



DUX 1242 / 2016

MUSICA IN MONASTERIIS FEMINEIS IN POLONIA MINORE Vol. I

STANIĄTKI

Moniales Ordinis Sancti Benedicti

Venite, exultemus Domino

Songs from the Benedictine Antiphonary written during the time of Abbess Dorota Szreniawska (1536)

Church bells of St Adalbert's Abbey of the Benedictine Nuns in Staniątki

-Invitatory: Venite, exultemus domino

Songs for Advent – 1536

- Instrumental improvisations (FP)
- First Sunday of Advent. First Vespers. Antiphons
- Dominum salvatorem nostrum[0:41]
- Gabriel angelus apparuit marie
- Maria dixit
- Respondit angelus
- Responsorium | Responsory: Ecce dies veniunt (SF, AP, KŚ)
- V: In diebus illis (SF)
- Great 'O' Antiphons to Magnificat

Songs for Christmas

- Instrumental improvisations (BS)
- Christmas Eve. Antiphon: Gaude et laetare
- Antiphon to Song of Zacharias: Orietur sicut sol salvator (SF, AP, KŚ)
- Second Nocturne. Responsory:
- Sancta et immaculata virginitas (AB, MG, MK, SF, KW)
- V: Benedicta tu (MG)
- Third Nocturne. Responsory Beata viscera (AB, MG, MK, SF, KW)
- V: Dies sanctificatus (KW)
- Christmas Antiphon to Canticles and None: Parvulus Filius hodie (SF, AP, KŚ)
- Antiphon to Magnificat: Hodie Christus natus est

Songs for Lent

- Instrumental improvisations (FP)
- Antiphon to Prime: Pueri Hebreorum
- Antiphon to Sext: Osanna filio David (AB)
 - Rattles (SP) [1:01]
- First Nocturne. Responsory: In monte oliveti (SF, AP, KŚ)
 - V: Vigilate (KŚ)
- Second Nocturne. Res: Ecce quomodo moritur (SF, AP, KŚ)
 - V: Tamquam agnus (AP)
- Hymn for Palm Sunday: Pange lingua

Songs for Easter

- Instrumental improvisations (FP)
- Paschal vigil. Antiphon: Alleluia (MK)
 - Antiphon: Regina celi
- Responsory: Virtute magna (AB, MG, MK, SF, KW)
 - V: Repleti quidem (AB)
- Responsory: Hec est Iherusalem (AB, MG, MK, SF, KW)
 - V: Porta eius (MK)
- Antiphon for the eve of Feast of Annunciation: Alleluia
- Church bells of St Adalbert's Abbey of the Benedictine Nuns in Staniątki

bonus track:

Ave Maria (setting of Staniątki) / Benedictine Nuns of St. Adalbert's Abbey in Staniątki

Female vocal ensemble FLORES ROSARUM

Instrumental improvisations

Filip Presseisen (FP) virginal, Bartosz Sałdan (BS) bells
Abbess of the Benedictine Abbey in Staniątki, Mother Stefania Polkowska OSB (SP) rattles

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THE PHENOMENON OF THE STANIĄTKI ABBEY

The history of the Benedictine Abbey in Staniątki, near Kraków, goes back to the thirteenth century. It was founded, most probably between 1228 and 1238, by Klemens Gryfita, who later served as the Castellan of Kraków and was killed in 1241 during the war with the Tatars. According to the first abbess of the convent, it was Gryfita's dowry for his daughter Wizenna. An early-Gothic church was built in Staniątki in the second and third quarters of the 13th century. Its late-Baroque decor, a result of efforts by Abbess Marianna Józefa Jordanówna, comes from around 1760. It included two 16th-century images of the Blessed Virgin Mary (in the main altar and in the chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary), which were the object of a widespread religious cult, as well as the late-Gothic sculpture of Crucified Christ (ca. 1500). The oldest section of the convent was built concurrently with the church. It acquired its present shape during the time of Abbess Anna Cecylia Trzcińska (1619-49).

During the partitions of Poland and the inter-war years, the Abbey pursued educational activity. Following the closure of the monasteries by the authorities in the Austrian zone of the partitions, the school for girls, founded in 1784, allowed the Benedictine nuns to remain in Staniątki. It was only during the years of the Stalinist terror that the school was closed.

Numerous works of art testify to the rich history of the Staniątki Abbey. In addition to those in the church, they include Gothic sculptures of a Madonna with Child (ca. 1370) and Christ on the Cold Stone (early 16th cent.), a late-Gothic monstrance (1532), a Baroque tray (the work of Augsburg goldsmiths from the end of the 17th century) and late-Baroque paintings on glass, all of which may be admired in the local museum.

