

Bill Barclay Artistic Director

CAPPELLA PRATENSIS Canons of Beauty: Josquin and Mouton

Dutch masters Cappella Pratensis join MB1800 for the fifth time in a stunning program of high renaissance polyphony. Marking the 500th anniversary of the passing of Josquin Desprez and Jean Mouton – two musical friends, singers, and pillars of western music – the ensemble antiphonally reflects the composers with each other. Singing around a central music stand as was Renaissance practice, the all-male chorus provides an exquisite historical experience of some of the finest music ever written.

> 4.00pm Sunday April 16, 2023 Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st Street

4.00pm Sunday April 23, 2023 Online

This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

Please turn off cell phones. Photography and recording are not permitted.

Music Before 1800 requires everyone who comes to any of our concerts to remain masked while indoors.

CANONS OF BEAUTY: JOSQUIN AND MOUTON

Josquin Desprez (1450/55-1521)	Inviolata, integra et casta
Josquin Desprez	Virgo salutiferi
Jean Mouton (c. 1459–1522)	Ave Maria gemma virginum
Josquin Desprez	Faulte d'argent
Jean Mouton	Salva nos
Josquin Desprez	Petite camusette
Jean Mouton	Tua est potentia
Jean Mouton	Missa Tua est potentia – Agnus Dei
Josquin Desprez	Missa Ave maris stella – Agnus Dei
Jean Mouton	Da pacem
Josquin Desprez	O virgo prudentissima
Josquin Desprez	Absolve, quesumus
Jean Mouton	Nesciens mater

Tim Braithwaite, Stratton Bull, Andrew Hallock superius Lior Leibovici, Korneel Van Neste contratenor Peter de Laurentiis, Pieter De Moor tenor Donald Bentvelsen, Marc Busnel, Roland Faust, Grantley McDonald bassus Stratton Bull Artistic director

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CAPPELLA PRATENSIS

Cappella Pratensis specializes in the music of Josquin Desprez (= Josqinus Pratensis) and other polyphonic composers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The ensemble performs its own programs and original interpretations, which are based on academic research. As was customary in the renaissance, the singers of Cappella Pratensis usually stand around a central music stand, singing from facsimiles of original choirbooks. This creates a unique perspective on the repertoire. The ensemble, founded in 1987, is now under the artistic direction of singer and conductor Stratton Bull.

In addition to regular concerts in the Netherlands and Belgium, Cappella Pratensis performs in leading international festivals and venues in France, Portugal, Germany and the United States. The ensemble also has also released several CD recordings which have been greeted with rave press reviews and awards, including the Diapason d'Or and the Prix Choc. From 2005 to 2007, Cappella Pratensis was ensemble-in-residence at the Fondation Royaumont (France), where it gave courses and concerts, and worked with several prominent musicians. In 2009, it released a DVD/CD production of the *Missa de Sancto Donatiano* by Jacob Obrecht, which contained a reconstruction of the first performance of this mass, filmed on location in Bruges, supplemented with extensive documentation. This production was awarded with a Diapason découverte and the highest rating in the professional magazine Classica.

The CD *Vivat Leo! Music for a Medici Pope* (2010), directed by guest conductor Joshua Rifkin, was awarded a Diapason d'Or. A successful series of concerts of the Requiem of Pierre de la Rue was led by guest conductor Bo Holten. A DVD of one of these concerts, performed as part of the event Jheronimus Bosch 500, was released in 2010 under the title Bosch Requiem.

In January 2012 they recorded the earliest surviving polyphonic requiem masses in music history by Johannes Ockeghem and Pierre de la Rue. In February 2014 the ensemble released a CD containing music written for the feast of the Assumption and transmitted in choirbooks from the Vatican, including Josquin Desprez's masterpiece *Missa Ave maris stella*. In late 2015, the ensemble recorded the *Missa Cum Jocunditate* by Pierre de la Rue.

