

present

Monteverdi 1610 Despers



December 3rd & 5th, 1993 Saint Alphonsus Church

Featured soloists:

Catherine Haight soprano
Thomasa Eckert soprano
Steven Wall tenor
Paul Karaitis tenor
Robert Schilperoort baritone
Peter Kechley bass

Intonation: Dominum ad adiuvandum me

Psalm 109: Dixit Dominus

Concerto: Nigra sum

Psalm 112: Laudate pueri Dominum

Concerto: Pulchra es Psalm 121: Laetatus sum Concerto: Duo Seraphim Psalm 126: Nisi Dominus Concerto: Audi caelum

Psalm 147: Lauda Jerusalem Dominus

INTERMISSION

Hymnus: Ave maris stella

Sonata sopra: Sancta Maria ora pro nobis

Magnificat

Listener's Guide to Monteverdi's 1610 Vespers-

At first hearing the sound of Monteverdi's sacred music overwhelms the listener with its sensual beauty. It seems to be some kind of gourmet treat for the ears, a combination of flavors smooth, mellow, rich, pungent, and rare. Or, it is like walking into a tropical jungle, you are surrounded by an intricate maze of intertwining green branches, vines, leafy canopies, lace with light from an invisible sun. Brilliantly hued flowers, scarlet and purple, gleam like jewels in the lower twilight, and spangled snakes slither from the branches.

Some listeners will find that the sensual richness of this music suffices to secure their enjoyment for the duration of the work. Others, however, will soon find themselves thinking, "Well, it's pretty, but there sure is a lot of green."

There is more to listen to in this music than the colors of the sound. The structure of the work as a whole is dramatic. The text is full of fascinating mythic threads. The individual pieces are highly varied in style, form, and musical techniques, and we find here musical innovations that prepared the way for later developments in Western music.

The Structure of the Work

The work is organized in the traditional format of an evening "Vespers" service, and was most probably intended as a divine office, not simply a performance piece. In keeping with this view of the Vespers this performance includes "service music" that would accompany the singing of the psalms, hymn and canticle that constitute the main body of the work. The service music includes the antiphons framing each psalm, the capitulum concluding the psalms, the versicle concluding the

hymn, and the antiphonbenedicamus-deo gratias concluding the whole work. All of the service music is simple plain chant. The liturgy for a Vesper service has three main parts:

- I. Five Psalms
- II. A Hymn
- III. A Canticle

In these Vespers the five psalms are texts traditionally associated with Advent and Christmastide, and the commemoration of Mary's visit to Elizabeth (Psalm 112). The hymn here is "Ave maris stella," a prayer addressed to Mary, and the Canticle is "The Magnificat," Mary's song of praise to God.

This basic, 3-part liturgical form is elaborated in the 1610 Vespers by the inclusion of four "concertos," which follow each of the first four psalms, and by the addition of the "Sonata sopra" following the Hymn.

The Mythic Drama

The liturgical form of the 1610

Vespers serves to support a mythic drama expressed through the structure of the work and by exotic allusions in the texts and the music. The drama has three parts, corresponding to the three primary sections of the liturgy. In Part I we are introduced to two lovers searching for one another. Their longing and anticipatory joy are presented through the antiphons with texts from the Song of Songs, and the Concerto, "Pulchra es."

It was not uncommon in the piety of 12-17th century Catholicism to represent Christ as a bridegroom and the Church as a bride, with the Songs of Songs as support. The union of God and human beings, heaven and earth, spirit and flesh, was dramatized in poetry, liturgy, and song as a sacred wedding, or lovers' tryst. The medieval carol, "My Dancing Day,"

reveals this tradition. In that carol Christ sings:

"Tomorrow shall be my dancing day, I would my true love did so chance. To see the legend of my play, To call my true love to my dance."

The image of Christ as lover and dancer has its roots in the very early (2nd century?) association of Christ with the Greek god of music, Orpheus who, in search of his beloved, journeyed into hell to rescue her from death, using the power of music to still the monsters guarding the gates of the underworld. It is interesting, in light of this ancient association, to note that Monteverdi uses for his opening orchestral accompaniment instrumental music from his opera "Orpheo." It is also interesting to observe that a "carol" was originally a circle dance. All carol music has its origin in dancing, and its theological reference is to Christ/Orpheus, the dancing master.

But here, in the 1610 Vespers the pair of lovers do not appear as Christ and the Church, but as Mary and the Church. The waiting congregation is the bridegroom searching for the beloved one, Mary. Her arrival is heralded in the fourth concerto, "Audi caelum:"

"Tell me:

who is she who rises bright as the dawn?"

