

## IBERIAN POLYCHORALITIES 1590-1650

Pedagogical project with performance practice, seminar, workshop and recording. March 2024  
Scientific and artistic coordination : Dr. Tiago Simas Freire (tiago.freire@cnsmd-lyon.fr)

CNSMD Lyon [Early Music, Choir conducting]  
University of Coimbra  
University of Valladolid

*In collaboration with*

Maitrise de la Cathédrale Saint Jean de Lyon  
University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz

[Bridging Musical Heritage](#) project with the support of Creative Europe

### **Iberian polychoralities 1590-1650** : An off-the-beaten-track educational project

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century Iberian Peninsula, polyphony with several choirs (polychorality) was the standard for major liturgical celebrations. Music divided into two, three and four choirs was a response to the Tridentine requirement for clarity of discourse, as well as a need to seduce and charm the listener. In reality, polychoral polyphony developed through the expansion of the application of polyphony to the monodic tradition and through the projection of techniques for alternating pairs of voices, used since the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, onto ensembles of eight, twelve, sixteen or even more voices.

The importance of polychorality in Portugal can be observed in the catalogue of King João IV's music library (1649) where two-thirds of the composers with polychoral liturgical works in the catalogue present compositions for twelve or more voices. It was indeed the most popular compositional and stylistic technique in the peninsula, disseminated in both Latin and vernacular genres, yet little studied and performed today.

Within polychorality, music for 2 choirs is undoubtedly the most widely represented, with works for more choirs having an extraordinary character, yet remaining the most widely unknown. Valuing the concentration of energies on this major project, we decided to focus on unpublished Iberian musical sources exclusively for 3 and 4 choirs, which are emblematic of a spectacular polychorality. The sources are from some of the peninsula's richest musical archives: Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de El Escorial and Valladolid Cathedral, in Spain, and the Library of the University of Coimbra in Portugal.

In Escorial and Valladolid, we encounter both local and international repertoires, from which we have selected two works by two musicians employed by the Kingdom of Castile: a three-choir motet by the Flemish composer Philippe Rogier (1561-1596), transcribed and studied by Soterraña Aguire Rincón (2024), and a four-choir mass by the Portuguese composer Alfonso Vaz de Acosta (? - 1660), transcribed and studied by Pablo Ballesteros Valladolid (2018).

In Coimbra, a collection of mid-17<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts - known as *Cartapácios* - is one of the rare Portuguese manuscript sources with works in triple and quadruple choir. We have selected from this collection two anonymous psalms (*Dixit Dominus* and *Beati omnes*) and a *vilancico* dating from between 1645 and 1655 from the Monastery of Santa Cruz. The *Dixit Dominus* is the first psalm for all vespers services and the *Beati omnes* is the specific psalm for *Corpus Christi* vespers. The *vilancico* is a *vilancico de negro*, an emblematic Christmas genre, in which four choirs represent four nations: Angola, São Tomé, Cape Verde and Mozambique. We performed the last two sections of this *vilancico* (*resposta* and *copla*), announced in the source as 'Dance of the Blacks', where, after the individual entrance of each choir/region, the four choirs/regions come together to celebrate with dancing and singing before the Infant Jesus.

The plainchant settings during Acosta's Mass allow the entire text of the Ordinary of the Mass to be set to music, and are selected from the formulas dedicated to the great liturgical feasts (*In Duplicibus Maioribus* or *In duplicibus Solemnibus*), taken from Salamanca's *Missale Romanum* (1588) and the treatise *Arte de canto llano* by Francisco de Montanos and Sebastián López de Velasco from Zaragoza (1648).

This project involves studying, transcribing, performing and recording unpublished Iberian polychoral musical sources, with the aim of contributing to a better understanding of these little-known repertoires. It forms part of the '[Bridging Musical Heritage](#)' project supported by Creative Europe, bringing together researchers from the Universities of Coimbra and Valladolid, and musicians from the [Capella Sanctae Crucis](#), in partnership with the CNSMDL, the Maitrise de la Cathédrale Saint Jean de Lyon, the Grands Concerts de Lyon de la Chapelle de la Trinité and with the support of Bullukian Foundation.

