately but simply drew on their memory of it. These are the texts that Guerrero, Victoria, and Ceballos set to music: antiphons, responsories, and other liturgical items generally associated with various feasts of the Blessed Virgin, for example her conception (*Quam pulchri sunt*) or assumption (*Vidi speciosam*). From a secular perspective at the beginning of the twenty-first century, many of these texts are so intensely erotic that it strains the imagination to try to understand them as allegorical language addressed to

the Mother of God: “Your lips are a dripping honeycomb, honey and milk are under your tongue” (*Hortus conclusus*) for example, or “I will climb into the palm tree and take hold of its fruit: and may your breasts be like clusters of grapes on the vine, and the scent of your mouth like apples” (*Trabe me post te*). Furthermore, in the sacred works of these 16th-century Spaniards the sensuousness of the language is matched everywhere by a profound sensuousness in the music. Difficult though it may be for us to grasp at this remove, this was apparently no paradox in an age when religion saturated every aspect of life.

Perhaps a more interesting paradox is that the music of Catholic composers who died four centuries ago, however they themselves may have interpreted the Song of Songs, may connect us directly to the unvarnished, sometimes overwhelming emotional impact of the original lyric. We enter into an emotional engagement with an ancient Hebrew love poem, sung in the voice of sacred music written by 16th-century Spanish composers, who were themselves conversing with the love poem through the medium of a translation into Latin, into sacred allegory, and into Christianity. And no two of us will experience this in exactly the same way, for no two persons’ experience of poetry or music will ever be exactly identical, any more than their precise experience of human love, or of the divine.

The erotic meaning of the Song has been evaded or obscured by most translations. For example, where the Hebrew has *dodim*, the King James Version uses the more general *love*, and the Vulgate has *ubera*, which literally means breasts but in Latin is often intended in a figurative sense as richness or fertility, perhaps pointing to abundant love, a usage dating back to classical authors. (*Ubera* also occurs in the Vulgate in the literal sense.) Some of the transformations found in the scriptural versions are more neutral or, surprisingly, even intensify the sensuality of the original. The Hebrew *tappuach*, for example, which scholars today tend to identify as an apricot, became *malus* or apple, a fruit not found in biblical Palestine. The Hebrew *libbabtini*, which Bloch and Bloch render as “You have ravished my heart,” becomes in the Vulgate, *vulnerasti cor meum*, “You have wounded my heart.” And where the Hebrew continues, “You have ravished my heart with . . . one link of your necklace,” Jerome’s Latin has the considerably more physical image “with one hair of your neck.”

With Guerrero’s *Missa Congratulamini mihi*, which makes up the balance of our program, we are again pursuing the theme of transformation. The mass is based on a motet by a Franco-Flemish composer of a generation earlier, Thomas Crecquillon. Crecquillon’s motet is a cheery affair, exuberantly portraying the rejoicing at the Resurrection and paying little musical heed to the weeping and uncertainty which preceded it. Guerrero takes

Crecquillon's motifs (many of which resemble each other) and harmonies and uses them as the basis for a glorious mass in five parts, with two soprano parts in place of the motet's two basses. He takes full advantage of the more striking features of the motet, such as the lovely sequential passage which occurs at the words "vidi dominum meum" (it is used for the first time at the end of *Kyrie II*), or a characteristic cadence in which a suspension and its resolution are heard simultaneously. Guerrero's limitless resourcefulness and skill in reworking the original is dazzling, an astonishing transformation of fairly simple musical material into something much richer and more complex. He is never content to use any part of the motet unaltered, and just when we think he has said all there is to say, he finds a new harmonic twist or yet another way to spin out Crecquillon's melody into a new one. His invention holds us spellbound right through to the second and final *Agnus dei*, where Crecquillon's second bass reappears to create a wonderful six-voice texture.

—Scott Metcalfe

I am indebted to *The Song of Songs: a new translation*, by Ariel Bloch and Chana Bloch (1995).

1. Bloch and Bloch, pp.34-5.
2. Ibid, pp.27-8.

A note on pronunciation:

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Latin was pronounced in the churches of Europe more or less according to the rules of the local tongue, so that Spanish Latin was heavily colored by the Spanish language and sounded quite distinct from Latin sung by Italian, French, English, or German speakers. The influence of the vernacular on Latin was felt both in the quality of vowels and consonants and in the rhythm and melody of the spoken language, and this latter effect is also noticeable in the characteristic musical gestures of composers from different linguistic groups, when they set words to music. For today's concert we are employing a pronunciation which is intended to convey something of the sound of Latin sung by Spanish musicians and clerics around the year 1600.



About the Artists

Formed in 1987 and incorporated in 1990, *Convivium Musicum's* singing has been praised for "the almost dancing lift given to the rhythms, both musical and verbal" (*Boston Globe*). Our recent focus on late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Franco-Flemish and Spanish sacred polyphony and our experimentation with period pronunciation of Latin have revealed wonderful musical effects and emotional affects of both familiar and rarely-performed Renaissance vocal music. *Convivium* is proud of being a corporation run by its singers; we serve on the Board of Directors, manage publicity, design programs, and seek out opportunities to perform Renaissance polyphony for new audiences. The musical growth of the ensemble over these last few years has been matched by the growth of an enthusiastic family of supporters and music lovers in a community that stretches across the New England area. We look forward with a mutual sense of excitement to sharing our music with longtime supporters and new listeners alike.