With Mary's advent the first section of the drama concludes. The love play is over, the beloved has arrived. The bridegroom then addresses her in the hymn, "Ave maris stella."

The title given to Mary, "O Star," has roots more ancient even than the association of Christ with Orpheus. The pre-patriarchal great mother goddess of the ancient Near East was known by many names, one of them being "Astarte." From her name the

word "star" derives. The Great Mother Goddess was associated with the night, and with the stars. She was said to have given birth to all beings, life as plentiful as the points of light in the night sky. Her symbols, the crown of stars and the crescent moon, and her title, "Queen of Heaven," became ascribed to Mary. Throughout the history of Christian piety Mary has carried the ambivalence of the Great Mother's story. Has she been assimilated into a patriarchal religion, or is she about to "take back the night?" Monteverdi's Vespers, like many of the great cathedrals, centers the focus of piety on Mary who emerges here full of beauty and power.

The comparative simplicity of the seven hymn verses, and the dancelike instrumental interludes between each verse, strengthen the dramatic posture of Part II of the mythic drama. This is the singing and dancing of the people, the Christmas merrymaking of the congregation welcoming Mary with joy.

Finally, the climax of the drama comes as Mary herself speaks. Her words are the Magnificat canticle, a song of praise to God whose creative purpose is to lift up the oppressed and throw down the high and mighty, to fill the hungry with good things, and send the rich empty away. The original setting for the Magnificat text in the Gospel of Matthew pictures the pregnant Mary singing her joy when she greets Elizabeth, also pregnant (with John the Baptist). Her story and song are prefigured by Hannah in the Old Testament, whose canticle in I Samuel 2 carries the same themes.

As a whole, the mythic drama of the 1610 Vespers is a movement from longing to greeting, from absence to presence, from waiting to fulfillment.

Musical Highlights

- 1. "Domine ad adiuvandum" This opening movement is an orchestral toccata with the chorus singing massive D major chords. The instrumental music has dancing ritornella sections. Monteverdi is using music from the overture to his opera "Orpheo."
- 2. Psalm 109 As with each of the Psalm settings in the Vespers, this movement is built around a plainsong melody which is heard in its entirety at the beginning. Note the dramatically contrasting sections.

 Monteverdi juxtaposes an archaic

church style (monastic polyphony) with free, madrigal solo parts.

- 3. "Nigra sum" In this solo "concerto" Monteverdi makes an innovation in sacred music by using an agitated style of recitation heretofore only heard in Florentine opera.
- 4. Psalm 112 An example of word painting can be heard in this movement. At "suscitans" (raising up) the chorus sings a rising line in triple time that then soars aloft in the plainsong melody.
- 5. "Pulchra es" A beautiful duet, anticipating the development of the aria, with richly embellished, extended lines.
- 6. Psalm 121 More word painting! The text speaks of going up to

- Jerusalem, and the bass line consists of a repeated "walking bass" (a ground bass).
- 7. "Duo Seraphim" Considered by some to be the most exquisite movement in the Vespers, this duet then trio (following the words) involves extremely difficult, dramatic vocal techniques. Notice that the elaborate coloraturas subside into simple unity on the words "unum sunt," the Three "are one."
- 8. Psalm 126 The Gregorian plainsong is sung throughout in the tenor line. The middle section uses double chorus, each in 5 parts.
- 9. "Audi caelum" Beginning with a solo first section, combining monodic speech-song and virtuoso coloratura passages, other voices join at the words "let all" (omnes), to create a beautiful, delicate contrast to the preceding and following Psalm settings. Listen to how the second tenor enters as an echo of the first soloist.
- 10. Psalm 147 The fifth and final Psalm is a setting of one of the Psalms for Christmastide. It contains sections in a gay, secular style, but concludes with churchlike propriety, to close Part I of the work.
- 11. Hymn, "Ave maris stella" Part II of the Vespers is comprised of the Hymn and the Sonata. The seven

Special Request

Since our formation in 1969, Orchestra Seattle and Seattle Chamber Singers has been a community group. OS/SCS was formed by interested, local musicians and continues to be supported by committed musicians and the music-loving public.

