Wonder and Woe: Mysteries of Christmastide

| Praeter rerum seriem | 13th-century sequence |
|-----------------------|---|
| Praeter rerum seriem | Josquin des Prez (c. 1450-1455 – 1521) |
| Magnificat | John Dunstaple (c. 1390 – 1453) |
| O magnum mysterium | Jacob Gallus (Handl) (1550 - 1591) |
| Virgo Rosa | Gilles Binchois (c. 1400 – 1460) |
| A solis ortus cardine | Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c. 1525 - 1594) |
| O magnum mysterium | Giovanni Gabrieli (c. 1556 - 1612) |
| | INTERMISSION |

Interfectio Puerorum

Anonymous, Fleury Playbook (c. 1200)

A solis ortus cardine

Binchois

PROGRAM NOTES

Thank you for joining us for this celebration of the glorious Christmas story. We present seven Renaissance pieces illuminating the famous narrative, as well as a medieval mystery play that relates a relatively unfamiliar part of the Christmas story: the rescue of Jesus from the jealous and murderous King Herod.

Our opening piece, *Praeter rerum seriem*, originated in the 13th century. This joyous, rhythmically lilting song was sung at Christmastime and for feasts of the Virgin Mary: it was well known to generations of musicians before Josquin. We follow this song with Josquin's motet, which is a florid polyphonic setting of the song, in 6-part polyphony. In the first part, each note of the song is stretched to four times its original length, so the *cantus firmus* (the tune from the song) essentially is heard in slow motion, lending an air of mystery. In the 2nd part, the pace of the *cantus* speeds up to just double the value, and at the end, the pace picks up again, and the song is finally heard in its original, dancing character, now set polyphonically. This composition was widely recognized in Josquin's own generation as a masterpiece, and subsequent generations of Renaissance composers embraced it as a model.

The *Magnificat* is Mary's response to the angel's announcement that she will bear a son. The text reflects Mary's praise to God and her willingness to be God's servant. The setting of this traditional text is by John Dunstaple, an early English composer. Characterized by interesting rhythms and harmonies, this performance showcases smaller groups of singers within the chorus.

The short and intimate *Virgo rosa*, by Gilles Binchois, is a hymn to Mary, likening the virgin to a rose. Binchois was one of the three most famous composers of the early fifteenth century (with Dunstaple and Guillaume Dufay).

The hushed awe of the shepherds as they find the infant Jesus and his mother among animals in a stable finds musical expression in *O magnum mysterium* in double-chorus settings by Jacob Gallus (also known as Handl) and Giovanni Gabrieli, contemporaries in the late sixteenth century in central Europe and in Italy.

Palestrina's *A solis ortus cardine* is a setting of a chant hymn for Christmas morning. Palestrina follows a common practice of his time by setting only odd-numbered stanzas (four of them) as polyphony, with the understanding that the even-numbered stanzas would be chanted. The hymn text, by Caelius Sedulis (5th century) begins each stanza with successive letters of the alphabet: *A, Beatus, Castae, Domus, Enixa, Foeno, Gaudet, Jesu:* an acrostic scheme commonly found in the psalms and other Hebrew poetry.

Interfectio puerorum ("The Massacre of the Innocents") is found in the Fleury Playbook, a medieval collection of Latin biblical dramas dating from the end of the twelfth century, kept at the library of Abbaye Saint Benoît de Fleury, a Benedictine monastery. Sung in chant and enacted with simple staging, this play would have been performed on December 28 for parishioners who could neither read nor understand the Latin liturgy. It continues the Christmas story after Christ's nativity, weaving together stories of joy and sorrow from the Old and New Testaments. While the image of Rachel weeping for her children is prophesied in Genesis and Jeremiah, the story of the massacre of the infant boys of Bethlehem is recounted in the gospel of St. Matthew. Interfectio Puerorum is horrific in its depiction of Herod's attempt to eliminate the infant king, yet triumphant in depicting the angel Gabriel's rescue of Jesus from Herod and Jesus' rescue of the souls of the innocent children from death.

