O Rose, So Red

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Gary Ekkel

Sopranos: Sue Droege, Lenore Stephens, Nicole Spicer,
Emma Bunker-Smith, Clare Scott
Altos: Melissa Lee, Rosemary Hodgson, Jill Livett, Christopher Field
Tenors: Euan Brown, Peter Neustupny, Michael Reid, Paul Pentland
Basses: Terence Tan, John Weretka, Edward Morgan,
Michael Beaton-Wells, Nicholas Howden

Violin: Ross Mitchell
Cello: Fiona Furphy
Chamber Organ: Elizabeth Anderson

Recorded in Xavier College Chapel, Kew, Victoria, Australia
Cover: Petrus Christus, *The Lady of the Dry Tree*,
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The red rose is one of the most enduring images of the Virgin Mary. In this collection it sprouts as the 'seed of a thorn' in one of the earliest Medieval motets and continues to flourish four-hundred years later as the 'springtime rose' and the measure of all beauty in the motets of Clemens and Dering. The image is particularly resonant. It has wide-ranging associations with the fertility of the Madonna, the beauty of the bride of Christ, the fragrances of Heaven (to counteract the "foul stench" of sin), the passion and romance of the Troubadour, the poignancy of the crown of thorns and the rich colour of spilt blood.

The variety of musical approaches used to depict or venerate Mary reflects the multi-faceted nature of the image of a rose (and indeed many of the other images that depict Mary). Most of the works are passionate, but some will be ethereal while others are thorn-like; some will be gentle while others are extrovert and joyous. This collection provides a sample of the different styles of music used to capture the nature of Mary over the course of more than a millennium. The songs, chants and motets are organised around various themes in Marian hagiography including her Nativity, the Annunciation, the Virgin Mother, the Intercessor, the Star of the Sea, the Springtime Rose and the Empress of Heaven. The polyphonic music is presented chronologically, while the Gregorian chant is interweaved amongst the polyphonic works.

The history of Gregorian chant goes back to the first centuries after Christ and in its origins to Jewish chants and chants of other cultures many hundreds of years earlier. The simple chanting on psalm tones in the alternate verses of Praetorius's *Magnificat* represents one of the oldest strands of chant. *Ave maris stella* – the hymn sung at Vespers on all major Marian feasts – comes from a second stage of chant composition, in which newly written poetic texts are set to music in strophes. The four Marian antiphons, by contrast, come from one of the latest strands of chant composition, most probably originating in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Whereas Gregorian chant as a whole is characterised by its restraint, these late chants are more effusive. The four Marian antiphons, which call for the intercession of the Virgin Mary, are the final chants sung on each night of the year in monasteries throughout the world: *Alma Redemptoris Mater* for the Advent and Christmas seasons, *Ave Regina caelorum* for Lent, *Regina caeli* for Easter and *Salve Regina* for the Trinity season.

The two polyphonic works dating from the Middle Ages in this collection both reveal the Medieval fervour for the Virgin Mary, but use contrasting musical and textual means to capture this fervour. *Ex semine Abrahe/Ex semine Rosa/[Ex semine]*, on one hand, epitomises Medieval artistry. The motet was identified by the Medieval theorist, Anonymous IV, as a work of

Perotin, a (perhaps mythical) composer influential in the Notre Dame school of Paris in the twelfth century. Its artistry stems from the layering of meaning in both text and music. The motet gains its traditional authority from the tenor line: it borrows a segment from the chant *Alleluia Nativitatis*, which is normally sung in the Mass for the Nativity of Mary. In typical Medieval fashion, the segment is not taken directly from the source itself but from later rhythmical versions (akin to later 'revelations') of the chant, called clausulae. First, one and then a second part have been added to the tenor during the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to form the composition as it is performed here.

