

CAPELLA SANCTAE CRUCIS

director Tiago Simas Freire

LA ZAGALA MAS HERMOSA

Mass for the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

(Coimbra, Portugal, 8th September 1646)

Bridging

Musical

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FROM THE PAST

Heritage

24 February 2024 19h30 ● Centro Cultural Miguel Delibes
Valladolid, Spain

The division between the sacred and secular spheres in Iberian musical practice is often difficult to grasp. An extraordinary example of this permeability between Latin and vernacular repertoires is a unpublished Parody Mass based upon the music of the Tono humano "La Zagala Mas Hermosa" for the day of the Nativity of the Virgin. The title in the source reads 8 setembro 1646 - Missa de Nossa Senhora da Natividade - La zagala mas hermosa - A9. 3 coros. The most beautiful shepherdess described in the secular vernacular work thus becomes the figure of the Virgin Mary in the liturgical Latin work.

With this fascinating crossroads of repertoires and natures as its starting point, the programme is built according to the great diversity of genres and styles characteristic of the religious ceremonies of the Monastery of Santa Cruz, particularly on the occasion of the major feasts whose liturgy seems to be the stage for some truly spectacular performances, attracting and seducing large numbers of assemblies.

Alternating with the ordinarium of the Mass – Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei (and a part of the proprium – the Alleluia – which is also set to music in the source) –, we present vilancicos, tonos and motets that trace the life of the Virgin Mary, evoking her joys and her sorrows – a shepherdess to become Queen of heaven and earth.

We begin with a motet in two parts, the first of which is a praise of the beloved ("Surge, propera amica mea") from the Song of Songs, and the second which specifically celebrates the birth of the Virgin Mary ("Hodie nata est virgo Maria"). This motet by an anonymous author (incertus autor) was printed by Tielman Susato in Antwerp in 1546 and is copied in open-score in a manuscript from the Monastery of Santa Cruz in Coimbra. This is followed by an evocation of Mary's childhood in the tono humano "La zagala mas hermosa", the origin of the parody Mass. In this tono, the beauty of the loveliest shepherdess is described as very dangerous, as all those who behold her risk death. We celebrate the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary with the prayer "Ave Maria gratia plena", proclaimed by his cousin Saint Elizabeth, by Pedro de Cristo, the unavoidable chapel master of the monastery of Santa Cruz. The joy of the Nativity of Jesus is commemorated with the vilancico de negro "Ola toro zente pleta", in which we find probably one of the oldest uses of the word "samba" evoking the festive season.

We reflect over the pain of the flight into Egypt, imagining Mary carrying her fragile newborn in her arms, with the vilancico Ai dina dina dana, like a gentle lullaby describing the divine and human natures of the infant Jesus. The suffering and the death of Jesus, observed by his helpless mother, are illustrated in the motet “Stabat mater dolorosa” by Pedro de Cristo. And the joy of Jesus’ resurrection is invoked with “Regina caeli”, the Marian antiphon sung on 8 September. And finally, the Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven and Earth is set to music with the tono “Las zagalas del valle”, converted into tono ao divino. We use this secular work – originally celebrating the city of Braga – to transform it into a devotional work, following one of the most frequent historical procedures for adapting texts to the divine – the text “Viva Braga!” becomes “Viva Maria!”. And so, the Capella Sanctae Crucis proposes to illustrate the crowning of the Virgin, a major religious event, celebrated not by angels in heaven but by shepherds on earth, Mary’s companions from the beginning, blending the sacred, the secular and the mythological – perfectly in harmony with 17th century humanism.

The musical sources presented here are preserved exclusively in the General Library of the University of Coimbra, Portugal, and come from the Monastery of Santa Cruz de Coimbra, which is responsible for one of the most important musical collections in Europe. Santa Cruz, the mother house of the Order of Canons Regular of Saint Augustine and an important centre of political and cultural influence since the founding of the Kingdom of Portugal in the 12th century, developed an intense musical activity, particularly in the 16th and 17th centuries. This impressive collection, comprising dozens of manuscripts and printed works, paves the way for the rediscovery of this flourishing monastic institution and, to a certain extent, of the Portuguese musical panorama. These sources include 16 manuscripts, known as Cartapácios, which provide extraordinary evidence of musical activity in the 17th century, including Latin polyphony, vernacular pieces and instrumental music.