We close with a gentle setting by Binchois of the first verse of the *A solis ortus cardine* (the chant is used in its entirety in the Palestrina setting.)

The members of Musica Spei are Jeanne Beddoe, Jim Blake, Lynette Blake, Tyler Cassidy-Heacock, Mary Cowden, Juli Elliot, Joe Finetti, Christopher Gold, Jeff Harp, Carrie Haymond, Lisa Jadwin, Eric Lobenstine, Mary Mowers, Howard Spindler, Brian Story, and Jeffrey Tabor.

For nearly twenty years, the **Saint Anne** community has supported Musica Spei with rehearsal space and the opportunity to perform in the acoustically magnificent sanctuary, as a member of the "Choir in Residence" program. We are especially grateful to **Father Gary Tyman**, the leader of the Our Lady of Lourdes / Saint Anne Cluster of Communities of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester, and the entire staff and parish, for their ongoing support and encouragement.

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Praeter rerum seriem

Text is for the song as well as the setting by Josquin des Prez (c. 1450-1455 – 1521)

Praeter rerum seriem

Parit deum hominem

Virgo mater.

Nec vir tangit virginem

Nec prolis originem

Novit pater.

Virtus sancti spiritus

Opus illud celitus

Operatur.

Initus et exitus

Partus tui penitus

Quis scrutatur?

Dei providentia

Que disponit omnia

Tam suave.

Tua puerperia

Transfert in mysteria,

Mater ave.

This is no normal scheme of things:

God and man is born

of a virgin mother.

She has known no man;

the child's origin is unknown

to the father.

By the Holy Spirit's power this heavenly work has been

brought about.

The beginning and end

of your giving birth

who can really know?

By God's grace,

which orders all things

so smoothly,

your childbearing

confronts us with a mystery.

Hail, Mother.

Magnificat

John Dunstaple (c. 1390 – 1453)

Magnificat anima mea Dominum,

et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salvatore meo.

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae: ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.

Quia fecit mihi magna, qui potens est:

et sanctum nomen eius.

Et misericordia eius a progenie in progenies

timentibus eum.

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo:

dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.

Deposuit potentes de sede

et exaltavit humiles.

Esurientes implevit bonis

et divites dimisit inanes.

Suscepit Israel puerum suum,

recordatus misericordie sue.

Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros,

Abraham, et semini ejus in secula.

Gloria Patri et Filio, et spiritui sancto.

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper,

et in secula seculorum. Amen.

My soul magnifies the Lord

and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

For he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me

blessed.

For he that is mighty has done great things for me:

and holy is his name.

And his mercy is for those who fear him from

generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm:

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their

hearts.

He has brought down the mighty from their thrones

and has exalted those of humble estate.

He has filled the hungry with good things

and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel

in remembrance of his mercy.

As he spoke to our fathers,

to Abraham and his offspring forever.

Glory be to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,

and forever. Amen.

O magnum mysterium Jacob Gallus (Handl) (1550 – 1591)

| 0 magnum mysterium | 0 great mystery |
|------------------------------------|---|
| et admirabile sacramentum, | and wonderful sacrament, |
| ut animalia viderent Dominum natum | that animals should see the new-born Lord |
| jacentem in praesepio. | lying in a manger! |
| Noe! | Noel! |

Virgo rosa

Gilles Binchois (c. 1400 – 1460)

| Virgo rosa venustatis, | Virgin, rose of loveliness |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| quae producta fiorem | with even greater blossom, |
| tene decus castitatis | hold the honor of your chastity |
| et in partu sanctiore | and rejoice in the privilege |
| exulta previle giis. | of a holier childbearing. |
| Salve virgo virginem, | Hail, virgin of virgins; |
| Salve vena vere, | hail, true virgin, |
| O puritatis terminum, | ultimate in purity; |
| Virgo gratia peperisti | virgin full of grace, |
| Dominum celestem. | you have borne the heavenly Lord. |
| Amen. | Amen. |

A solis ortus cardine

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c. 1525 - 1594)

Beatus auctor saeculi Servile corpus induit, Ut carne carnem liberans, Non perderet quod condidit.