In contrast to later music where it is conventional to have the same text in each voice, the three voices here have different – but related – texts that are sung simultaneously. The two added parts have texts that provide a gloss on the meaning of the original chant text; thus they elaborate on the lineage and sacred birth of Mary. The initial line of the text, however, also reflects back on the process of composition in the motet. The triplum sings: "From the seed of Abraham [… is born] the salvation of mankind." In an analogous musical process, the triplum is born from the musical equivalent of the seed of Abraham – Gregorian chant. Similarly, the "rose" of the motetus "springs up" from the *ex semine* ("out of the seed") portion of the chant.

In contrast to the complexity of organisation in *Ex semine*, *O Virgo Splendens* has a relatively simple, but very effective, structure. It is one of the earliest examples of a three-part *casa* or canon. It is a devotional pilgrimage song, which would have been sung as the pilgrims made their way to Monserrat in Catalonia. The song comes from the Spanish fourteenth-century manuscript entitled the *Llibre Vermell [de Monserrat]* (the Red Book of Monserrat). The Benedictine monks of Monserrat saw their own mountain and its unusual fertility as a symbol of the Virgin Mary herself. This entreaty to the 'resplendent Virgin' makes specific reference to the miraculous powers associated with the 'cleft mountain' of Monserrat.

John Dunstable's setting of the even verses of the hymn, *Ave maris stella*, retains a Medieval flavour with its tight three-part polyphony, regular voice-crossing in the lower parts and the use of parallel motion in the second half of each verse. Its thirds and sixths in the harmony do, however, hint at the new '*contenance Angloise*' (English countenance) that was to become the hallmark of Renaissance harmony. The French poet, Martin le Franc wrote of this new 'countenance' that it was a 'practice of making frisk concordance … rendering their song joyous and notable.' The frisk concordances are particularly evident in Dunstable's energetic version of *Ave maris stella*.

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries represent the pinnacle of Marian spirituality. The Renaissance is the age of the Marian confraternities, litanies, processions and devotional services reserved for the Virgin Mary. The devotional Marian motet plays an integral part in the worship of the believer. The Marian motet – together with the mass – becomes the chief form of sacred composition during the Renaissance.

Two Flemish expressions of this Marian-oriented spirituality are seen in Ockeghem's *Alma Redemptoris Mater* and Clemens non Papa's *O Maria, vernans rosa*. Unusually for their respective generations, neither composer worked in Italy. Ockeghem received his early training in Antwerp and later served under three successive Kings of France: Charles VII, Louis XI and Charles VIII. Clemens is also likely to have worked in France for some time, before returning to the Low Countries in about the year 1545. Their music accordingly is more pure in its Franco-Flemish qualities: long-breathed lines and rich counterpoint which reflect more closely the character of the French Gothic Cathedrals of Chartres and St. Denis than the Renaissance Dome of Florence. Ockeghem's music derives its strength from the constantly overlapping phrases that avoid general cadences and simple repetition. The exquisite duets between various pairs of voices form the textural contrasts in the motet. Clemens' motet is similarly expansive

but, in contrast to Ockeghem's motet, is more symmetrical in its melodic shapes and imitative in its texture. It ends with one of the most expansive Amens in the Renaissance, sequentially descending through the span of an octave before finally coming to rest on a C chord in mode 5.

Richard Dering's setting of a Medieval hymn to the Blessed Virgin, *Ave Virgo gloriosa*, composed more than one hundred years later, also reveals the influence of the Flemish school, most notably in the exquisite final canon to describe the lady who is whiter than the lilies. Dering, although born in England, was forced into exile because of his Catholic beliefs and settled in Brussels – adjacent to Flanders. Dering, however, embraces traditional Flemish five-part polyphony as only one of a number of contrasting textures, including chordal, three-part and antiphonal writing. The contrasts set in relief the different epithets of the text and give a more emotive rendering of the words.

