

Missa Pange Lingua

by Josquin des Prés



Carla Mattioli '95

arranged for
guitar
duet
by
Jeffry

Hamilton

Steele

As heard on the CD album *Guitara Illuminata*
(Centaur Records CRC 2384)

artwork by Carla Mattioli, Awakening Arts

PrismMusic
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978-282-3106
www.jeffrysteele.com

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From the liner notes to the Centaur Records CD:

Of what little is known of the life of Josquin des Prés, a few details stand out that help form a picture of his nature. He was born in Picardy (in France, close to the border with Belgium) and distinguished himself as a singer in boyhood. That he grew to be considered one of the most valued composers of the day is evidenced by the higher fees paid him compared with his contemporaries. That he valued the spiritual over the material is implicit in his choice to spend his last period at the college of Condé, near his birthplace, when he might easily have held a court position in any of a number of countries. He must have sensed the conditions required for him to produce a work of the depth of *Pange Lingua*.

In this arrangement – of what may have been Josquin’s final work – the original score has been transposed down by a minor third, both guitars having their strings tuned as were the Renaissance lute and vihuela (the interval of the major third now occurring between the third and fourth strings instead of between the second and third strings). As it was common contemporary practice to perform vocal music on these instruments, it is not surprising that this configuration lends itself idiomatically to the vocal polyphony of that time. In fact, vihuela tablature arrangements of Josquin’s vocal music provide clues in questions of *musica ficta* (sharps and flats added to the original score by performers in accordance with contemporary practice) – as there can be little doubt as to whether a note is sharpened when the actual fret on which it is fingered has been indicated. [Although these arrangements are from another region and produced by the next generation]. Throughout most of the work, each guitar plays two of the four voices – the latter originally corresponding to counter-tenor (alto), tenor, baritone and bass ranges.

I. The piece begins with the plainchant on which the mass is based, *Pange Lingua* (“O my tongue, proclaim the mystery”) – whose text speaks of how Jesus “concluded

in a marvelous manner his life on earth.” It is played once each on the nylon and steel string guitars, two successive “verses” being each heard in different octaves. The melody is in the phrygian mode – a church mode in the minor with a particularly dark intensity, owing to the second degree of the scale being a half step above the root note.

This is followed immediately by the Kyrie – the shortest movement in most masses, having the briefest text – whose three sections are in 3/4 (“Lord have mercy”), 2/4 (“Christ have mercy”) and 3/4 (“Lord have mercy”) respectively. Here the first phrase (ten notes) of the plainchant melody is the basis for (what begins as) a canon at the fifth. Although printed editions do not maintain the phrygian mode in each entering voice, I have taken the liberty of doing so (as was done in the first recording made of the Mass by the New York Pro Musica). This makes for alternation between two phrygian tonal centers, a fifth apart, throughout the Mass.

II. With the Gloria, a generic chant intro (“Glory be to God on high”) leads us into a similar treatment of the plainchant melody, followed by a playful exchange between voices on the two-word text phrases: *Laudamus te. Benedicimus te. Etc...* (“We praise thee. We glorify thee.”). This style continues through other declarations of praise. When the text foreshadows the *Agnus Dei* (*Qui tollis peccata mundi...*), the meter switches to 2/4 with a more plaintive canon that begins, this time, using the first four notes of the plainchant. With *suscipe deprecationem* (“hear our prayer”), we hear the first homophonic (all parts singing the same words at the same time) moment in the mass thus far. Note how the plea *misere nobis* (“have mercy on us”) – also to be heard in the *Agnus Dei* movement – is dramatized by an octave leap in the melody. The Holy Spirit may have been a nimble one in Josquin’s view, for the music takes on a dance-like (dotted rhythm)

character for the Cum Sancto Spiritu that closes the movement.