Scott Metcalfe, Music Director

A conductor with a repertoire extending from the fifteenth century to the eighteenth, Scott Metcalfe is in his seventh season as music director of *Convivium Musicum*. Mr. Metcalfe enjoys a varied career in the stimulating field of early music. Besides *Convivium Musicum*, he also directs the Renaissance vocal ensemble *Blue Heron* and the *Cambridge Bach Ensemble*. As a guest conductor, he has recently directed Handel's *Messiah* with the *Tudor Choir* and *Seattle Baroque*, Monteverdi's *Vespers* of 1610 at *Monadnock Music*, and Bach cantatas for the *Berkshire Bach Society*. Also a violinist and violist, he is a member of *La Luna* and *The King's Noyse*, and is principal second violinist and occasional concertmaster of the *Trinity Consort* in Portland, Oregon.

for more information:

phone: 617-623-0656 · web: www.convivium.org
email: info@convivium.org



Texts & Translations

To better display the transformations the Song of Songs text has undergone in its passages from language to language, we have presented several versions of the text in a separate format.

Congratulamini mihi — *Easter responsory; from John 20:13, 15*

Congratulamini mihi, omnes qui diligitis Dominum, quia quem quaerebam apparuit mihi, et dum flerem ad monumentum vidi Dominum meum, alleluia.

Tulerunt Dominum meum, et nescio ubi posuerunt eum; si tu sustulisti eum, dicito mihi; et dum flerem ad monumentum vidi Dominum meum, alleluia.

Rejoice with me, all who love the Lord, for he whom I sought appeared to me, and while I wept at the tomb, I saw my Lord, alleluia.

They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him; if you removed him, tell me; and while I wept at the tomb, I saw my Lord, alleluia.

Missa Congratulamini mihi

Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison. Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy.

Gloria in excelsis deo, et in terra pax hominibus bone voluntatis. Laudamus te. Benedicimus te. Adoramus te. Glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam. Domine deus, rex celestis, 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 gloria dei patris. Amen.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to all of good will. We praise you. We bless you. We adore you. We glorify you. We give thanks to you for your great glory. Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God the Father, Lord Jesus Christ, only begotten Son, Lord God, lamb of God, Son of the Father, Who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Who takes away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Who sits at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are holy, you alone are the Lord, the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Credo in unum deum, patrem omnipotentem, factorem celi et terre, visibilium omnium, et invisibilium. Et in unum dominum Jesum Christum,

filium dei unigenitum. Et ex patre natum ante omnia secula. 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 celis. 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 celum: sedet ad dexteram patris. Et iterum venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos et mortuos: cujus 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 seculi. Amen.

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God. Begotten, not made; of one being with the Father, through whom all things are made. For us and for our salvation he came down from Heaven. He was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and was made man. He was crucified for our sake under Pontius Pilate, died, and was buried. On the third day he rose again, in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge both the living and the dead, and his kingdom shall have no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who together with the Father and Son is worshipped and glorified; who has spoken by the prophets. And in one holy catholic and apostolic church. I confess one baptism for the remission of sins, and I await the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, dominus deus sabaoth. Pleni sunt celi et terra gloria tua. Osanna in excelsis. Benedictus qui venit in nomine domini. Osanna in excelsis.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

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

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

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



Acknowledgements

Convivium would like to thank the parish of St. John's Episcopal Church, Charlestown, Laurie Rofinot, rector, and Douglas Witte, organist, for our "home base" in Charlestown. We would also like to thank our other hosts at Christ Church, Hamilton, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Cambridge, The Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lynn and St. John's Episcopal Church, Jamaica Plain.

Many thanks also to Philip "Doc" Davis for recording our concerts, to Sheila Beardslee Bosworth for publicity, to Richard Silverman for maintaining our Internet presence, Maureen Conroy and Ford Fay for assistance with our mailings, Elana Messer for Hebrew typesetting, and Evan Ingersoll for brochure and program design.

Convivium Musicum is a non-profit corporation largely supported by membership dues and tax-deductible donations. We thank our contributors for their generous support this season, and we welcome you to join us in our continuing effort to bring beautiful music to life.

We gratefully acknowledge our contributors this season:

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SPRING 2003:
Music of the Protestant Renaissance



Claude Le Jeune, Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, and others

In the spring we turn to music from more northerly lands, with a program featuring settings of melodies and poetry from the mid-16th-century Genevan Psalter. Combining finely wrought French versions of the psalms with catchy, effortlessly memorized tunes, the Psalter caught the imagination of composers across Europe, especially in Calvinist lands, where sacred music in the home was encouraged as a powerful spiritual refreshment (even while overly florid music in church was frowned upon as a sinful distraction). We will focus on music by the French composer Claude Le Jeune and the Dutch Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, both of whom crafted settings of the Psalter's tunes and texts which match the vim and vigor of the originals with an elaborate, rhythmically vital contrapuntal art.

Saturday, May 17, 8 p.m. · St. Peter's Episcopal Church
838 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA
not ☎ · Near Central Square T; directions at www.diomass.org

Saturday, May 31, 7 p.m. · Trinity Lutheran Church
73 Lancaster Street, Worcester, MA
*☎ nave & bathroom · call 617-623-0656 or email info@convivium.org
for directions*

Sunday, June 1, 7 p.m. · St. Paul's Episcopal Church
15 St. Paul Street, Brookline, MA
*☎ nave & bathroom · Near Brookline Village T (D line); directions at
www.diomass.org*