The Spanish Marian motets, in contrast to their Flemish counterparts, are more homophonic and direct in their enunciation of the text. Guerrero's *Ave Maria* is presented as a reverent dialogue between two choirs. The choirs alternate for most of the motet, only joining in eight-part celestial polyphony at the end of each half. The superius part of each choir paraphrases the plainsong *Ave Maria*, which is sung immediately before

the motet. The *Salve Regina* by Victoria is the most succinct of his four settings of this text. It reveals the influence of his earlier training in Rome. In particular, the motet has the refinement and restraint of Palestrina. To these influences, Victoria adds a rich harmonic scheme and a transparent texture, combining to make a motet of subdued intensity.

The final works of this collection reveal two distinct faces of German spirituality at either end of what has become known as the Baroque period. Hieronymous Praetorius's *Magnificat*, first published as early as 1599, is an extrovert outpouring of praise while Zelenka's Marian antiphons exhibit the more personal pietism of the early eighteenth century. Praetorius was organist at the church of St. James, Hamburg, but like a number of Germans of his generation was strongly influenced by the polychoral style of the Venetians. Praetorius divides his forces into two choirs, one made up of higher voices and the other of lower voices. The well-known text of the Magnificat is Mary's song of praise after hearing the news from the Angel Gabriel that she is to be with child. This exuberant *Magnificat* is prescribed for the feast of Christmas; it captures the grandeur of the humble handmaiden who has become Queen of Heaven.

Jan Dismas Zelenka, as a Middle European, was exposed to a wide range of influences from both the East and West. His works reveal Bohemian, Polish, German and French influences. Zelenka

also showed an unusually high regard for composers from earlier periods. In Dresden, where he worked for most of his life, he kept an extensive library of music from the Renaissance and early Baroque. The five settings of the Marian antiphons accordingly are works which combine remarkable forward-looking progressions with *stile antico* (old style) counterpoint and the energetic rhythmic patterns of Middle Europe. The first *Ave Regina caelorum*, for example, introduces a classical sounding solo trio amidst dense and chromatic chordal sections, while the *Salve Regina* juxtaposes an old-fashioned cantus firmus in long notes in the soprano above a busy ostinato in the bass. Following baroque practice, the vocal parts are accompanied by a basso continuo part, here performed by a chamber organ and cello. To this characteristic texture an obbligato violin part is added in *Alma Redemptoris Mater* and *Salve Regina*. Zelenka makes full use of his instrumental and vocal resources and cultural background to underpin these passionate, yet tender, pleas for mercy and intercession from the Blessed Virgin.

Gary Ekkel

Schola Cantorum of Melbourne Photograph: Adrian Maiolla

SCHOLA CANTORUM OF MELBOURNE

Schola Cantorum of Melbourne has established a reputation for presenting sacred music from the Middle Ages, Renaissance and Baroque together with Gregorian chant in historical and innovative contexts. Among its priorities are the liturgical reconstructions of major feasts, the performance of Medieval plays and the public exposure of unpublished music. Its present conductor, Gary Ekkel, founded *Schola Cantorum of Melbourne* in 1994. In the following year it presented the first performance since the sixteenth century of works by Morales and Guerrero in the recently discovered Granada MS. 975 manuscript. *Schola Cantorum of Melbourne* performed the Medieval Easter Play, *Visitatio Sepulchri*, as part of the Melbourne International Festival of Organ and Harpsichord in 1996. The following year it produced a second Medieval play, *The Voice of Rachel,* for the feasts of Christmas and Holy Innocents. The women of *Schola Cantorum of Melbourne* sang the female chant in the television documentary, *Tuscany*. The choir has had its own three-concert subscription series since 1995. It is resident at Newman College, The University of Melbourne, where it sings in regular services.

