



(LEMS 8081, formerly released as LLST 7265)

Josquín Des Prez

Missa Gaudeamus

**Dominus regnavit
In exitu Israel
Nymphes des bois**

Capella Cordina
Alejandro Planchart, *director*

In 1502 the Venetian printer Ottaviano Petrucci, who had issued the previous year the first collection of part-music ever printed (the *Harmonice musices odhecaton*), published his first book of Masses; the Misse Josquin. The book contained five Masses: L'Homme armé super voces musicales; La, sol, fa, re, mi; Gaudeamus; Fortuna desperata; and L'Homme armé sexti toni.

The choice of Josquin for such a volume was an obvious one, for the composer was then at the very height of his fame and influence. Indeed, although Petrucci eventually brought out books of Masses by other composers, only Josquin merited three complete prints from him (Book II, 1505; Book III, 1514), and only the Josquin Mass books were reprinted (Book I in 1516, Book II in 1515). Thus, virtually all the extant authentic Masses of Josquin were published by Petrucci. The exceptions are the Missa Pange lingua, probably composed after 1516, and the Missa Allez regretz, an inferior work that may well be spurious. A third Mass attributed to Josquin in some sources, the Missa Da pacem, has been shown to be the work of a minor composer, Noel Bauldweyn.

In 1502, however, neither Petrucci nor Josquin (who most likely had a say in the selection of pieces) could have known that there would be eventually three complete books of Josquin's Masses from the Venetian's press, and the choice of pieces reflects a great deal of care. All five are masterpieces (Books II and III have a few weaker, and probably early, Masses), they are all impressively "learned" works, and they present a very complete picture of the entire range of styles and techniques found in Josquin's Masses until then.

The Missa Gaudeamus is probably the earliest one in Book I, and may date as far back as 1480. It is based on the Gregorian Introit Gaudeamus omnes in domino, originally for the feast of St. Agatha, but which in the course of the middle ages had been adapted to a great number of feasts, including All Saints and most of the feasts of the Blessed Virgin.

The Mass shows a mixture of cantus firmus and polyphonic paraphrase technique. Josquin makes a sharp distinction between the intonation on the Introit (to the word "Gaudeamus") and the rest of the chant. Most of the chant appears only in the tenor, sparsely ornamented, and often in very long notes. The intonation, however, which is one of the most characteristic formulas in the chant repertory, permeates the entire polyphonic fabric and becomes the central motive of the entire Mass. The following example gives it in its simplest form, as the chant itself, and in the most common ornamented version found in the Mass.



The Mass alternates between sections dominated by the Gaudeamus motive (Kyrie I, Et in terra, Sanctus, Osanna, Agnus III), sections based on the rest of the cantus firmus, even though they may start with the Gaudeamus motive (Christe, Kyrie II, Qui tollis, Patrem, Et in spiritum, Et unam sanctum, Agnus I), and sections in reduced scoring where the cantus firmus is absent (Et incarnatus, Pleni sunt, Benedictus, Agnus II). Nevertheless, no two of the sections are remotely alike, and the whole work is a tour de force of contrapuntal imagination. The device that seems to permeate the whole Mass, motive repetition, is turned to the most different expressive purposes, and produces the tremendous climaxes at the Confiteor, the Osanna, and the Agnus III, as well as the

serenity of Kyrie I or of the Sanctus. Despite many passages that point to the declamatory style of the late works, the Mass remains an archaic and austere character.

The two motets in this record are part of a large legacy of posthumous works that were published in Germany in the decades following Josquin's death. They are probably late works, written after 1500. Dominus Regnavit (Track 6) a setting of Psalm 92 (King James 93), for Lauds, is a freely composed piece typical of the early 1500s. The joyful text is set with an easy melodiousness that contrasts sharply with the austerity and grandeur of the Mass. In exitu Israel (Track 8), on the other hand, is much closer to the spirit of the Mass, despite its modernity. The piece is a setting of Psalm 113 (King James 114-115), for Vespers. The Psalm is a long and grim text dealing with the Exodus, and Josquin has chosen to derive most of his themes from the Gregorian psalmody. He begins the piece citing (in an ornamented fashion) a psalm-tone, the tonus peregrinus, where the first half of each verse is recited on A and the second on G. Most of the other themes in the piece rely heavily on the repeated-note pattern of psalmody. This is the most unpromising melodic stuff imaginable and Josquin does not attempt to build long melodies out of it, instead, he builds the piece out of short motives that are reiterated with slight rhythmic displacements by the different parts. The result is a work with an enormous rhythmic drive, where the reiteration of short melodic formulas achieves an almost hypnotic effect.

Nymphes des bois (Track 7), a setting of the Déploration for the death of Johannes Ockeghem (1425-95) by Jean Molinet, is one of Josquin's most famous works. The tenor sings the Introit of the Mass for the Dead while the other voices sing Molinet's poem in slow-moving and affecting music. Josquin inserted a line of his own, about Ockeghem's learning and handsome appearance, into Molinet's poem. At the end, all voices join in the final Latin supplication: "May they rest in peace. Amen."

As the Mass and Psalm texts are easily available in English, only the Déploration is translated here.

Tenor: Eternal rest give them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.

Other voices: Nymphs of the woods, goddesses of the fountains, skilled singers of all nations, change your voices, so clear and proud, to piercing cries and lamentations, for Atropos, most terrible satrap, has caught your Ockeghem in her trap, true treasurer of music and masterpiece, learned, handsome, and not at all stout. Great pity is that the earth should cover him.

Clothe yourselves in mourning, Josquin, Pierrsson, Brumel, Compère, and weep great tears from your eyes, for you have lost your good father. May they rest in peace. Amen.

Performance forces:

Missa Gaudeamus (a 4), In exitu Israel (a 4)

Soprano: 6 singers, recorder (also English horn in the motet); Alto: 6 singers, bassoon;

Tenor: 5 singers, trombone; Bass, 5 singers, bassoon.

Dominus regnavit (a 4), Nymphes des bois (2 5)

All voices: 5 singers each. Dominus regnavit transposed up a major 3rd, Nymphes des bois transposed down a half-step.

Sopranos: Millicent Allison, Julia Blue, Jeanine Dovell, Amy Klohr, Sally Sanford, Karen Shoos.

Altos: Susan Addiss, Roverta Graziano, Christine Hunter, Karen Kleeman, Naomi Lewin, Sally Mead, Kerala Snyder.

Tenors: Franck Avril, George Huber, Steve Sametz, Ben Ward, Britt Wheeler, Jack Zamboni.

Basses: David Carr, John Graziano, Thomas MacCracken, Christopher Wall, David Weisbrod.

Rogene Russell, English horn.

Francis Braunlich, William Liddell, recorder.

William Cobb, Kim Kowalke, bassoon.

Charles Scott, trombone.

Recorded March 3rd, March 9th, and May 26th, 1972 at Marquand Chapel in Yale University.

Recording engineer: Frederick Bashour.

Track Lengths

1. Kyrie 2:37
2. Gloria 5:38
3. Credo 9:58
4. Sanctus 5:49
5. Agnus Dei 4:55
6. Dominus regnavit 3:43
7. Nymphes de bois 5:10
8. In exitu Israel 9:29



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