In 2016, Cappella and the Nederlands Kamerkoor performed eight concerts of the world premiere of the Missa Unitatis, composed in 2008 by Anthony Pitts (* 1969) in a unique partnership with choirs in Antwerp, Breda, 's-Hertogenbosch, Eindhoven, Tilburg and Helmond. It has also performed during the Early Music Festival in Utrecht, and presented five performances of the program Christmas with Josquin in the Season of Early Music.

Cappella Pratensis shares its vision and approach to vocal polyphony with professionals and amateurs in masterclasses, with multimedia presentations, and also in a weeklong summer school that takes place annually during the festival Laus Polyphoniae in Antwerp. In a structural collaboration with the universities of Leuven and Oxford, the musical manuscripts of the workshop of Petrus Alamire are explored by musicologists and adapted for use by other musicians.

PROGRAM NOTE

In 2021 and 2022 the musical world celebrated the five hundredth anniversary of the death of the two most important composers of their generation, Josquin Desprez and Jean Mouton. It is probably impossible to verify the claims that Mouton was Josquin's pupil, but a great number of other elements show the strong connection between the two. The two composers probably met at the French court, and we know that while Josquin chose to return to his family home in Condé to spend the last seventeen years of his life, Mouton was following Josquin's earlier path down to Italy to become the most sought-after composer of his time, greatly appreciated by both the Duke of Ferrara and the Pope.

But the kind of filiation we are most interested in is the musical heritage that Josquin passed on to Mouton and that both passed on to the following generations of composers, arguably shaping the way polyphonic music would be conceived and composed for many years to come. In particular we decided to show how both composers chose extremely difficult compositional tasks, but were able to carry them out to extremely efficient rhetorical and seemingly effortless effect. A very good example of this is their use of canonic writing, where one or more voices are not written but implied and have to be solved by the singers.

But what exactly is 'canonic writing'? Alongside the development of imitative writing, late medieval composers demonstrated an early interest in techniques that involved using a single complete melody multiple times within a composition. The underlying principle of these techniques was that the melody would only be notated once, with its repetitions and alterations determined by a written rule, known as a canon. Obviously, the art of canon-writing requires great skill as a composer, so first and foremost it serves as a demonstration of mastery. But we can speculate on a deeper level that canons also prompt the listener (and singer) to engage with the material on multiple levels—additional musical planes if you will. Iterations of the exact same thematic material, either stretched or distorted by some rule encourage a kind of 'dimensional' reading, as if viewed through a lens or at oblique angles. This kind of treatment of the thematic material further draws the listener into a saturated musical world, serving both as a compelling compositional device, and as part of an immersive liturgy.

The selection of motets, mass movements, and chansons in this program shows how the creative geniuses of Josquin and Mouton could use such complex structures to compose rich, varied and breathtakingly beautiful music. The opening motet, *Inviolata, integra et casta* presents Josquin's writing at its best, with transparent duets and monumental tuttis, all framed by canonic presentation of the chant. With its twenty-eight known sources, this motet strongly influenced succeeding generations of composers. With *Virgo salutiferi*, on a text by the Italian humanist Ercole Strozzi, the writing couldn't be more different: three virtuoso parts are woven around the classic Ave maria melody presented in a canon at the octave in the tenor and the soprano voices. Mouton's Ave Maria gemma virginum is a quadruple canon, meaning that the eight sounding voices result from only four written voices. Salva nos, Domine is a short but sonorous bedtime prayer for peace and protection.

A change of atmosphere is given by the secular pieces Faulte d'argent and Petite camusette: deceptively sweet and emotionally direct songs that conceal a highly complex structure. With the *Tua est potentia* motet Mouton uses his own melody for the canonic voices, caractherised by an opening ascending fifth leap, but he also incorporates the Da pacem chant we'll hear later. His Agnus **Dei** from the Missa Tua est potentia exploits not only the melodic material of its model motet, but also its canonic writing as a way of adding an extra voice to create a grand finale for the last invocation of the Agnus Dei. However, he inverts the order in which the canonic voices appear and changes the interval between them.