Throughout our 25 year history, OS/SCS has striven to keep ticket prices at an affordable rate while offering innovative, high-quality performances. However, ticket prices cover only about half of the cost of presenting the music we enjoy so much. In honor of our silver anniversary, we are asking that you consider a gift to Orchestra Seattle/Seattle Chamber Singers. We are counting on your support to keep the music playing for another 25 years!

verses of the hymn are set first slowly for the full chorus in motet-style, then simply and more quickly (2 verses) as a four-part hymn, then for solo voices (3 verses) ornamented at will, and finally with a repeat of the opening slow full chorus. Between each verse of the hymn there is an orchestral interlude (ritornella). The dancelike music is the same each time, but the orchestration changed and occasionally the instrumentalists innovate ornamentation. Listen for the time when the violins take a riff.

12. Sonata This dancing instrumental piece, balancing the opening movement's orchestral flourishes, is dramatically punctuated by the plain chant line, heard in the voices, "Sancta maria ora pro nobis" (Holy Mary, pray for us). Each time the chant occurs it is sung with a different rhythm.

13. Magnificat The climaxing section of the Vespers is this elaborate setting of the 12 verses of Mary's song. The plainsong melody, repeated in each verse, forms the basis for mini-

concertos, each verse setting contrasting with the previous one, and giving special interpretation to the text. Especially beautiful is the "Et misceridordia." Notice how the proud are represented by brazen trumpets, and the humble by gentle violins in "Desposuit potentes." The full chorus come in for the concluding "Sicut erat" which weaves together fast coloraturas and the grandly slow, obligato plainsong, taking us back to the style in which the work began. The final simple chanting of the Magnificat antiphon, the Benedicamus and Deo gratis ends the Vespers.

In keeping with the style of early baroque instrumentation, we have made an effort in this performance of Monteverdi's Vespers to make creative use of the instruments we have on hand that are either copies of original instruments of the era or are modern day descendants of early baroque instruments. Where Monteverdi indicated scoring we have followed his orchestration.

Elsewhere we have chosen orchestrations that will bring in the colors of the various consorts (winds, brass, strings), or highlighted the structure or drama of a particular piece. At appropriate points our performers add free improvisation and ornamentation.

Though published in the fall of 1610, the time and place of the first performance of these Vespers is shrouded in mystery, and considerable scholarly debate also surrounds many aspects of the piece. According to some the work was first performed on Christmas Eve at San Marco Basillica in Venice, where Monteverdi succeeded Gabrieli as Director of Music in 1613. The work was forgotten for several centuries. It was revived in 1935 and has been recorded in several different interpretations. The tradition that associates the work with Christmas Eve is a happy one - it complements the rich, joyful and tender character of this sacred work in praise of Mary.

Notes by Rebecca Parker



Orchestra Seattle & Seattle Chamber Singers

George Shangrow, music director

Our 25th Anniversary Season Continues!

December 17 & 19 J.S. Bach: Christmas Oratorio Friday concert 8:00 pm Sunday concert 3:00 pm First Free Methodist Church

January 23
3 Piano Concerti/3 Soloists
Mozart concerto, Beethoven concerto
No. 4, Kechley World Premier
Arthur Barnes, Judith Cohen, Peter Mack
Shorecrest Performing Arts Ctr/3:00 pm

February 6
Baroque Court Concert
featuring: Bach, Telemann, Vivaldi &
Geminiani
Lakeside Chapel/3:00 pm

February 27 Handel's Birthday Party Handel: Ode to Saint Cecilia Handel: Dettingen Te Deum First Free Methodist Church/3:00 pm

March 20 Bach's Birthday Party Cantata #80 & Orchestral Suite #3 University Unitarian Church/7:00

April 1 Good Friday J.S. Bach: St. John Passion First Free Methodist Church/7:00 pm April 24 Sams: 3 One-Act Operas Shorecrest Performing Arts Center/ 3:00

May 13
All-Choral Program
Carissimi: Jephte
Brahms: Double Chorus Motets
English Folk Song Settings
University Congregational/8:00 pm

May 22
Orchestra Grand Finale
Mozart: Symphony No. 25
Stravinsky: Symphony in 3 Movements
Brahms: Symphony No. 2
Shorecrest Performing Arts Center/
3:00 pm

Text Translation-

Intonation: Dominum ad adiuvandum me

O God make speed to save me.
O Lord make haste to help me.
Glory be to the Father
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning
is now and ever shall be:
world without end. Amen.
Alleluia

His left hand is under my head and his right hand embraces me.

Psalm 109: Dixit Dominus

The Lord said unto my Lord:
Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.
The Lord shall send the rod of thy power out of Sion:
Be thou ruler, even in the midst among thine enemies.
In the day of thy power shall the people

In the day of thy power shall the people offer thee free-will offering with an holy worship: the dew of thy birth is of the womb of the morning.

The Lord sware and will not repent: Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedech.