The strengths of Lyon's CNSMD Early Music and Choir Conducting departments will help to put this into practice as part of an educational project in which the students, along with the choir from Lyons Cathedral, were able to work closely with unpublished musical sources and the researchers who handle and study them, in a project of rare scientific, artistic and musical scope. In addition, with the support of the University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz, thanks to an exchange of two students (playing shawm and dulcian), we will be able to complete the project's instrumental forces to fill out the richest and typically Iberian workforce of the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

PROGRAMME

<i>Entrada 1ª tom</i>	organ	Dom Jorge (c.1610)	P-Cug MJ1, f. 45v
<i>Missa - KYRIE</i>	12v in 4 choirs	Alfonso Vaz de Acosta (? - 1660)	E-E 83-3(1)
<i>Dixit Dominus</i>	15v in 4 choirs	Anonymous (c.1643)	P-Cug MM228, f. 14v-21
<i>Missa - GLORIA</i>	12v in 4 choirs	Alfonso Vaz de Acosta (? - 1660)	E-E 83-3(1)
<i>Verso Inexito</i>	strings	Anonymous (milieu XVII <sup>e</sup> s.)	P-Cug MM52, ff. 21v-22v
<i>Beati omnes</i>	12v in 3 choirs	Anonymous (c.1646)	P-Cug MM239, f. 1-4
<i>Missa - CREDO</i>	12v in 4 choirs	Alfonso Vaz de Acosta (? - 1660)	E-E 83-3(1)
<i>Domine Dominus noster</i>	12v in 3 choirs	Philippe Rogier (c.1561 - 1598)	E-VA: Papeles sueltos 70/331
<i>Obra a 5</i>	Strings and winds	Anonymous (milieu XVII <sup>e</sup> s.)	P-Cug MM236, ff. 270-271
<i>Missa - SANCTUS</i>	12v à 4 choirs	Alfonso Vaz de Acosta (? - 1660)	E-E 83-3(1)
<i>Missa - AGNUS DEI</i>	12v à 4 choirs	Alfonso Vaz de Acosta (? - 1660)	E-E 83-3(1)
<i>Concertado a 4</i>	strings	Gabriel de São João (? - 1658)	P-Cug MM236 f. 253
<i>Dança dos Negros</i>	16v in 4 choirs	Anonymous (c.1651)	P-Cug MM236, ff. 14-25

**musical, Artistic and Scientific director**

Tiago Simas Freire

**singers from CNSMDL's Early Music Department**

Joséphine Solus, Adèle Huber, Laudine Bignonet, Anne Delafosse | soprano  
Guillaume Ribler, Marie Brendle, Brice Claviez-Homber | alto  
Raphaël Bougy | tenor

**singers from CNSMDL's Choir conducting Department**

Éloïse Magat | mezzo  
Marius Thiault, Augustin Dessarps | tenor  
Samuel Trias, Nicolas Forin, Simon Heberlé, Jean Fortunier-Cateland | bass

**instruments from CNSMDL and University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz**

Clara Sidhoum | violin  
Noé Bécaus, Sacha Levy, José Miguel Huamani Torre | viol  
Loyal Ramadan | violone  
Teddy Danjean, Sushaant Jaccard | cornett  
Leona Lenger | shawm  
Solveig Rousse | sackbut  
Johanna Unterpertinger | dulcian  
Armance Merle, Rose Chevrier, Esther Bry, Manon Girard | recorder  
Martin Billé, Pierre-Baptiste Brioude | theorbo and guitar  
Emilie Pagat-Vergne, Carla Roy | harpe  
Victor Chollat-Namy, Dimitrij Gilbert | harpsichord  
François Guyot, Julien Pizzichemi | organ

**choir of Lyon's Saint John's Cathedral (prepared by Simon Heberlé)**

Reine Martineu, Bérénice Feck, Cléopée Dupuis-Testenoire, Salomé Vignon | soprano  
Guilhem de Saint-George, Hélène Chavasse, François Plus | alto  
Timoléon de Vivies, Gaspard Michaud, Édouard Mounier de Verrot, Bosco Tampé, Jean Fernet | tenor  
Marcel Bousquet, Auguste de Préneuf, Paul Gaucher, Louis Maurice, Augustin Rapidy | bass

**music editions**

Maria Soterraña Aguirre Rincon, Pablo Ballesteros Valladolid, Paulo Estudante, Tiago Simas Freire

**scientific board**

José Abreu, Maria Soterraña Aguirre Rincon, Paulo Estudante, Tiago Simas Freire

**recording engineer**

Camille Frachet

**digital editing**

Camille Frachet, Tiago Simas Freire

**executive production and logistics**

Andrada-Erika Badiu, Virginie Brunet, Océane Demeure, Juliette Mabilais, Vanessa Pires

**pedagogical support**

Sara Águeda Martín, Anne Delafosse

**stage management**

Eric Soldevilla

**administrative production**

Juliette Mabilais

**partners**

Universidade de Coimbra, Universidad de Valladolid, Artway, Capella Sanctae Crucis, CNSMD Lyon, Maîtrise de la Primatiale Saint Jean de Lyon, Grands Concerts de Lyon

**recording at**

CNSMD de Lyon, Salle Varèse, 16-17/03/2024

**sponsors**

Creative Europe, Fondation Bullukian, Universidade de Coimbra, Centro de Estudos Clássicos e Humanísticos