In its history of almost eight centuries, the Benedictine Abbey has witnessed many turbulent events, which are described

in its chronicles, such as the Swedish Deluge of 1655-7, the November and January Uprisings of 1830 and 1863, the Galician Slaughter (also known as the Peasant Uprising) of 1846 and the two World Wars.

As in every convent, religious practice in the Staniątki Abbey gave rise to artistic and musical activity. Contacts with the diocesan authorities have played an important role in the life of the nunnery from the beginning of the 17th century until modern times. Albin Cardinal Dunajewski remained in cordial contacts with the Staniątki Abbey at the end of the 19th century and Karol Cardinal Wojtyła, the future Pope John Paul II, less than a century later. Jesuit priests played a significant role in Staniątki from the beginning of the 17th century until the Stalinist repressions of the 1950s. Their knowledge and intellectual abilities found their reflection in the richness of ideas contained in the late-Baroque interior decoration of the church and in the activities of the school. The Staniątki Abbey has long been the centre of the Marian cult (since the foundation of the first church, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary), of the devotion to the Holy Sacrament and the Suffering Christ, the cult of St. Adalbert (another regional patron), as well as of the local cult of the founders of the Abbey (since at least the first half of the 17th century).

At the start of the 20th century the activities of the Staniątki nuns spread beyond the walls of the Abbey. During the time of Abbess Kazimiera Hilaria Szczerbianka (1907-39), the nuns offered protection to the Benedictine Abbeys in Vilnius and Nieśwież. Much of the credit for the revival of spiritual life of the Benedictine nuns in the Warsaw convent went to Jadwiga Byszewska, Abbess's Szczerbianka's close colleague. During the Nazi occupation, they made an heroic stand during the Warsaw Uprising, offered clandestine education and provided shelter for Jewish girls.

The phenomenon of the centuries-long history of the Staniątki Abbey was aptly summed up by Father Władysław Jankiewicz, a provincial of the Society of Jesus. In 1929, during ceremonies to mark the 700th anniversary of the Abbey and the coronation of the image of Our Lady of Sorrows, he said: "the shape of Europe has changed many times (...), kingdoms and empires rose and fell one after the other (...), the entire Polish history has moved beside You and almost through You (...), and You have stood here untouched!"

Bogusław Krasnowolski

The convent at Staniątki has been a place of worship for eight centuries and, as St. Benedict's rule says, 'a school for God's service'. This is manifested in two ways: through prayer and life in a community. Ever since its foundation, the convent has joined the immemorial strand of worship to the Lord, which is manifested first and foremost in liturgy, that is the participation of the nuns in the Holy Mass and in choral singing.

For the nuns, music, both vocal and instrumental, is not therefore a joyful way of spending their leisure time but an inseparable part of what is central to their lives – the daily prayers. From the beginnings of our convent, Gregorian chant, which had been shaped many centuries earlier as the core of the liturgy of the entire Western Church, has been an important part of these prayers. Their texts are in Latin, the language of liturgy in the whole of Europe, while the performance is monodic.

The earliest musical manuscripts of the Staniątki convent, dating from the 13th and 14th centuries, have not survived. They were destroyed in a fire around 1518. The new songbooks, still in use, were copied from those in the collection of the Benedictine Abbey in Tyniec. These are three large antiphonaries, used for choral prayers for the whole year. Handwritten around 1530 (no music was printed in Poland at the time), they had beautiful ornamentation, parchment and wooden covers. The book was placed at the centre of the choir so that all members of the community could follow the notation. Naturally, the nuns could write down sections of the antiphonaries in various size for their own use and hold them in their hands, if they wished to do so. Quite a large number of such private manuscripts have survived to the present day. Some polyphonic compositions entered the liturgical practice in the 17th century.

In addition to liturgical books, our musical collection includes numerous handwritten songbooks, known as hymnals, with both Latin and Polish songs. They were performed during various services as well as recreational activities. The oldest of these hymnals date from 1568 and continue to be the subject of research by both musicologists and linguists. The present recording is addressed, however, not so much to specialists as a subject of study but to all those who want to gain insights into the centuries-old tradition of conventual prayer and find in it means of expression for individual prayer.

Małgorzata Borkowska OSB

It was from silence and in silence that the many melodies included in the old manuscripts have been created down the centuries. Today they are the object of fascination for researchers and performers, enrapturing listeners with their beauty and also appealing to the hearts of those who are seeking light along the paths of their lives.

It was from silence and in silence that these melodies were born in the depths of the hearts of the many generations of

monks and nuns as an expression of their meeting with God. Their daily perseverance in opening their ears and minds to the Word of God shaped their prayers and toil, in line with the motto of the Benedictines *ora et labora...* Their entire life was therefore a continuous *officium divinum* which created, behind the monastic walls of medieval Europe, a culture in which are our roots.

