

## Brumel - Missa Et Ecce Terrae Motus (1990)

Wpisany przez bluesever

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*Kyrie 1 Kyrie Eleison 1:40 2 Christe Eleison 2:45 3 Kyrie Eleison 1:40 - 4 Gloria 10:26  
5 Credo 10:50 Sanctus 6 Sanctus 3:14 7 Pleni Sunt Caeli (8-pt.) 1:47 8 Hosanna  
2:23 9 Benedictus (8-pt.) 3:08 10 Hosanna 2:27 Agnus Dei  
11 Agnus Dei I 1:46 12 Agnus Dei II (6-pt.) 3:09 13 Agnus Dei III 1:53 - 14 Sequentia  
"Dies Irae, Dies Illa" 19:11*

Huelgas Ensemble Alto Vocals – Claudio Cavina (tracks: 14) Bass Vocals – Kees Jan de Koning, Lieven de Roo, Willem Ceuleers Soprano Vocals – Carol Schlaikjer, Katelijne van Laethem, Marie Claude Vallin Tenor Vocals – Angus Smith, Ibo van Ingen, John Dudley, Marius van Altena, Otto Rastbichler, Stéphane van Dijck Trombone [Alto] – Symen van Mechelen (tracks: 14) Trombone [Bass] – Wim Becu (tracks: 14) Trombone [Tenor] – Cas Gevers (tracks: 14), Harry Ries (tracks: 14) Paul Van Nevel - conductor Recorded in the Chapel of the Irish College, Leuven, Belgium, May 1990.

Antoine Brumel (c1460–1512/13) is famous for one piece, and otherwise little known and rarely performed today. His *Missa Et ecce terrae motus*, alias the 'Earthquake' Mass, is justly fêted due to its status as the first twelve-voice Mass-setting, and is notable for its vitality of rhythm as well as its almost obsessive repetition of small motivic cells. But the rest of his output is poorly represented in the recording catalogues. His compositions are quite unlike those of his contemporaries in the way in which he handles voices: at times he appears to be conceptualizing a vocal ensemble as a primarily rhythmic entity, creating wild syncopations and using the same figure in different relationships to the underlying tactus so that the straightforward pulse is broken up with cross-rhythms. This is not to say that he lacks lyricism: the *Agnus Dei* of the *Missa de beata virgine* and the motet *Beata es, Maria*, for example, achieve an inward spirituality to equal any of his contemporaries.

Like most church musicians of his generation, Brumel was employed primarily as a singer, though he latterly became a master of choristers and was also a priest. Possibly from the village of Brunelles near Chartres, he is known to have held positions, from 1483 onwards, at the

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cathedrals of Chartres, Laon, and Notre-Dame de Paris (1498–1500, when he resigned after an administrative dispute). He also worked in Geneva, at the Savoyard court in Chambéry, and from 1505 at Ferrara in Northern Italy, where he was paid the substantial sum of 100 ducats per annum. After the Ferrarese chapel was disbanded in 1510 he remained in Italy and appears to have resided in Mantua. It is possible that he was present at the coronation of Pope Leo X in 1513, but the account is not contemporaneous and he may already have died by this point.  
---Stephen Rice, hyperion-records.co.uk

Thomas Morley wrote in 1597 that only Brumel and Josquin were able to teach one about the older canonic techniques of the composers of the *Prima Prattica*. Even Orlando Lassus performed the Missa 'Et ecce terrae motus' over fifty years after Brumel's death, in an obviously sign of great admiration. This work is written in 12 parts and has a tremendous immediacy of appeal.

This is the world premier recording that produced such a stir when it appeared that it generated a lot of 'me too' recordings by the likes of the Tallis Scholars. Due to subtle coloring of the vocal tone with a sound more from the throat and chest, Nevel's approach to this music is richer hued and differentiated than that of the bright, and homogeneous sounding English choral groups, who insist on always only ever using a head voice. The resultant warmth is for me a great relief from the icy puritanical English sound. Nevel's general approach is as always deeply poetic and meditative in a way that is always much more immediately communicative than icy gloss.

Mary Berry writes an unusually honest review in Gramophone magazine that is well worth quoting:

"The Tallis Scholars sing a semitone higher than the written pitch, which is that chosen by the Huelgas Ensemble. Van Nevel cultivates a rich reedy vocal quality and the lower pitch has the advantage of encouraging deeper and darker sonorities; though the sound is more opaque, lacking the clarity of The Tallis Scholars."

It should be mentioned that practice of transposing like this is perfectly in keeping with period practice and neither group is being more 'historically accurate' in this case. However, I always

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feel that the darker, more chiaroscuro feel of the Huelgas sonority reminds me of the feel of a lot of contemporary painters who prefer a far more somber coloring, whereas the Tallis Scholars seem to have a bright clean texture more like a Picasso or Kandinsky. Then again Peter Phillips has even gone so far as to deny that the Tallis Scholars are even an early music choir - he just wants the music to sound like he thinks it should, which is based on an ideal he learnt while at Cambridge.

Mary Berry goes on:

"Where the two choirs differ most, however, is in the last movement, the Agnus Dei. The Munich source, used by both choirs, is deficient at this point and some reconstruction is needed. Van Nevel has supplied an ingenious canonic solution to the first (and third) Agnus Dei, with its "virtuosic and turbulent" progression of mensural changes. He has, moreover, replaced the missing Agnus Dei II by a section from an independent Danish source, a section rejected by Peter Phillips and Francis Knights on the grounds that it was scored for six voices only and voices using different ranges from those in the rest of the Mass. The net result is that the two choirs present what amounts to two completely different final movements."

Quite correctly, Van Nevel - whose version might be preferred on this ground alone - has carried out the more ingenious and thoroughly researched reconstruction of the missing parts.

However, the most telling comment of all by Mary Berry in her comparison of the Huelgas and Tallis Scholar Brumel recordings is this: "There is an infectious warmth and sense of involvement in the singing of the Belgian group". While French critics tend to carry on a bit (too much sometimes) in criticizing the Tallis Scholars for their 'perfection glacée' (icy perfection), this is about as close an admission as you would ever get from an English critic that the Huelgas Ensemble have a far warmer and communicative sound. Interestingly all of these comments by her come from a review of the Tallis Scholar's recording - yet she still ends up writing more about the Huelgas Ensemble than the Tallis Scholars!

The accompanying Sequentia 'Dies irae' is also a fascinating work although much darker and medieval in feel and makes a worthy filler for this superb CD. ---Sator, amazon.com

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