The Lord upon thy right hand shall wound even kings in the day of his wrath.

He shall judge among the heathen: he shall fill the places with the dead bodies: and smite in sunder the heads over divers countries.

He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up his head. Glory be to the Father and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be:
world without end. Amen

His left hand is under my head and his right hand embraces me.

Concerto: Nigra sum

I am black but comely,
O ye daughter of Jerusalem.
Therefore the King hath loved me,
and hath brought me into his chambers,
and hath said unto me:
Arise up my love and come away.
For lo, the winter is past,
the rains are over and gone,
the flowers appear in our land.
The time of pruning is at hand.

For lo, the winter is past, the rains are over and gone. Arise, my love, and come away.

Psalm 112: Laudate pueri Dominum

Praise the Lord, ye servants:
O praise the Name of the Lord.
Blessed be the Name of the Lord:
from this time forth evermore.
The Lord's Name is praised: from the rising up of the sun unto the going down of the same.

The Lord is high above all heathen: and his glory above the heavens.

Who like unto the Lord our God, that hath his dwelling so high: and yet humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth?

He taketh up the simple out of the dust: and lifteth the poor out of the mire;

That he may set him with princes: even with the princes of his people.

He maketh the barren woman to keep house: and to be a joyful mother of children.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

For lo, the winter is past, the rains are over and gone. Arise, my love, and come away.

Concerto: Pulchra es

Thou art fair, my love, beautiful and comely, O daughter of Jerusalem, Terrible as an army set in array. Turn thine eyes from me, for they have made me flee away.

My beloved is radiant white and ruddy: the hair of his head is like the crimson of the king, bound in little plaits.

Psalm 121: Laetatus sum

We will go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand in thy gates:
O Jerusalem.
Jerusalem is built as a city:
that is at unity in itself.
For thither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord: to testify unto Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord.

I was glad when they said unto me:

For there is the seat of judgment: even the seat of the house of David.
O pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.
Peace be within thy walls: and plenteousness within thy palaces.
For my brethren and companions' sakes; I will wish thee prosperity,
Yea, because of the house of the Lord our God:
I will seek to do thee good.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

My beloved is radiant white and ruddy: the hair of his head is like the crimson of the king, bound in little plaits.

Concerto: Duo Seraphim

The two seraphim cried one to the other: Holy is the Lord God of Sabaoth. The whole earth is full of His glory: there are three that bear record in Heaven:

the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one:

Holy is the Lord God of Sabaoth: the whole earth is full of his glory.

Where has your beloved gone to, you fairest of women?
Which way has your beloved turned?
We will seek him with you.

Psalm 126: Nisi Dominus

Except the Lord build the house: their labour is but lost that build it. Except the Lord keep the city: the watchman waketh but in vain. It is but lost labour that ye haste to rise

up early, and so late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness.

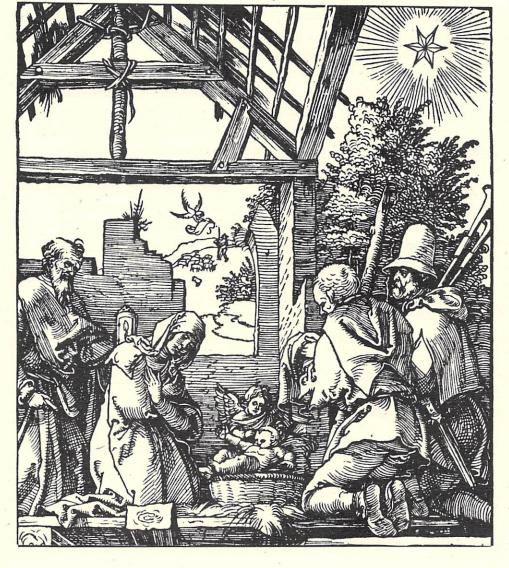
For so he giveth his beloved sleep: Lo, children and the fruit of the womb, are an heritage and gift that cometh of the Lord.

Like as the arrows in the hand of the giant, even so are the young children. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: he shall not be ashamed when he speaks with their enemies in the gate.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning,

is now and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Where has your beloved gone to, you fairest of women?
Which way has your beloved turned?
We will seek him with you.



Concerto: Audi caelum

Heaven hear my words, full of desire and suffused with joy. Tell me: who is she who rises bright as the dawn, That I should bless her? Say if this one, beautiful as the moon and chosen as the sun, fills with joy earth, heavens and sea. This sweet Virgin Mary, foretold by Ezekial, the Prophet from the East, this holy and happy portal through whom death was driven out and who established that life, who is ever the perfect and sure link between God and man for overcoming sin. Let us all therefore strive, with what grace we can, to attain this eternal life. Let us all therefore strive, and may God the Father, Son and Mother give comfort to the afflicted And may the Father, Son and Mother whose sweet name we invoke, give comfort to the afflicted. Blessed art Thou, O Virgin Mary, world without end.