GARY EKKEL

Gary Ekkel is a leading Australian interpreter of choral and Early Music. He commenced his instrumental studies on the modern flute and recorder but turned to baroque flute as his main focus in 1983. His formative training in Early Music was with Hartley Newnham, Ruth Wilkinson and Hans-Diether Michatz in the late 1970s and early 1980s. During 1986-87 he received a Netherlands Government Scholarship to study Gregorian chant, sacred music and baroque flute under Barthold Kuijken at the Royal Conservatorium in The Hague. He has since graduated with a Masters degree in Performance at the University of Melbourne in 1988 and a Doctorate in the analysis of Renaissance choral music at the same university in 1997. Under the auspices of an M.A. Bartlett Research scholarship, he conducted research on music of the Josquin generation at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and the Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance in Tours, France in 1993 and 1994. Prior to founding the *Schola Cantorum of Melbourne*, he was the Assistant Conductor of The Choir of Ormond College under Douglas Lawrence. In 1996 he was appointed Director of Choral Music at St. Michael's Grammar School. He has been the conductor of the *Schola Cantorum of Melbourne* since its inception in 1994.
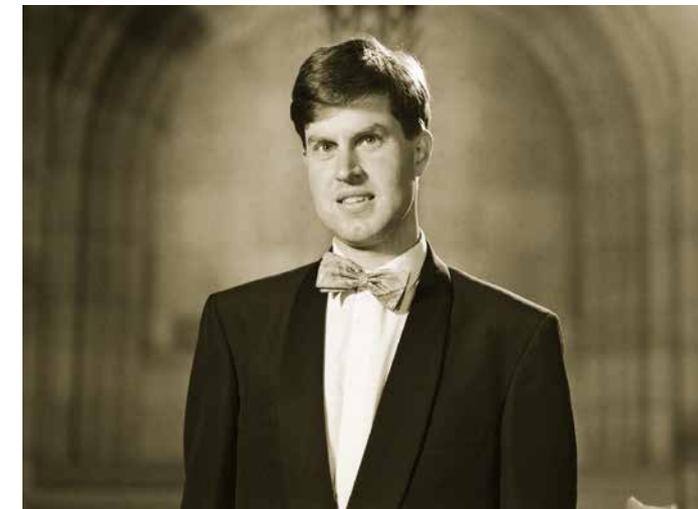
Gary Ekkel Photograph: Ron Ekkel

1 **Perotin (12th-13th century)** *Ex semine Abrahe/Ex semine Rosa/[Ex semine]*

Triplum:
Ex semine
Abrahe, divino
Moderamine
Igne pio numine
Producis, Domine:
Hominis salutem,
Paupertate nuda,
Virginis nativitate
De tribu Juda.
Iam propinas ovum
Per natale novum
Piscem, panem dabis.
Partu sine semine.

Motetus:
Ex semine
Rosa prodit spine
Fructus olee
Oleastro legitur
Virgo propagine
Nascitur Judee
Stelle matutine
Radius exoritur
Nobis caligine
Radio sol stella
Petra fluit melle
Parit flos puelle
Verbum sine semine.
Tenor:
[Ex semine]

Triplum:
From the seed
Of Abraham, by divine
Direction,
In the holy fire of your will,
You bring forth, O Lord,
The salvation of mankind.
From stark poverty,
By the birth of a virgin
From the tribe of Judah.
Now you set forth an egg
For a new birth;
You will give fish and bread
By this birth without seed.

Motetus:
From the seed of a thorn,
A rose springs up;
Fruit of the olive
Is plucked from the olive tree.
A virgin is born
From a descendant of Judea.
The ray of the morning star
Shines forth
From the darkness of a cloud;
The sun from the ray of the star;
A stone flows with honey;
The flower of a maid gives birth
To the Word, without seed.
Tenor:
[From the seed]

2 **from** *Llibre Vermell* **(14th century)** *O Virgo splendens*

O Virgo splendens, hic in monte celso
    mirculis serrato fulgentibus ubique,
    quem fideles conscendunt universi.

Eia pietatis oculo placato cerne ligatos
    fune peccatorum, ne infernorum
    ictibus graventur, sed cum beatis tua
    prece vocentur.

O resplendent Virgin, here on the
    miraculous mountain cleft
    everywhere by dazzling wonders,
    and which all of the faithful climb.
Behold with the merciful eye of love
    those enmeshed in the bonds of sin,
    that they will not have to endure
    the blows of hell, but rather will be
    named among the blessed through
    your intercession.