Castae parentis viscera caelestis intrat gratia; venter puellae bajulat secreta, quae non noverat.

Domus pudici pectoris Templum repente fit Dei; Intacta nesciens virum Concepit alvo Filium.

Enixa est puerpera quem Gabriel praedixerat, quem matris alvo gestiens clausus Joannes senserat. From the rising of the sun to the ends of the earth, let us sing of Christ the Prince, born of the Virgin Mary.

The blessed creator of the world put on a servant's body, so that, liberating the flesh through taking flesh, he would not lose what he had made.

The virgin mother's belly is filled with heavenly grace; the girl's womb carries secrets which she has not known.

The modest dwelling of her body becomes God's new temple; untouched, not knowing a man, at a word she conceived the Son in her womb.

By her birth pangs she brought forth the one whom Gabriel had foretold, and whom the Baptist, leaping within the womb, had recognized as Lord. Foeno jacere pertulit, Praesepe non abhorruit, Et lacte modico pastus est, Per quem nec ales esurit.

Gaudet chorus caelestium et Angeli canunt Deo, palamque fit pastoribus pastor, creator omnium.

Iesu, tibi sit gloria, Qui natus es de Virgine, Cum Patre et almo Spiritu, In sempiterna saecula. Amen. He consented to lie in the hay; he did not shrink from the manger; and with little milk he was fed, who does not allow even the birds to hunger.

The heavenly chorus rejoices, and the angels sing God's praise, and to the shepherds is now made known the Shepherd who is the creator of all.

Jesus, to you be glory, who are born of a virgin, with the Father and the loving Spirit, for eternal ages. Amen.

*O magnum mysterium*Giovanni Gabrieli (c. 1556 – 1612)

O magnum mysterium et admirabile sacramentum, ut animalia viderent Dominum natum jacentem in praesepio.
O beata Virgo, cujus viscera meruerunt portare Dominum Christum.
Alleluia!

O great mystery
and wonderful sacrament,
that animals should see the new-born Lord
lying in a manger!
O blessed is the Virgin, whose womb
was worthy to bear Christ the Lord.
Alleluia!

INTERMISSION

Interfectio Puerorum (The Massacre of the Innocents)
From the Fleury Playbook (late 12th century)

Ad interfectionem puerorum induantur Innocentes stolis albis, et gaudentes per monasterium orent Deum dicentes:

Innocentes:

O quam gloriosum est regnum In quo cum Christo gaudent omnes sancti; Amicti stolis albis sequuntur Agnum quocumque ierit.

Tunc Agnus ex improviso veniens portans crucem, antecedat eos huc et illuc, et illi sequentes cantent:

Innocentes:

Emitte agnum, Domine, Dominatorem terre de petra deserti ad montem filie Sion. For the slaughter of the children let the Innocents be clothed in white robes, and rejoicing through the church let them pray to God, saying:

Innocents:

O how glorious is the kingdom in which all the saints rejoice with Christ; Clothed in white robes they follow the Lamb Wheresoever he may go.

Then let the Lamb, arriving unexpectedly and carrying a cross, go before them hither and thither, and as they follow let them sing:

Innocents:

Send forth, Lord, the lamb, the subduer of the land from the rock of the desert To the mountain of the daughter of Sion. Interim Armiger quidam offerat Herodi sedenti sceptrum suum dicens:
Super solium David et super regnum eius
Sedebit in eternum, alleluia.

Interea Angelus super presepe apparens moneat Joseph fugere in Egimtum cum Maria. Angelus dicat tribus vicibus Joseph: Joseph, Joseph, Joseph, fili David!

Postea dicat hec:

Tolle puerum et matrem eius et vade in Egiptum, et esto ibi usque dum dicam tibi. Futurum est enim ut Herodes querat puerum ad perdendum eum.