As long as the king is at his table, my spikenard gives forth sweet perfume.

Psalm 147: Lauda Jerusalem Dominus

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem: praise thy God, O Sion. For He hath made fast the bars of thy gates:

and hath blessed thy children within thee.

He maketh peace in thy borders: and filleth thee with the flour of wheat. He sendeth forth his commandment upon the earth and his word runneth very swiftly.
He giveth snow like wool:
and scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes.
He casteth forth his ice like morsels:
who is able to abide his frost?
He sendeth out his word, and melteth them:

He bloweth with his wind, and the waters flow.

He showeth his word unto Jacob: His statutes and ordinances unto Israel.

He hath not dealt so with any nation: neither have the heathen knowledge of his laws.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be:

world without end. Amen.

As long as the king is at his table, my spikenard gives forth sweet perfume.

From the beginning, before all time was I created, and in eternity I shall not perish; in his holy dwelling I served before him, Thanks be to God.

INTERMISSION

Hymnus: Ave maris stella Hail, star of the sea, ever Virgin Mother of God, happy gateway to Heaven.

By that Ave from the mouth of Gabriel establish our peace by changing the name of Eve.

Break our mortal chains, bring light to the blind; banish our wickedness, plead for all good things. Show yourself a mother:
He will accept our prayers through you.
who for us deigned
to be born your Son.

O peerless and most gentle Virgin, make us meek, pure and free from sin.

Through your perfect life prepare for us a safe journey hence; that, seeing Jesus, we may rejoice for ever.

Praise be to God the Father, glory to Christ the Lord, honour to the Holy Spirit, three in one.

Amen.

Make me worthy to praise you, Holy Virgin. Give me strength against your enemies.

Sonata sopra: Sancta Maria ora pro nobis

Holy Mary, come to the aid of us poor ones, strengthen the faint-hearted, console those who weep, pray for your people, be a help to the priests, intercede for pious women, may all feel your aid who celebrate your holy festival.

Magnificat

My soul doth magnify the Lord:
And my spirit hath rejoiced
in God my Saviour,
For he hath regarded the lowliness of
his handmaiden.
For behold, from henceforth all
generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath magnified
me:



and holy is his Name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations.

He hath showed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat:

and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things:

and the rich he hath sent empty away. He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel:
As he promised to our forefathers,
Abraham and his seed, for ever.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son; and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be: world without end.

Holy Mary, come to the aid of us poor ones, strengthen the faint-hearted, console those who weep, pray for your people, be a help to the priests, intercede for pious women, may all feel your aid who celebrate your holy festival.

Let us praise the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Amen

Orchestra Seattle

George Shangrow, music director

Orchestra Seattle operates on a basis of rotating seating, therefore personnel are listed alphabetically in each section.

VIOLIN

Susan Abrams
Kristin Fletcher
Sue Herring
Deb Kirkland, concert
master
Fritz Klein, principal 2nd

Pam Kummert

Janet Showalter

Michelle Stearns

VIOLA

Beatrice Dolf, principal Katherine McWilliams Robert Shangrow

CELLO

Julie Reed, principal Valerie Ross Matthew Wyant

BASS

Kerry Fowler, principal Jay Wilson

OBOE

M. Shannon Hill, principal

RECORDER

Huntley Beyer, principal Sally Weaks

BASSOON

Judith Lawrence, principal

TRUMPET

Matthew Dalton, principal

TROMBONE

David Brewer
Cuauhtemoc Escobedo,
principal
David Holmes
Kevin Karnes

ORGAN/HARPSICHORD

Robert Kechley

25 years ago Randall Jay McCarty was one of the founding members of the Seattle Chamber Singers. Five years ago Randy played the keyboard continuo in our performance of the 1610 Vespers here at St. Alphonsus Church. It was the final concert Randy performed before he was taken from us by AIDS. We lovingly dedicate today's concert to Randy McCarty, beloved friend and fine musician

Seattle Chamber Singers

George Shangrow, music director

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John Stenseth
Rick Wyckoff



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Tickets \$8-\$12, Elliott Bay Bookstore, Red And Black Books, Folk Art Gallery/La Tienda or by Phone 623-8632 (9-5 P.M.)