



(LEMS 8044)

JOHANNES REGIS (1496)
Missa Ecce Ancilla Domini
Missa Dum Sacrum Mysterium (L'Homme Arme)

SCHOLA DISCANTUS
 Director: Kevin N. Moll

NOTES BY KEVIN MOLL

The exceedingly poor documentary record that survives to illumine the career of Johannes Regis unfortunately typifies all too well the extent of our knowledge of 15th century composers. Certain evidence indicates that he may have served at Cambrai Cathedral as secretary to the most renowned composer of the age, Guillaume Dufay (1474), and he is mentioned in the latter's will. Until quite recently, even the year of Regis's death was uncertain, but recent archival research of musicologist David Fallows has established a death date of 1496, or about ten years later than had previously been thought. Notwithstanding the paucity of biographical information regarding Regis, clear testimony to his standing as a composer is provided by contemporary music theorist Johannes Tinctoris, who refers to Regis several times in his treatises. In the prologue to his Art of

Counterpoint (1477), Tinctoris names him second only to Johannes Ockeghem among five of the greatest composers of the age.

The two masses recorded here, both set in four parts, are the only ones that have been transmitted to us with attributions to Regis. It is possible (albeit unlikely) that the *Missa Dum sacrum mysterium* is the Regis mass recorded as having been copied into a Cambrai choirbook in 1463. At any rate, the style of both cycles points strongly to an origination in the third quarter of the 15th century. In this regard it is significant that the different voice parts are not yet fully homogenized rhythmically, as is the case with the later works of Ockeghem, Obrecht, Josquin, La Rue, et al. Rather, in the Regis masses, the upper parts are highly ornamented melodically, exemplifying what might be called a "flamboyant" aesthetic, characteristic of both music and architecture in the earlier 15th century. (For a more extensive discussion of this point, see the program notes to Lyrichord Early Music Series CD LEMS 8025: "Echoes of Jeanne D'Arc: *Missa De beata virgine* of Reginaldus Liebert".) The rhythmic potential of such embellishments is very effectively exploited by Regis, resulting in many compelling turns of phrase, particularly at points of musical closure.

Regis's masses are historically significant in that they are among the earliest Franco-Flemish cycles to set cantus-firmus material in more than one voice simultaneously (for a discussion of such procedures in the *Missa Dum sacrum mysterium*, see below). The *Missa Ecce ancilla Domini* - a work of rather monumental proportions for its time-places in the tenor the chant used by Dufay in his mass of the same name. But in addition, Regis uses five other Office chants in the lower voices at various points, often with more than one sounding at the same time.

These cantus-firmus parts are underlaid in the source with their original plainchant texts, which apparently were intended to be declaimed concurrently with the standard liturgical text in the upper parts (discantus and contratenor altus). Such a juxtaposition of texts represents a vestige of the "trope" practices of the earlier Middle Ages. Contrapuntally, the *Missa Ecce ancilla Domini* is typical of the 15th century in that it incorporates a single voice pair as a consistent structural basis for the composition, but the work is remarkable in that here the companion voice to the discantus is not the customary tenor, but rather the contratenor altus (labelled "contra" in the source) - a voice type which in this period was most typically relegated to a subordinate role in the counterpoint. This results in the unusual situation of the voice labelled "tenor" being contrapuntally dispensable almost throughout the cycle, even though it is the part that most often carries a cantus firmus.

The most popular cantus-firmus source for masses in the 15th and 16th centuries, as aficionados of Renaissance music are undoubtedly aware, was the secular tune *L'homme arme*. Most of the major Continental

composers of the time wrote at least one mass cycle based on this melody, and Regis proves to be no exception, for the Missa Dum sacrum mysterium is really nothing other than a L'homme arme mass, with various sacred texts (beginning with that of the plainchant antiphon Dum sacrum mysterium) set to the cantus firmus melody. While evidently corrupt in some places, these trope texts clearly identify Saint Michael the archangel, to whom the above-mentioned antiphon is dedicated, as "the armed man". The compositional conception of this mass is more conventional than Ecce ancilla Domini insofar as the tenor does form a structural duet with the discantus throughout, and at the end of every movement is the lowest voice (the bassus usually leaps up an octave at the final cadence to take the fifth above the tenor). In this mass, too, the cantus firmus appears in more than one part simultaneously, a feat Regis accomplishes both by combining several different preexistent melodies together, and by setting the L'homme arme tune against itself, i.e., in imitation between the contratenor altus and the tenor (at the fifth below), with the latter acting as a kind of melodic "shadow" of the former. In the Sanctus and Agnus movements, the cantus firmus appears in the contratenor bassus as well.

KEVIN N. MOLL c1999

TRACKS:

Missa Ecce Ancilla Domini

1. Kyrie - 4:17
2. Gloria - 7:45
3. Credo - 12:22
4. Sanctus - 9:54
5. Agnus Dei - 4:36

Manuscript Sources:

- 1) Vatican, Cappella sistina 14
(fols. 87v-101r)
- 2) Brussels, Bibliotheque royale 5557
(fols. 121v-136r)

Missa Dum Sacrum Mysterium (L'Homme Armé)

6. Kyrie - 5:52
7. Gloria - 7:10
8. Credo - 8:11
9. Sanctus - 6:25
10. Agnus Dei - 4:02

Manuscript Source:

- 1) Vatican, Cappella sistina 14
(fols. 117v-127r)

[Discantus]	Ken Fitch, Corey McKnight
Contratenor altus	David Munderloh, Michael Lichtenauer
Tenor	Kevin Baum
Contratenor bassus	Eric Alatorre

TEXTS OF CANTUS-FIRMUS (WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS)

Page numbers from modern chant sources are identified through the following abbreviations:

AM = Antiphonale monasticum, edited by the monks of the order of St. Benedict (Tournai: Desclee, 1934).