Joseph abiens, non vidente Herode, cum Maria portante Puerum, dicens:

Ioseph:

Egipte, noli flere, quia dominator tuus veniet tibi, Ante cuius conspectum movebuntur abissi, liberare populum suum de manu potencie.

Interim Armiger, nuncians Magos per aliam viam redisse, salutat prius Regem, postea dicat:

Rex in eternum vive! Delusus es domine; Magi viam redierunt aliam.

Tunc Herodes, quasi corruptus, arrepto gladio, paret seipsum occidere; sed prohibeatur tandem a suis et pacificetur, dicens: Herodes:

Incendium meum ruina restinguam.

Interea Innocentes, adhuc gradientes post Agnum, decantent:

Agno sacrato pro nobis mortificato, Splendorem patris splendorem virginitatis, Offerimus Christo sub signo luminis isto, Multis ira modis ut quos inquirit Herodis Agno salvemur; cum Christo conmoriemur.

Armiger suggerat Herodi dicens: Discerne, domine, vindicare iram tuam, et stricto mucrone iube occidi pueros; forte inter occisos occidetur et Christus. Meanwhile let a Man-at-Arms offer the seated Herod his scepter, saying:

Over the throne of David, and over his kingdom he will sit forever, alleluia.

Meanwhile let the Angel, appearing at the manger, warn Joseph to flee to Egypt with Mary.
Let the angel say Joseph three times:
Joseph, Joseph, Joseph, son of David!

Then let the angel say this:

Take the Boy and his mother, and go to Egypt,

and stay there until I tell you. For it will happen that Herod seeks the Boy to destroy him.

Joseph, going away, unseen by Herod, with Mary carrying the Boy, saying:

Joseph:

Egypt, do not weep, because your ruler will come to you, before whose glance abysses will open up, to save his people from the hand of power.

Meanwhile a Man-at-Arms, announcing that the Magi have returned by a different route, first greets the King: then let him say:

King, live forever!

You have been deceived, my Lord; the Magi have returned by another route.

Then Herod, as if devastated, should snatch up a sword and make as if to kill himself; but let him at length be prevented and calmed by his attendants, saying: Herod:

I shall extinguish my fire by destruction.

Meanwhile the Innocents, until now walking behind the Lamb, should continue singing:

To the consecrated Lamb, done to death for our sake, to Christ we offer the glory of the Father, the glory of virginity, beneath that banner of light. So that those whom Herod's anger seeks in many ways may be saved by the Lamb, we shall die with Christ.

Let the Man-at-Arms prompt Herod, saying:
Lord, resolve to vent your anger,
And with drawn blade order the children to be killed;
possibly among the dead Christ too will be killed.

Herodes tradens et gladium dicens:

Armiger eximie,

Pueros fac ense perire.

Interim, occisoribus venientibus, subtrahetur Agnus clam, quem abeuntem salutant Innocentes:

Innocentes:

Salve, Agnus Dei!

Salve, qui tollit peccata mundi, alleluia.

Tunc Matres occidentes orient occisos: Oremus, tenere natorum parcite vite.

Postea, iacentibus Infantibus, Angelus ab excelso ut moneat eos, dicens:
Vos qui in pulvere estis, expergiscimini et clamate.

Infantes iacentes:

Quare non defendis sanguinem nostrum, Deus noster?

Angelus:

Adhuc sustinete modicum tempus donec impleatur numerus fratrum vestrorum.

Tunc inducatur Rachel et Consolatrices; et stans super Pueros plangat, cadens aliquando, dicens:

Heu! teneri partus laceros quos cernimus artus!

Heu! dulces nati, sola rabie iugulati!

Heu! quem nec pietas nec vestra coercuit etas!

Heu! matres misere que cogimur ista videre!

Heu! quid nunc agimus? cur non hec facta subimus?

Heu! quia memores nostrosque levare dolores,

Gaudia non possunt nam dulcia pignora desunt!