III. The Credo begins in 2/4 with what can be interpreted as a much embellished version of the first two phrases (21 notes) of the plainchant. Though very similar to the opening of the other movements, there is something particularly declarative about the lines here, reflecting strength of belief (“I believe in one God, the father almighty, etc.”). The list of beliefs builds to a crescendo with the Qui propter nos homines (“Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven”). There follows the suddenly quiet peace of the Et incarnatus est (“And became incarnate by the Holy Spirit”), which closes with one of few cadences on the relative major. Played by a single guitar, it is the most extended section of homophony in the Mass. This moment may be taken to symbolize, musically, letting go of the struggle to predict our destinies and allowing God to come through fully (as did Jesus when, at baptism, he became “The Christ”).

The plainchant’s first phrase is next invoked for the reverential Crucifixus (“He was crucified also for us”); the ascent to heaven is reflected in rising scales; and dotted rhythms return for sitting “on the right hand of the Father”. The Et in Spiritum Sanctum (“I believe in the Holy Spirit...”) section reaches its apex in a duet for the two upper voices. The meter then shifts to an unshakable 3/4 meter for the acknowledgement of baptism, back to 2/4 for “the resurrection of the dead”, and back to 3/4 for “the life of the world to come.” The final Amen is a brief “tape loop” type canon such as will be given more extended treatment in the dona nobis pacem that closes the mass.

IV. Like the Kyrie and Gloria, the Sanctus begins in 3/4 with the first phrase of the plainchant, its first brief section coming to repose in a plagal (IV-I) cadence on the relative major. Pleni sunt coeli (“Heaven and earth are full of your glory”) is set to fiery canonic writing in the two upper voices – where imitations come as close as one beat apart – often defiant of meter. In fact, breaking free of time signature constraints is a musical device Josquin appears to use more often the further from earth he would like to take us – as one may experience in the following Osanna in excelsis.

To balance the earlier duet, the next section, Benedictus qui venit (“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord”), is sung by the two lower voices. The bass voice pauses, as though a mountain climber, to hear each of his initial phrases echoed by the baritone. Seeking this voice from the next mountain, he hikes towards it; and thus we hear the time between echoes decreasing. Could this be Josquin’s depiction of the journey towards

God: how we seek the being who produced the echo we have been hearing, only to find that He was singing to us from within? As is customary, the Sanctus closes with a reprise of the Osanna.

V. Also beginning in 3/4, the Agnus Dei (“Lamb of God”) quotes the first three notes of the plainchant but then surprises us on the fourth note by jumping down to the sixth degree of the scale rather than the seventh (as we have heard in every previous instance) – temporarily transforming the earthly melancholy and struggle felt in the phrygian minor mode into the heaven-bound relative major. Though we may be led to expect that this section will cadence on the major, in the penultimate beat Josquin brings us back into minor. The middle section is an extended duo between the two higher voices, played on the solo classical guitar, in 2/4. Like the Pleni sunt coeli duo (from the Sanctus), the voices at first have canon entrances four beats apart, but intensity increases – as each voice becomes more anxious to be heard – and soon the entrances are coming only one beat apart. On the first miserere nobis (“have mercy on us”) of this section, we twice hear a yearning phrase that Josquin will reinvoké near the close of the movement.

In the final section, each voice enters three beats apart (in 3/4) with one “Agnus Dei” each, pathos leant by wrenching half-step dissonances. Here, only three notes of the plainchant remain intact, beyond which the melody has a new shape emphasizing – or giving in to the gravity of – the root note. The meter immediately shifts to 2/4 as the treble voice begins the first six notes of the plainchant in augmentation (lengthened note values) – a technique Josquin used throughout his earlier masses but only chose this single instance to employ in this one. After the usual qui tollis peccata mundi (“who takes away the sins of the earth”) we are led into the dona nobis pacem (“grant us peace”). Josquin appears to evoke three consecutive and distinct moods with each statement of this famous prayer: reticence (when the voices are paired), heroism (repeated notes followed by a brief descent culminating in the aforementioned “yearning” phrase), and, finally, bliss. The sense of inner peace evoked by this closing canon is at the same time plaintive, as if leaving behind the emotional intensity of human existence upon reaching the Kingdom of Heaven.

