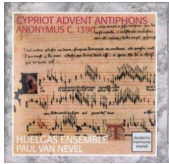


Cypriot Advent Antiphons (Huelgas Ensemble) [2014]

Wpisany przez bluesever

Środa, 09 Grudzień 2015 17:06 -

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1 *Nos Demoramur - O Sapientia Incarnata* 06:42 2 *Pictor Eterne Syderum - O Adonay Domus Israel* 06:34 3 *Cunti Fundent Precamina - O Radix Yesse Splendida* 06:57 4 *Quis Igitur Aperiet - O Clavis David Aurea* 05:58 5 *Veni Splendor Mirabilis - Lucis Eterne Splendor* 08:38 6 *Quis Possit Dignexprimere - O Rex Virtutum Gloria* 05:50 7 *Magne Virtutum Conditor - O Emanuel Rex Noster* 05:32 8 *Tu Nati Nata Suscipe - O Sacra Virgo Virginum* 07:13 9 *Homo Mortalis Firmiter - Hodie Puer Nascitur* 03:45 Performers: Josep Cabré, Marie-Claude Vallin, Katelijne van Laethem (vocal soloists) Willem Bremer, Bart Coen (recorders) René van Laken (rebec, fiddle) Wim Becu, Willy Verdievel, Harry Ries (bass trombones) Jean-Yves Guerry, Anne Mertens, Nele Minten, Godfried van de Vyvere, Rika Wouters (chorus) Paul van Nevel – director Anonymous c.1390 Recorded in the chapel of the Irish Friar-College, Leuven, 17-19 June 1989

From 1189 up to 1492, the isle of Cyprus was a European outpost under French rule. In this period, the island was populated by a huge number of European immigrants, mainly French. The blend of the imported Roman Catholic and the Greek Byzantine religions led to situations as described by Pope Honorius III, who complained in a letter to Alix de Champagne, Reine de Chypre (Queen of Cyprus), that Greek and Latin archbishops lived and worked under the same roof, and that chantres were singing in different languages at the same time!

The French kings of Cyprus under the leadership of the house of Lusignan installed a feudal structure in western fashion on the island, and the French cultural pattern was imposed upon the natives. Cyprus was visited by Kings, diplomats, artists and crusaders. The French gothic style was introduced in the field of architecture. In 1208, the rebuilding of Santa Sophia in Nicosia started: the choir is identical to that of Notre-Dame in Paris. The Kolossi, Kantara, Buffavento and Dieudamour castles were built in the European mode. The Limassol bastion is a copy of the one at Foix; the St.-Georges des-Lantins church in Famagusta and the church of La Sainte Chapelle in Paris are twins.

The pinnacle of cultural and musical prosperity lasted from 1359 to 1432. Several sovereigns turned this period into a golden era for Cyprus.

Pierre I de Lusignan went down in history as a kind of "sun king" of the island. He was famous mainly for his extensive travels in Europe. He was a great lover of the arts and promoted French music in Cyprus after he had visited the major European musical centers. None other than Guillaume de Machaut wrote an 8,000-line chronicle in honor of Pierre de Lusignan: "La Prise d'Alexandrie". Wherever the Cypriot royal household arrived on its European journey, it was received in great honor.

The musicians of the Cypriot court also created a furor during this journey. When the Cypriot entourage visited Charles V at Reims, the latter gained such a high opinion of the royal musicians that he paid 80 gold Francs "... pur les minestriers du roi de Chypre".

During the reign of Pierre II (1369-1382), the influence of the French *ars nova* on Cypriot music was incontestable. Many French musicians joined the royal chapel, and Cypriot music gradually drifted toward *ars subtilior*. The last sovereign important for Cypriot music was Janus I of Lusignan. This king had not only the most luxurious, but also the most turbulent reign. Janus was constantly at war with the Saracens, the Genoese and the Venetians. However he took advantage of every opportunity to present the numerous European visitors to his court with deafening and blinding splendor.

Khbil Dhabeir, the chronicler of Sultan Al-Malec-al-Ascharf Barsebai, describes the palace of Janus as follows: "... furthermore, the palace had sumptuous beds and extraordinarily tasteful and expensive furniture. Splendid paintings and gold and silver crosses hung on the walls. However, my master mainly admired a huge organ, which produced the most wonderful sounds when the keys were touched."

Notwithstanding, the reign of Janus ushers in the decay of French rule in Cyprus. But the modern music-lover owes King Janus a debt of gratitude, for when his daughter Anna married Count Louis of Geneva, her dowry included a manuscript that remains the only source of Cypriot music.

This Cypriot manuscript is now at the Biblioteca Nazionale in Turin under the signature Ms. J. 11.9. The manuscript contains liturgical music for the office and mass, polyphonic Glorias and Credo, motets and secular music.