Consolatrices excipientes eam cadentem dicentes:

Herod, handing him his sword, saying:

Exceptional man-at-arms,

make the children perish on the blade.

Meanwhile, as the murderers arrive, let the Lamb be quietly drawn away, and let the Innocents hail him as he goes:

Innocents:

Hail, Lamb of God!

Hail to him who takes away the sins of the world, alleluia.

Then let the Mothers appeal to the killers for the slain: We beseech, spare the tender life of the children.

Then, as the Infants are lying, let the Angel from on high instruct them, saying:

You who are in the dust, wake up and shout.

The Infants, as they lie:
Why do you not defend our life-blood,
our God?

The Angel:

Wait for a brief time, until the number of your brothers is made complete.

Then let Rachel and Comforters be led on; and standing over the Children let her weep, falling from time to time, saying:

Alas! tender offspring, what mangled limbs we see!

Alas! sweet children, with throats cut in a single act of madness!

Alas! for the one whom neither proper respect nor your age could restrain!

Alas! miserable mothers, we who are forced to witness these acts!

Alas! what are we now doing, why do we not submit to these deeds?

Alas! because we remember, and no joys can lighten our griefs,

because our sweet children are no more.

The Comforters should catch her as she falls, saying:

Consolatrices:

Noli virgo Rachel, noli dulcissima mater, Pro nece parvorum fletus retinere dolorum.

Si que tristaris exulta que lacrimaris,

Namque tui nati vivunt super astra beati.

Item Rachel dolens:

Heu! Heu! Heu!

Quomodo gaudebo dum mortua membra videbo.

Dum sic commota fuero per viscera tota?

Me facient vere pueri sine fine dolere. O dolor!

O patrum mutataque gaudia matrum! Ad lugubres luctus lacrimarum fundite fluctus

Iudee florem patrie lacrimando dolorem.

Tunc Consolatrices esupinantes Infantes dicentes:

Consolatrices:

Numquid flendus est iste, qui regnum possidet celeste, quique prece frequenti miseris fratribus apud Deum auxilietur?

Item Rachel cadens super Pueros: Anxiatus est in me spiritus meus; in me turbatum est cor meum.

Tunc Consolatrices abducant Rachel, et Angelus interim de supernis dicat antiphonam que sequitur:

Angelus:

Sinete parvulos venire ad me; talium est enim regnum celorum.

Ad vocem Angeli surgentes Pueri intrent chorum dicentes:

Pueri:

O Christe, quantum patri exercitum iuvenis, doctus ad bella maxima populis predicans colligis,

umbras suggens cum tantum miseris.

Interim Angelus ammoneat Joseph in Egiptum, quo prius secessit, dicens:

The Comforters:

Do not, maidenly Rachel, do not, sweetest mother, restrain your weeping in anguish

for the slaughter of the little ones.

If you are lamenting something, rejoice in what you are weeping for.

For your sons are living in blessed happiness beyond the stars.

Again Rachel, grieving:

Alas, alas, alas!

How shall I rejoice, when I see the dead limbs;

when I have been so distressed through the whole core of my being?

Truly the Children will make me grieve unendingly. O grief!

O altered joys of fathers and mothers!

Pour out floods of tears in anguished mourning by weeping

your sorrow for the flower of the land of Judea.

Then the Comforters, laying out the Infants on their backs, saying:

 ${\it Comforters:}$

Should that child be wept over who possesses the heavenly kingdom, and so with constant prayers can intercede with God for his brothers?

Again Rachel, falling on the Children: My spirit is in turmoil within me; within me is my heart troubled.

Then let the Comforters lead Rachel away, and meanwhile the Angel on high should declaim the antiphon that follows:

Angel:

Suffer the little children to come to me, for such is the Kingdom of God.

Rising in response to the voice of the Angel, let the Children enter the choir, saying:

The Children:

O Christ, a young man trained for the greatest wars, how huge an army you are gathering for the Father, preaching to the people, raising the shades so much with the sufferers.