Josquin's **Agnus Dei** from the *Missa Ave maris stella* shows us the full power of his creative genius, with canons in all three invocations. Here, in the first and last invocation he gives the *Ave maris stella* chant—with its distinctive ascending fifth opening leap—to the canonic voices, but treats it in very different ways each time. Mouton's *Da pacem Domine* is a prayer for peace in the dense style of "pervasive imitation" that Mouton perfected and passed on to the next generation. Two bass parts and two treble parts enclose the canonic pair, creating a rich six-voice tapestry whose threads are all based on an antiphon melody widely used as a prayer for peace. Like for *Inviolata, integra et casta* that opened the concert, *O virgo prudentissima,* another monumental Josquin creation, quotes the cantus firmus of *Beata mater et innupta virgo* but assigns it to the two canonic voices. With a similar technique but with astonishingly different results in *Absolve quesumus/Requiem eternam* Josquin manages to quote the famous Requiem melody in a canon at the fifth.

We close our program with Mouton's renowned motet *Nesciens mater*, where the seemingly effortless melodic and contrapuntal flow spectacularly defies the strict constraint of a quadruple canonic writing and gives us a taste of the multidimensional immersive world that we mentioned above.

A note on the plainchant: we are presenting the chant being used in a number of the pieces, in some cases applying techniques of improvising additional voices or creating our own simple extemporised canons. Also, in this concert we will use facsimiles of both partbooks and choirbooks, and whenever possible we will position the singers of the canonic voices so as to make their role more 'visible' to the audience.

> -STRATTON BULL, PETER DE LAURENTIIS, ANDREW HALLOCK

JOSQUIN DESPREZ

Josquin Lebloitte dit des Prez (c. 1450–1455 – 27 August 1521) is variously described as French or Franco-Flemish. Considered one of the greatest composers of the Renaissance, he was a central figure of the Franco-Flemish School and had a profound influence on the music of 16th-century Europe. Building on the work of his predecessors Guillaume Du Fay and Johannes Ockeghem, he developed a complex style of expressive—and often imitative—movement between independent voices which informs much of his work. He further emphasized the relationship between text and music, and departed from the early Renaissance tendency towards lengthy melismatic lines on a single syllable, preferring to use shorter, repeated motifs between voices. Josquin was a singer, and his compositions are mainly vocal. They include masses, motets and secular chansons.

JEAN MOUTON

Jean Mouton (born c. 1459, Haut-Wignes, France—died October 30, 1522, Saint-Quentin) composed in the Franco-Flemish style of the early 16th century and is known for his sacred music. Mouton was a chorister in Nesle (1477–83) and worked in Amiens and Grenoble from 1500 to 1502 before joining the French royal chapel under Louis XII and Francis I. He apparently studied with Josquin Desprez, and he taught Adriaan Willaert. His music leads away from the older style, which falls into clear sections, and instead emphasizes a continuous flow of vocal lines from beginning to end, with pervasive melodic imitation. He was a master of the technique of canon. His output is largely masses and motets, published during his life by printers such as Ottaviano dei Petrucci and Pierre Attaingnant.

Inviolata, integra et casta

Inviolata, integra et casta es Maria: Que es effecta fulgida celi porta. O Mater alma Christi carissima: Suscipe pia laudum preconia. Te nunc flagitant devota corda et ora: Nostra ut pura pectora sint et corpora. Tua per precata dulcisona: Nobis concedas veniam per secula. O benigna! O Regina! O Maria! Que sola inviolata permansisti. Inviolate, whole and chaste are you, Mary: you are the shining gate of heaven. O kind mother, dearest to Christ, accept our faithful hymns of praise. To you our hearts and lips cry out: may our souls and bodies be pure. Through your prayers' sweet sounds grant us forgiveness for ever. O kindly one! O Queen! O Mary! you alone remain inviolate.

Virgo salutiferi

Virgo salutiferi genitrix intacta tonantis unicaque undosi stella benigna maris, quam rerum pater, ut lapso succurreret orbi nondum distincto, jusserat esse polis lesseque sacro nasci de sanguine gentis et matrem statuit virginitate frui.