LU = Liber Usualis, edited by the monks of the order of St. Benedict (Tournai: Declee, 1952).

MISSA ECCE ANCILLA DOMINI

1) AM 863 Fifth antiphon at Laudes; Feast of the Annunciation (March 25)
Ecce ancilla Domini: fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.

Behold the handmaiden of God: let it be done to me according to your word.

2) AM 862 Third antiphon at Laudes; Feast of the Annunciation (March 25)
Ne timeas Maria, invenisti gratiam apud Dominum

Mary, fear not, you have found favor with the Lord

3) AM 953 Antiphon for the Commemoration of the Visitation at Second Vespers; Feast of the Most Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ (July 1)

Beata es Maria, quae credidisti: perficientur in te quae dicta sunt tibi a Domino.

You are blessed, Mary, [you] who have believed: the things that have been told you by the Lord will be fulfilled in you.

4) AM 957 Antiphon for the Magnificat of Second Vespers; Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (July 2)

Beatam me dicent omnes generationes, quia ancillam humilem respexit Dominus.

All generations will call me blessed, since the Lord has looked with favor upon his lowly handmaiden.

5) AM 189 Antiphon for the Benediction at Laudes; First Sunday of Advent
Spiritus sanctus in te descendet, Maria: ne timeas, habebis in utero Filium Dei, [alleluia].

The Holy Spirit will descend unto you, Mary: fear not, you carry the son of God in your womb [alleluia].

6) AM 191 Antiphon for the Benediction at Laudes; Monday, first week of Advent
Angelus Domini nuntiavit Mariae, et concepit de spiritu sancto, [alleluia].
The angel of God announced to Mary, and she conceived of the holy spirit, [alleluia].

7) AM 861 First antiphon at Laudes; Feast of the Annunciation (March 25)
Missus Gabriel angelus ad Mariam virginem desponsatam Joseph, [alleluia].
The angel Gabriel was sent to the Virgin Mary, betrothed to Joseph, [alleluia].

MISSA DUM SACRUM MYSTERIUM

AM 1057-8 Dum sacrum mysterium cerneret Johannes, Michael
Archangelus tuba cecinit: dignus es Domine Deus meus accipere librum.
While John was discerning the sacred mysteries, Michael the Archangel
sounded his trumpet: You are worthy, Lord my God, to receive the book.

Michael Archangelus, milia milium ministrabant ei.
Michael the archangel, thousands upon thousands were attending to him.

Michaeli, quem honorificant cives angelorum.
Michael, whom the legions of angels honor.

Michael praepositus paradisi quem honorant eius archangelorum.

LU 1659-60? Dum cerneret belli dracho cum Micheal Archangelo.
While the dragon of war contends with Michael the archangel [...]

LU 1665 [L]audes Dominum, quem laudant angeli, cherubim et seraphim.
Laudamus Christum quem laudant.
Praise the Lord, whom the angels praise, the cherubim and seraphim.
We praise Christ, whom they [also] praise.

LU 1658 Audita est vox milia milium dicentium salu Deo nostro.
Dum committeret belli.
The voice of thousands upon thousands is heard saying "Praise to our
God". While he was engaging in battle [...]
Translations by James M. Isaacs

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Discantus." Alex Ross, The New Yorker, 1 June 1998

"Schola Discantus clearly has a very personal and very mature vision
of Ockeghem and of how to perform his music." Ivan Moody, Goldberg,
Jan/Mar 1998

LEMS 8025 - ECHOES OF JEANNE D'ARC:
MISSA DE BEATA VIRGINE OF REGINALDUS LIEBERT (rec. 1995)

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peril." J.W. Barker, American Record Guide, Mar/Apr 1997

"Give it a hearing, for it deserves your attention." J.F. Weber,
Fanfare, Jan/Feb 1997

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1996

"Try this marvelous disc." J.F. Weber, Fanfare, Nov/Dec 1996

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Moll! Bravo Lyrichord! J.W. Barker, American Record Guide, Mar/Apr
1995

LEMS 8010 - JOHANNES OCKEGHEM: THE TWO THREE-VOICE MASSES (rec.
1992)

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...strong but lucid delivery...thoroughly responsible and
praiseworthy." J.W. Barker, American Record Guide, Jan/Feb 1995

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"Very beautifully sung." Penguin Guide to Compact Discs, 1996

Schola Discantus specializes in historically informed performances of Franco-Flemish polyphony from the Ars nova and early Renaissance eras (c. 1320-1500). In the last 100 years, musicologists have unlocked the technical secrets of this music, thus allowing it to be performed again after a lapse of over half a millenium. Although many great works are still rarely heard in modern times, it has become clear that in the 14th and 15th centuries music achieved an aesthetic level fully equal to that attained by other art forms of the time. Indeed, in it's combination of gracefulness and vitality, this late medieval repertoire of vocal polyphony is unsurpassed in the entire literature of music, and it is no coincidence that it's creators are exact contemporaries of the likes of Chaucer, Erasmus, Donatello, Brunelleschi, the van Eycks, Botticelli, and Leonardo da Vinci.

Cantemus praeclara oblitaque

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CREDITS:

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Produced by Kevin N. Moll for TRIVIUM PRODUCTIONS

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Recording Assistant: Ruth Melles

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