3 **Gregorian chant** *Alma Redemptoris Mater*

Alma Redemptoris Mater, quae pervia
    caeli porta manes,
Et stella maris, succurre cadenti surgere
    qui curat populo:

Tu quae genuisti, natura mirante, tuum
    sanctum Genitorem:
Virgo prius ac posterius, Gabrieli ab
    ore sumens illud Ave, peccatorum
    miserere.

Loving mother of the Redeemer, open
    door to heaven
And star of the sea, come quickly to the
    aid of your people, fallen indeed by
    striving to rise again.
To nature's astonishment you were the
    mother of your holy Creator
Without ceasing to be a virgin, and
heard from Gabriel that greeting "Hail."
Have pity on us sinners.

4 Gregorian chant *Ave Regina caelorum*

Ave Regina caelorum,	Hail, Queen of Heaven.
Ave Domina Angelorum,	Hail, Queen of angels.
Salve radix, salve porta,	Hail, root of Jesse.
Ex qua mundo Lux est orta.	Hail, Gate from whom Light came forth into the world.
Gaude, Virgo gloriosa,	Rejoice, glorious Virgin,
Super omnes speciosa.	Beautiful above all.
Vale, O valde decora.	Hail, O exceedingly noble,
Et pro nobis Christum exora.	And beseech Christ for us.

5 Gregorian chant *Regina caeli*

Regina caeli, laetare, alleluia.	Rejoice, thou Queen of Heaven, alleluia.
Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia.	For He, whom you were worthy to bear, alleluia.
Resurrexit sicut dixit, alleluia.	Has risen, as he said, alleluia.
Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.	Pray to God for us, alleluia.

6 Gregorian chant *Salve Regina*

Salve Regina, mater misericordiae :	Hail, Queen and mother of mercy.
Vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.	Hail, our life, comfort and hope.
Ad te clamamus, exsules, filii Hevae.	Exiled sons of Eve, with loud voice we call upon you.
Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes in hac lacrymarum valle.	As we journey in sorrow and lament through this 'Valley of Tears,'
Eia ergo, Advocata nostra,	Ah, then, our Advocate,
Illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte.	Turn those eyes of pity towards us now.
Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui, nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.	When this time of exile is past, show us Jesus, the blessed fruit of your womb,
O clemens: O pia: O dulcis Virgo Maria.	Gentle, loving and kind Virgin Mary.

7 **John Dunstable (c. 1385-1453)** *Ave maris stella*

Ave maris stella,	Hail star of the sea,
Dei Mater alma,	God's loving Mother
Atque semper Virgo,	And ever a virgin,
Felix caeli porta.	Heaven's fair gate.
Sumens illud Ave	You who received that 'Ave'
Gabrielis ore,	From Gabriel's lips.
Funda nos in pace,	Establish in us peace,
Mutans Hevae nomen.	Reversing the name Eva.
Solve vincla reis,	Break the sinners' fetters,
Profer lumen caecis:	Bring light to the blind,
Mala nostra pelle,	Drive away our ills
Bona cuncta posce.	And ask for us every blessing.
Monstra te esse matrem:	Show yourself a mother.
Sumat per te preces,	May He who deigned to be your Son,
Qui pro nobis natus,	Who was born for us,
Tulit esse tuus.	Receive our prayers through you.
Virgo singularis,	Virgin without equal
Inter omnes mitis,	Gentle beyond all others,
Nos culpis solutos,	Win us pardon for our sins,
Mites fac et castos.	And make us gentle and pure.
Vitam praesta puram,	Make it your care that our life is without sin,
Iter para tutum:	Arrange a safe journey for us,
Ut videntes Jesum,	So that we may see Jesus
Semper collaetemur.	And rejoice together forever.
Sit laus Deo Patri,	To God the Father be praise,
Summo Christo decus,	To Christ most high and
Spiritui Sancto,	To the Holy Spirit be glory;
Tribus honor unus. Amen.	To the Three by equal honour. Amen.