Meanwhile let the Angel advise Joseph in Egypt, where he went before, saying:

Anaelus:

Joseph, Joseph, Joseph, fili David! Revertere in terram Iudam; defuncti sunt enim qui querebant animam pueri.

Tunc Joseph revertatur cum Maria et Puero, secedens in parte Galilee, dicens: Joseph:

Gaude, gaude, gaude, Maria virgo; cunctas hereses sola interemisti in universo mundo.

Cantor incipit:

Te Deum laudamus:.

Chorus:

Te Dominum confitemur.

Te eternum Patrem omnis terra veneratur. Tibi omnes angeli, tibi celi et universe potestates:

Tibi cherubim et seraphim incessabili voce proclamant:

Sanctus: Sanctus: Santcus Dominus Deus Sabaoth.

Pleni sunt celi et terra maiestatis glorie tue.

Te gloriosus: apostolorum chorus:

Te prophetarum laudabilis numerus:

Te martirum candidatus laudat exercitus.

Te per orbem terrarum sancta confitetur Ecclesia:

Patrem immense maiestatis.

Venerandum tuum verum, et unicum Filium:

Sanctum quoque Paraclitum Spiritum.

Tu rex glorie, Christe.

Tu Patris sempiternus es Filius.

Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem,

non horuisti Virginis uterum.

Tu devicto mortis aculeo,

aperuisti credentibus regna celorum.

Tu ad dexteram Dei sedes, in gloria Patris.

Iudex crederis esse venturus.

Te ergo quesumus, tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.

Eterna fac cum sanctis tuis in gloria numerari.

Salvum fac populum tuum Domine, et benedic hereditati tue.

Et rege eos, et extolle illus usque in eternum.

Per singulos dies, benedicimus te.

The Angel:

Joseph, Joseph, Joseph, son of David!

Return to the land of Judaea,

for they are dead who were seeking the life of the Boy.

The let Joseph return with Mary and the Boy, withdrawing to the area of Galilee, saying: Joseph:

Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice, Virgin Mary; you alone have banished all heresies in the whole world.

The Cantor begins:

O God we praise thee;

The Choir:

we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.

Everlasting Father, all the earth doth worship Thee.

To Thee all the Angels, the Heavens and all the Powers,

all the Cherubim and Seraphim,

unceasingly proclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts!

Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty of Thy glory.

The glorious choir of the Apostles,

the wonderful company of Prophets,

the white-robed army of Martyrs, praise Thee.

Holy Church throughout the world doth acknowledge Thee:

the Father of infinite Majesty;

Thy adorable, true and only Son:

and the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.

O Christ, Thou art the King of glory!

Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.

Thou, having taken it upon Thyself to deliver man,

didst not disdain the Virgin's womb.

Thou overcame the sting of death

and hast opened to believers the Kingdom of Heaven.

Thou sittest at the right hand of God, in the glory of the

Father.

We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge.

We beseech Thee, therefore, to help Thy servants

whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy Precious Blood.

Make them to be numbered with Thy Saints in

everlasting glory.

Save Thy people, O Lord,

and bless Thine inheritance!

Govern them, and raise them up forever.

Every day we thank Thee.

Et laudamus nomen tuum in seculum, et in seculum seculi.
Dignare Domine die isto sine peccato nos custodire.
Miserere nostri Domine, miserere nostri. Fiat misericordia tua Domine super nos, quemadmodum speravimus in te.
In te Domine speravi:
Non confundar in eternum.

Sic finit.

And we praise Thy Name forever, yea, forever and ever.

O Lord, deign to keep us from sin this day.

Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us. Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in Thee. O Lord, in Thee I have hoped; let me never be confounded.

Thus it ends.

A solis ortus cardine Binchois

A solis ortus cardine
Ad usque terrae limitem
Christum canamus Principem,
natum Maria Virgine.

From the rising of the sun to the ends of the earth, let us sing of Christ the Prince, born of the Virgin Mary.



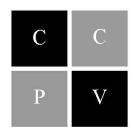
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