The names of the composers of the old melodies remain unknown, as do the exact time and place of their origin. This is perhaps why there is a profound sense of encountering inspired melodies, those that were born as a result of the Word of God meeting man's intuition and cleansing it so that man is able to give vent to what is the most sacred.

Created in silence, these melodies transport all those who listen raptly to them to silence. They lead to a silence which is not an emptiness but a deep, face-to-face encounter with God, in which we can, as it were, hear anew the entire 'melodic line' of our life.

In the face of these old melodies we often have to go beyond ourselves and our capabilities in order to attain something entirely new which is not a result of human skills or an established interpretation but of making ourselves open, individually and as a community, to the Word of God, which today too speaks directly and finds its way to man's heart. The present CD features music from the oldest antiphonary in the archives of the Benedictine Convent in Staniątki, entitled *Antiphonale iuxta constitutionem Ordinis Patris Santi Benedicti. De tempore*, ms. 1-4. It contains antiphons and responsories used by the choir of nuns during the Divine Services and for many years served as the principal songbook in the Staniątki convent.¹ Some of these melodies continue to be used in monastic practice, including that at the Staniątki convent. Some others have survived only in manuscript as a testimony to the richness of the spiritual life of medieval monastic communities.

The present antiphonary was notated as the initiative of Dorota Szreniawska, the twelfth Abbess of the Staniątki Convent (†21 May 1536). She asked the Benedictine Friars in nearby Tyniec to compile a prayer book for the celebration of the *officium divinum*. One may wonder why the oldest liturgical book of the Staniątki Convent dates from as late as the end of the 16th century, considering the fact that the convent had been founded more than three centuries earlier. The reason is that in 1518 the convent's entire valuable archive, including the manuscripts of liturgical books, was destroyed in a fire. The nuns were left without any prayer books; hence the Abbess's request addressed to the Tyniec monastery. The antiphonary manuscripts numbered 1-4, written down by Tomasz² the copyist on the basis of the Tyniec books³, therefore constitutes the oldest surviving liturgical book of the Benedictine Convent in Staniątki.

Initially, it was a single book, but in 1800, at the request of Abbess Apolonia Wizanna Szmidowiczówna (†1806), it was divided and assigned the call number 1-4. The reason why the division was made was explained in a note supplied to the first part: "This book weighed so much that the present Reverend Mother in the Lord, Abbess Apolonia Wizanna Szmidowiczówna, taking into account the fragile strength of today's youth, ordered that the book be split into two. It took place in the year 1800"⁴.

Venite, exultemus Domino – 'Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord' – its words taken from Psalm 94 (*invitatorium*), the opening verse for the day's choral prayer which was used as the title of the CD, invites us to rejoice in the Lord through the melodies which follow the liturgical year: from Advent (the period of waiting for the coming of Christ), through Christmas (the joyful celebration of Christ's birth) and Lent (the time of meditation on His passion and death) to Easter (the outburst of joy for the Lord's Resurrection).

The CD consists mainly of the antiphons and responsories for daily choral prayer. The former have been selected for the beauty of their melodies and texts, and are sung without the psalms, unlike the usual practice in the Liturgy of the Hours. Many of these melodies can no longer be heard these days in liturgical practice because of the changes which were introduced, first at the Council of Trent and then following the Second Vatican Council. Bearing this in mind, it was necessary to make a certain compromise, that is the presentation of the antiphons outside their natural environment – their liturgical context. The Latin text has been copied from the manuscript without any changes, that is without

¹

The antiphonary was still in use in the nineteenth century in the celebration of the *officium divinum*. Cf. Father Tadeusz Bratkowski, *Officium divinum de tempore w rękopiśmiennych antyfonarzach zakonów benedyktynskich w Polsce od XVI do XIX wieku / Officium divinum de tempore in manuscript antiphonaries in the Benedictine monasteries in Poland from the 16th to the 19th centuries*, Rzeszów 2013, p. 73.

²

He was most probably an organist in Tyniec. In some sources he is identified as Tomek, an associate of Stanisław from Buk, the author of the Jan Olbracht Gradual (Archiwum Kapituły at Wawel Castle, ms. 42-44). Cf. Bartosz Izbiński, *Graduał tyniecki ms. b.s. I w świetle tradycji europejskiej i polskiej. Studium źródłowe / The Tyniec Gradual ms. b.s. I in the light of European tradition. A study of sources*. Doctoral dissertation written under the supervision of the Rev. Professor Jerzy Pikulik, Warsaw 2006, pp. 37-38.

³

Tomasz the copyist used, most probably, the antiphonary of Abbott Mściwój from 1409, which is currently kept at the National Library in Warsaw (ms. b.s., Akc. 10 808). Even though the Staniątki antiphonary is more than 100 years younger than the one from Tyniec, the melodies of the antiphons and responsories exhibit many similarities. Numerous additions and changes included in the Staniątki antiphonary most probably date from a later period. Cf. Father T. Bratkowski, *Officium divinum de tempore...*, p. 73.