Tu potis es prime scelus expurgare parentis, humanumque Deo conciliare genus, lacte tuo, qui te cuncta elementa crearat, pavisti vilis culmine tecta case.

Nunc, celi regina, tuis pro gentibus ora, quosque tuos juvit filius, ipsa juva. Amen.

Cantus firmus

Ave Maria, gratia plena, dominus tecum: benedicta tu in mulieribus. Alleluia Virgin bearer of salvation, inviolate mother of the thunderer, sole loving star of the stormy sea, whom the father of all things, to rescue a fallen world, even before he had made the poles separate, ordered to be born from the holy line of Jesse, and to be a mother, although a virgin.

You can cleanse the sin of our first ancestor and reconcile the human race to God; with your milk you fed the one who created you and all the elements, beneath the roof of a humble dwelling.

Now, queen of heaven, pray for your people; come to the aid of those whom your son too helped. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you: you are blessed among women. Alleluia.

Ave Maria gemma virginum

Ave Maria, gemma virginum, mundi domina, celi regina, Dominus tecum. Audi benigna mater omnium, tu nos adjuva in mortis hora apud Dominum. Hail Mary, jewel of virgins, mistress of the world, queen of heaven, the Lord is with you. Listen kind mother of all, help us at the hour of our death when we come before the Lord.

Faulte d'argent

Faulte d'argent c'est douleur non pareille. Se ie le dis las ie scay bien pourquoy. Sans de quibus il se fault tenir quoy: femme qui dort pour argent se reveille. Being poor is a great pain. And alas, I know it but all too well. The penniless have to lay low, since sleeping women will only wake for cash.

Salva nos

Salva nos domine vigilantes, custodi nos dormientes, ut vigilemus cum Christo, et requiescamus in pace. Save us, O Lord, waking, and guard us sleeping, that we may watch with Christ, and rest in peace.

you have brought me close to death.

vou have brought me close to death.

are going to the woods to play.

they are walking arm in arm,

they have gone to sleep.

you are above all nations.

Give peace in our time, Lord.

Little snub-nose.

Robin and Marion

Little snub-nose.

Petite camusette

Petite camusette, a la mort m'avez myz. Robin et Marion s'en vont au boys jouer, ilz s'en vont bras a bras, ilz se sont endormyz. Petite camusette, a la mort m'avez myz.

Tua est potentia

Tua est potentia, tuum regnum Domine, tu es super omnes gentes. Da pacem, Domine, in diebus nostris.

Missa Tua est potentia - Agnus Dei

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

Ave maris stella

Ave maris stella, Dei mater alma, atque semper virgo, felix celi porta.

Sumens illud Ave Gabrielis ore, funda nos in pace, mutans Eve nomen. Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

Yours is the power, yours the kingdom, Lord,

Hail, star of the sea, dear mother of God, and forever a virgin, happy gate of heaven.

Receiving that "Ave" from Gabriel's mouth, confirm us in peace, reversing Eva's name. Vitam presta puram, iter para tutum, ut videntes Jesum, semper colletemur.

Sit laus Deo Patri, summo Christo decus Spiritui Sancto, tribus honor unus. Amen.

Da pacem

Da pacem, Domine, in diebus nostris quia non est alius qui pugnet pro nobis nisi tu Deus noster.

O virgo prudentissima

O Virgo prudentissima, quam celo missus Gabriel superni regis nunctius plena testatur gratia.

Te sponsam factor omnium, te matrem Dei Filius, te vocat habitaculum suum beatus Spiritus.

Tu stella maris diceris; semper nos inter scopulos inter obscuros turbines portum salutis indicas.

Per te de tetro carcere antique patres exeunt; per te nobis astrifere panduntur aule lumina.

Audi virgo puerpera, tu sola mater integra, audi precantes quesumus tuos Maria famulos.

Beata mater et innupta virgo, repelle mentis tenebras, disrumpe cordis glaciem, gloriosa regina mundi, nos sub tuum presidium confugimus, intercede pro nobis ad Dominum. Alleluia.