The polyphonic "O"-Antiphons are part of the third section, the 41 motets in the French style. The cycle of nine antiphons (there are actually 8 antiphons and a final motet) is meant for four voices, in which the duplum (second voice) and triplum (first voice) have different texts and the contratenor and the tenor are instrumental parts without texts, consisting mainly of ligatures.

The "O"-Antiphons are sung at vespers during the week before Christmas, as an antiphon to the Magnificat. They are called "O"-Antiphons as they all start with the acclamation "O". Initially, the Gregorian cycle consisted of seven "O"-Antiphons, of which the first antiphon, "O sapientia", was sung at vespers on December 17th, the second, "O Adonay", on December 18th, and so on, until the last antiphon, "O Emmanuel", was performed on December 23th. To this cycle the late Middle Ages added an antiphon that was sung on December 24th. This antiphon is mainly devoted to the Virgin Mary as a medium for the advent of Christ; it was probably added in response to the enormously popular cult of the Virgin. As a rule this antiphon was the popular "O Virgo Virginum", which is the Cypriot cycle's eighth motet in a troped form.

However, the Cypriot cycle contains a local deviation: the series ends with a ninth motet, which fully connects with the previous eight motets as far as tonality and rhythmic order are concerned. Regarding lyrics and musical expression, this antiphon represents the culmination and the climax of the cycle. The motet was sung on Christmas Day and it contrasts with the supplicatory tone of the preceding antiphons. The text has a triumphant air, although it does not start with the typical acclamation "O".

All the texts of this cycle are strongly troped. The ones of the triplum parts are extensions of the liturgical antiphon texts. The duplum texts deviate more sharply from the original Gregorian version, and paraphrase the idea of the coming of Christ. Tropes start as early as the opening words of the triplum texts, to such an extent that the original words can be retraced only with great difficulty. In the fifth motet, "Lucis eterne", even the characteristic "O" declamation has disappeared.

The underlying text must be considered to be very special. The words are exclusively a function of the polyphonic autonomy and triplum. It is used in a pointillistic way and supports the melodic and rhythmic articulation. The intelligibility of the text is of secondary importance; indeed, the

text is to a great extent rendered unintelligible, since the duplum and triplum have different texts at the same time. The course of the text is always subject to the most capricious rhythmic evolutions and accentuations, so that the "playing with sounds", the phonetic expression, dominates clarity and recitation. In this fashion, the syllables of one word are often separated by breaks. The end of a sentence in the text doesn't always coincide with the end of a musical sentence at all. In this manner, a new *talea* (rhythmic period) often happens to coincide with the last word (or even syllable) of the previous sentence. Many *hoquetus*-figures don't make use of *melismas* either, but place another syllable on each note instead. It would be a denial of the perfect notation of this manuscript without ambiguity and with a very consequent application of the character of the *ars subtilior* aesthetics, to try and make the underlying text conform more to "*seconda prattica*" rules or with Renaissance comprehension of written music. Indeed, the central idea of the Cypriot "O"-Antiphons' style of composition is the ideal of the most extreme polyphony, with all its consequences. Every voice of the polyphonic texture is completely independent in range and has its own autonomous profile. By using syncopation, color, alteration, imperfection and proportions, stresses never coincide in the duplum and triplum regularly.

The complex rhythmic polyphony of the duplum and triplum contrast with the rhythmic properties of contratenor and tenor that mostly evolve in a perfect mode and represent another tempo order. These voices evolve much more slowly. Consequently, an enormous space emerges between both polyphonic "blocks": the duplum and triplum on the one hand and the tenor and contratenor on the other. This implies consequences on a vertical level as well. False relations and unresolved dissonances originate mainly between the two different groups, and rarely between the voices of the same group.

Another striking characteristic of these motets is the use of the isorhythmic principle, applied in all the works of the cycle without exception. Moreover, this principle is applied in all parts, and in most cases the *Talea* are equally long in all parts. This provides the motets with a very well-organized structure. As far as modality is concerned, the cycle of nine "O"-Antiphons is structured in pairs. Motets 1 and 2 are written in the Dorian mode; motets 3 and 4 are in the Lydian mode; 5 and 6 are Hypolydian, whereas 7 and 8 are as composed in the Hypomixolydian mode. The local appendix, the Christmas antiphon, returns to the mode of the first motets.

The Cypriot Advent cycle can be considered one of the musical highlights of an era in which all attention was focused on the exuberant use of all possible rhythmicpolyphonic structures. For the interpretation of this *ars subtilior* music, the Huelgas Ensemble kept as close as possible to the principles of the detailed realisation of the polyphony. ---mymusicbase.ru

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