⁴ Cf. Ibid, p. 71.

punctuation marks and capital letters.

The antiphon is a brief text sung during the recitation of Divine Office, before or after a psalm or canticle⁵. It plays the role of an introduction to the psalm. It consists of two or three lines, notated in a syllabic manner, and refers to the liturgical period of the given day or the feast falling on that day. There is a wide range of melodies that can be applied to every antiphon. They are scattered in various manuscripts, as if they wanted to compensate for the simplicity of notation with their number. The so-called Great 'O' Antiphons accompanying the Magnificat on the last seven days of Advent are highly interesting examples. They all begin with the interjection 'O' and all have the same melody in the second tone⁶.

The responsories in the present recording are so-called *responsoria prolixa*, which are parts of the *Matutinum* and play the function of a commentary following the readings. In view of the fact that in the Benedictine liturgy each *Nocturne* has four responsories, there is a great profusion of them. The responsory is a response to the Word of God. Each *responsorium prolixum* consists of two different parts: *responsum* and a versicle, after which the *responsum* is repeated either in its entirety or, more often, only in part.⁷ The last responsory of each *Nocturne* contains *Gloria Patri* (deleted during the period of celebrating Lord's Passion). There was also the custom of repeating the entire refrain at the end of the responsory⁸ (example: the responsory *Ecce quomodo moritur iustus*).

The last track on the CD is the *Ave Maria* setting for which the nuns of the Staniątki convent have a special fondness. It is a sequence for the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which after the Council of Trent was not allowed to be sung during Mass. For this reason, the nuns decided to perform it as a pious song. Until recently it was sung by the choir at the start of morning prayers. At present it is sung every day after lunch in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The songs for various liturgical periods are interspersed on the recording by instrumental music which turn our thoughts to the gift of salvation, a gift which is manifested with the same intensity, albeit in a different manner, in all liturgical periods. Year after year God's pedagogy reveals itself in the life of every Christian and the whole Church. Love, which desires salvation for all human beings, is always creative because it has its source in the Father, who in His Son has accomplished the work of salvation for all of us.

May the melodies on this CD help us to enter the realm of silence in which they were created. May this silence help us in making us open to God, our neighbours and ourselves.

Sister Susi Ferfoggia

Female vocal ensemble FLORES ROSARUM was established in 2006 as an expression of the admiration for the unique musical oeuvre of the medieval mystic St Hildegard of Bingen. The ensemble was founded by Sister Susi Ferfoggia, a lecturer at the Institute of Church Music of the John Paul II Papal University and of the Franciszek Cardinal Macharski Archdiocesan Music School in Kraków. Flores Rosarum brings together professional singers specializing in early music and historical performance practice. Its members are: Adrianna Bujak, Magdalena Grzonka, Maria Klich, Anita Pyrek, Katarzyna Śmiałkowska, and Katarzyna Wiwer.

Flores Rosarum presented in the autumn of 2013 a concert performance of one of Hildegard of Bingen's most interesting works, the morality play *Ordo Virtutum*.

The repertoire of Flores Rosarum also includes songs from Llibre Vermell, Codex Calixtinus, and Laudario di Cortona, as well as Gregorian chant (from the graduals in the archives of Wawel Cathedral, the Benedictine Abbey in Staniątki, the Cistercian Abbey in Lubiąż and St Clare Sisters in Kraków and Stary Sącz). The ensemble has performed at many festivals in Poland and abroad, including 2nd Summer Festival 'Muzyka nad Zdrojami' (Szczawnica, 2009), Music for Lent (Lublin, 2012), 7th Festival of Religious Music 'Fide et Amore' (Żory, 2013), 13th Festival 'Banchetto musicale' (Vilnius, 2013), Days of Church Music in the Kraków Archdiocese (Kraków, 2009, 2012, 2014), Days of Organ Music (Kraków, 2014), 39th Festival Music in Old Kraków (Kraków, 2014), 12th Early Music Festival (Szczecin, 2015), and 'Colours of Poland' (Lutomiersk, 2015).

⁵ Song of Mary (*Magnificat*), Song of Zachariah (*Benedictus*) and Song of Simeon (*Nunc dimittis*).

⁶ Cf. Willi Apel, *Il canto gregoriano*, Lucca 1998 (Italian edition), pp. 502, 511.

⁷ Cf. Ibid., pp. 431-432.

⁸ Cf. John Harper, *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Polish edition: *Formy i układ liturgii zachodniej od X do XVIII wieku*, Kraków 2002, p. 103.

At present the ensemble is working on medieval songs from the archives of convents in the southern region of Małopolska.