While this arrangement was recorded on two classical guitars, to help distinguish the lines of polyphony one was strung with Thomastik rope-core steel strings (which are optimized for nylon-string guitars). Fingering has been left to the players. While straightforward in most cases, a few large stretches will be required to maintain the independence of voices when they come to a unison.

Jeffrey Hamilton Steele

MISSA PANGE LINGUA

Arranged for Two Guitars by
JEFFRY HAMILTON STEELE

JOSQUIN DES PRÉZ

Plainchant

The musical score is arranged for two guitars: Steel String Guitar (SS) and Nylon String Guitar (NS). Both parts are in the key of F# major (three sharps: F#, C#, G#) and use a treble clef. The piece is titled "Plainchant".

The score is divided into three systems. In the first system, the SS part has a whole rest, while the NS part plays a melodic line starting on D4, moving up to G4, then down to D4, with a fermata over the final G4. The second system continues the melodic line in the NS part, with the SS part again having a whole rest. The third system concludes the piece with a double bar line and repeat sign. The SS part has a whole rest, and the NS part plays the final notes of the melodic line.

Kyrie

③-F#

③-F#

6

6

11

11

15

15

21

21

The musical score is written for Soprano (SS) and Alto (NS) voices. It begins with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a common time signature. The Soprano part starts with a three-measure rest, indicated by a circled '3' and 'F#'. The Alto part begins with the first note. The score is divided into systems, with measure numbers 6, 11, 15, and 21 marking the start of new systems. The music features a variety of note values, including quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests and ties. The Soprano part has a melodic line with some grace notes, while the Alto part provides a more rhythmic accompaniment. The score concludes with a final cadence in the Alto part.

This musical score is arranged in six systems, each containing two staves. The top staff of each system is labeled 'SS' and the bottom staff is labeled 'NS'. Both staves are in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a common time signature (C). The systems are numbered 27, 32, 37, 43, and 49 at the beginning of their respective staves. The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, and half notes), rests, and slurs. The bottom staff of the final system (49) features a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed notes.

53

SS

NS

57

SS

NS

61

SS

NS

66

SS

NS

This page intentionally left blank to facilitate page turns.

Gloria

SS
NS

5
NS

10
SS
NS

15
SS
NS

20
SS
NS

3-F#

This musical score is for two voices: Soprano (SS) and Alto (NS). It consists of five systems, each with two staves. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 8/8. The score begins at measure 25 and ends at measure 40. The SS part features a melodic line with various note values, including quarter, eighth, and half notes, and rests. The NS part provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a common time signature (C) at the end of the final system.

45

SS

NS

52

SS

NS

59

SS

NS

66

SS

NS

73

SS

NS

79

SS

NS

85

Cum Sancto Spiritu

SS

NS

91

SS

NS

97

SS

NS

103

SS

NS

Credo

③-F#

6

14

22

30

SS

NS

This musical score is for a Soprano Solo (SS) and Narrator Solo (NS) part, arranged in a two-staff format. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is common time (C). The score is divided into six systems, each starting with a measure number: 38, 46, 54, 61, and 67. The SS part is written in a treble clef, and the NS part is written in a bass clef. The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The SS part often has melodic lines with some grace notes, while the NS part provides a harmonic accompaniment with sustained notes and rhythmic patterns. The score concludes with a final measure in the sixth system.

74
SS

74
NS

80
SS

80
NS

86
SS

86
NS

Et incarnatus est

91
SS

91
NS

101
SS

101
NS

Crucifixus etiam

The musical score is arranged in four systems, each with two staves. The top staff of each system is for Soprano Solo (SS) and the bottom staff is for Narrator Solo (NS). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 8/8. The score begins at measure 111 and ends at measure 136. The SS part features a melodic line with various note values and rests, while the NS part provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The notation includes slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

142

SS

NS

148

SS

NS

Et in Spiritum Sanctum

154

SS

NS

160

SS

NS

166

SS

NS

Detailed description: This page of a musical score is for two voices, Soprano (SS) and Alto (NS). It contains six systems of music, each with two staves. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 8/8. The systems are numbered 142, 148, 154, 160, and 166. The text 'Et in Spiritum Sanctum' is written above the second system. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings.