Cantus firmus

Beata mater et innupta virgo, gloriosa regina mundi, intercede pro nobis ad Dominum. Ensure a pure life, grant a safe journey, so that we may see Jesus and always rejoice together.

Praise to God the Father, glory to Christ in the highest, to the Holy Spirit, one honour to all three. Amen.

Give peace in our time, O Lord, because there is no one else who will fight for us, if not you, our God.

O virgin of high wisdom, the angel Gabriel sent from heaven, herald of the high king, testifying "full of grace."

The creator of all calls you his bride, the Son of God calls you his mother, the Holy Spirit calls you his dwelling place.

To us you are called the star of the sea, which points us through cliffs, through dark hurricanes, the lurkers to the port of salvation.

You free the old fathers out of the dark dungeon, you open to us the entrance to the palace of heaven, richly spangled with stars.

O mother maiden and only pure mother, hear, we beg you Mary, the prayers of your little servants.

Blessed Mother, pure Virgin, banish from our minds the darkness, and break the chill of our hearts, glorious queen of the world, to your protection we turn and beg: intercede for us with the Lord. Alleluia

Blessed mother, pure virgin, glorious queen of the world, intercede for us with the Lord.

MUSIC BEFORE 1800

Absolve quesumus

Absolve quesumus, Domine, animam famuli tui Philippi ab omni vinculo delictorum. Ut in resurrectionis Gloria, inter sanctos et electos tuos resuscitates respiret. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Requiescat in pace. Amen.

Cantus firmus

Requiem eternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Nesciens mater

Nesciens mater virgo virum peperit sine dolore salvatorem seculorum. Ipsum regem angelorum sola virgo lactabat, ubere de celo pleno. We pray you, Lord, to free the soul of your servant Philip from the bond of all sins. That in the glory of the Resurrection he may breathe again, among your saints and chosen ones. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

May he rest in peace. Amen.

Give them eternal rest, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine on them.

Knowing no man, the Virgin mother

bore, without pain,

the Saviour of the world.

Him, the king of angels, only the Virgin suckled,

breasts filled by heaven.

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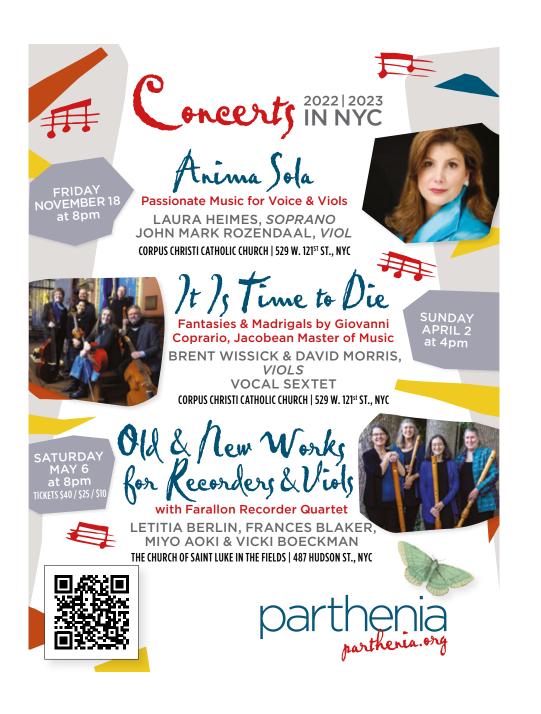
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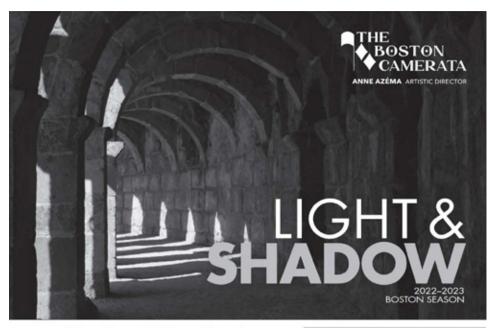




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