8 Johnannes Ockeghem (c. 1410-97) *Alma Redemptoris Mater*
(see translation above)

9 Clemens non Papa (1500-58) *O Maria, vernans rosa*

O Maria vernans rosa,
Porta caeli speciosa,
Clarior sideribus
Me guberna, me supporta,
Me defende, me conforta,
Ne vincar ab hostibus.

O Mary, springtime Rose,
Beautiful gate of Heaven,
Brighter than the stars,
Rule me, support me,
Defend me, comfort me,
So that I may not be overcome by the
    enemy.

Tu lux pulchra,
Tu medela,
Tu pax vera,
Tu tutela,
Inimici frange tela,
Succure cadentibus. Amen.

You are the beautiful light,
You are the healer,
You are our true peace,
You are our protection
Break the weapons of the foe,
Help the falling. Amen.

10 Gregorian chant *Ave Maria*

11 Francisco Guerrero (1528-99) *Ave Maria* (published 1570)

Ave, Maria, gratia plena:
Dominus tecum:
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,
Et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.

Hail, Mary, full of grace:
The Lord is with thee:
Blessed art thou among women,
And blessed is the offspring of thy
    womb, Jesus.

Sancta Maria,
Regina caeli,
Dulcis et pia,
O Mater Dei,
Ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
Ut cum electis te videamus.

Holy Mary, Queen of Heaven,
Sweet and devout,
O Mother of God, Pray for us sinners,
So that with the chosen ones we may
    see Thee.

12 Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611) *Salve Regina*
(see translation above)

13 Richard Dering (c. 1580-1630) *Ave Virgo gloriosa* (published 1617)

Ave Virgo gloriosa,
Favo mellis dulcior,
Mater Dei gloriosa,
Stella sole clarior:
Tu es illa speciosa,
Qua nulla est pulchrior,
Rubicunda plus quam rosa,
Lilio candidior.

Hail, glorious Virgin,
Sweeter than the honeycomb;
Glorious Mother of God,
Star far brighter than the sun,
You are the lovely one,
Than whom nothing is more beautiful:
Redder than the rose,
Whiter than the lily.

14 Hieronymus Praetorius (1560-1629) *Magnificat* (published 1599/1622)
Song of Mary: Luke 1:46-55

Magnificat anima mea Dominum.
Et exsultavit spiritus me in Deo salutari
 meo.
Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae:
ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent
omnes generationes.
Quia fecit magna qui potens est: et
 sanctum nomen ejus.
Et misericordia ejus a progenie in
 progenies timentibus eum.
Fecit potentiam in bracchio suo:
 dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.
Deposuit potentes de sede, et exaltavit
 humiles.
Esurientes implevit bonis: et divites
 dimisit inanes.

My soul glorifies the Lord,
My spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.

He looks on his servant in her lowliness:
 henceforth all ages will call me
 blessed.
The Almighty works marvels for me.
 Holy is His name!
His mercy is from age to age on those
 who fear Him.
He puts forth His arm in strength and
 scatters the proudhearted.
He casts the mighty from their thrones
 and raises the lowly.
He fills the starving with good things
 and sends the rich away empty.

Suscepit Israel puerum suum,	He protects Israel, his servant,
recordatus misericordiae suae.	remembering His mercy,
Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros,	For Abraham and his sons forever, both
Abraham et semini ejus in saecula.	now and forever, world without end.
Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.	Glory be to the Father, and to the Son
	and to the Holy Spirit,
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et	As in the beginning, so now and ever
semper, et in saecula saeculorum.	shall be, world without end.
Amen.	Amen.

15 **Jan Dismas Zelenka (1679-1745)** *Alma Redemptoris Mater* (1728)

16 **Jan Dismas Zelenka** *Ave Regina caelorum (i)* (1737)

17 **Jan Dismas Zelenka** *Ave Regina caelorum (ii)* (1737)

18 **Jan Dismas Zelenka** *Regina caeli* (after 1728)

19 **Jan Dismas Zelenka** *Salve Regina* (1727)
(see above for translations of the Marian antiphons)