172

SS

NS

178

SS

NS

Confiteor unum baptisma

183

SS

NS

Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum

189

SS

NS

195

SS

NS

199

SS

NS

203

SS

NS

207

Amen

SS

NS

211

SS

NS

Sanctus

SS

NS

6

SS

NS

11

SS

NS

16

SS

NS

Pleni sunt coeli

The musical score is arranged in six systems, each with two staves. The top staff of each system is for Soprano Solo (SS) and the bottom staff is for Nones (NS). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is common time (C). The score begins at measure 21 and ends at measure 49. The SS part features a melodic line with various note values and rests, while the NS part provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. The music is written in a clear, professional notation style.

56

SS

NS

63

SS

NS

70

SS

NS

77

SS

NS

84

SS

NS

Osanna

90

SS

NS

95

SS

NS

100

SS

NS

105

SS

NS

110

SS

NS

This musical score is arranged in three systems, each with two staves. The top staff of each system is labeled 'SS' and the bottom staff is labeled 'NS'. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 8/8. Measure numbers 115, 120, 125, 129, and 133 are placed at the beginning of their respective systems. The SS parts feature a melodic line with various note values and rests, while the NS parts provide a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The score concludes with a double bar line and a final chord in the NS part at measure 133.

137 Benedictus

The image displays a musical score for two voices, Soprano (SS) and Alto (NS), in the key of D major (three sharps) and 3/4 time. The score is divided into six systems, each containing two staves. The first system starts at measure 137. The second system starts at measure 141. The third system starts at measure 146. The fourth system starts at measure 151. The fifth system starts at measure 156. The music features a variety of note values including quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests and ties. The vocal lines are written in treble clef with a soprano or alto clef sign (an '8' in a circle) below the staff. The key signature is consistent throughout the page.

161
SS
NS

166
SS
NS

171
SS
NS

175
SS
NS

179
SS
NS

da capo Osanna

Detailed description: This page contains six systems of musical notation for Soprano Solo (SS) and Narrator Solo (NS) parts. Each system consists of two staves. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 8/8. The systems are numbered 161, 166, 171, 175, and 179. The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes), rests, and slurs. The final system (179) ends with a double bar line and the instruction 'da capo Osanna'.

Agnus Dei I

The musical score is arranged in four systems, each with two staves. The top staff of each system is for the Soprano Solo (SS) and the bottom staff is for the Narrator Solo (NS). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is common time (C). The score begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The first system starts at measure 1. The second system starts at measure 6. The third system starts at measure 11. The fourth system starts at measure 16. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots at the end of the fourth system.

Duo

NS 26

NS 33

NS 40

NS 47

NS 54

NS 61

NS 68

NS 75

The image shows a musical score for a duo, consisting of eight staves of music. Each staff is labeled with 'NS' and a measure number: 26, 33, 40, 47, 54, 61, 68, and 75. The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots at the end of the eighth staff.

Agnus Dei II

82

SS

NS

89

SS

NS

96

SS

NS

103

SS

NS

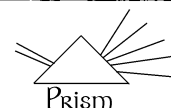
110

SS

NS

This musical score is arranged for two voices: Soprano (SS) and Alto (NS). The key signature is A major (three sharps: F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 8/8. The score is divided into six systems, each containing two staves. Measure numbers 118, 126, 134, 141, and 149 are placed at the beginning of their respective systems. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth, quarter, and half notes, as well as rests and accidentals. The SS part features more melodic and rhythmic complexity, while the NS part provides a harmonic and rhythmic foundation.

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