The Mass presented here can be found in cartapácio MM234, the Marian antiphon in cartapácio MM51 and the vilancicos in cartapácios MM229, MM232, MM234 and MM239. These mid-17th century cartapácios also contain copies of musical works dating

back to the 16th century, which may testify to the consistency of the performance of earlier repertoires, which could be the case of Pedro de Cristo, one of the most emblematic musicians of the congregation.

The music from Coimbra’s Cartapácios shows great formal freedom, with a wide range of vocal textures, from accompanied monody to polychorality. It thus fits perfectly into the Iberian musical taste of the 17th century.

PROGRAMME

Nativity of the Virgin Mary (motet)	<i>Surge, propera amica mea Hodie nata est virgo Maria (Anonyme, 1546)</i>	A5	BGUC MM48 f. 10v-12
Mary’s childhood (tono humano)	<i>La zagala mas hermosa (Anonyme, 1646)</i>	A4	BGUC MM234, ff. 6v-7
MISSA - KYRIE	<i>Kyrie “La zagala mas hermosa” (Anonyme, 1646)</i>	A9	BGUC MM234, ff. 1-15
Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth (motet)	<i>Ave Maria gratia plena (Pedro de Cristo, c.1550-1618)</i>	A8	BGUC MM18, ff. 95v-97
MISSA - GLORIA	<i>Gloria “La zagala mas hermosa” (Anonyme, 1646)</i>	A9	BGUC MM234, ff. 39-41v
Nativity of Jesus (vilancico)	<i>Ola toro zente pleia (Anonyme, 1651)</i>	A7	BGUC MM232 ff. 37v -39
MISSA - ALLELUIA	<i>Alleluia (Anonyme, 1646)</i>	A9	BGUC MM234, ff. 41v-42, 48-48v
Flight into Egypt (vilancico)	<i>Ai dina dina dana (Anonyme, 1646)</i>	A7	BGUC MM239, f. 48v, 21v
MISSA - CREDO	<i>Credo “La zagala mas hermosa” (Anonyme, 1646)</i>	A9	BGUC MM234, ff. 42v-48v
Suffering and death of Jesus (motete)	<i>Stabat mater dolorosa (Pedro de Cristo, c.1550-1618)</i>	A4	BGUC MM33, ff. 6v-7; MM53, ff. 10v-11
MISSA - SANCTUS	<i>Sanctus “La zagala mas hermosa” (Anonyme, 1646)</i>	A9	BGUC MM234, ff. 49-50
Resurrection of Jesus (Marian antiphon)	<i>Regina caeli (Anonyme, 1650)</i>	A8	BGUC MM51, ff. 33v-34v
MISSA - AGNUS DEI	<i>Agnus Dei “La zagala mas hermosa” (Anonyme, 1646)</i>	A9	BGUC MM234 ff. 50v-51v
Coronation of Mary (tono [ao divino])	<i>Las zagalas del valle (Anonyme, 1646)</i>	A8	BGUC MM229, ff. 20-22

Anonymous
Motet *Surge, propra amica mea* (4vv) (1546) '
(P-Cug M.M. 48, ff. 10v-12r)

Anonymous
Tomo *La zagala mas hermosa* (4vv) (c.1646) '
(P-Cug M.M. 234, ff. 6v-7r)

Anonymous
Missa *La zagala mas hermosa* (9vv) (1646) '
(P-Cug M.M. 234, ff. 1r-15r)
Kyrie

Pedro de Cristo (c. 1550-1618)
Motete *Ave Maria gratia plena* (8vv) (c.1610) '
(P-Cug M.M. 18, ff. 95r-97v)

Anonymous
Missa *La zagala mas hermosa* (9vv) (1646) '
(P-Cug M.M. 234, ff. 39r-41v)
Gloria

Anonymous
Villancico *Ola toro zente pleta* (7vv) (c.1651) '
(P-Cug M.M. 232, ff. 37v-39r)

Anonymous
Missa *La zagala mas hermosa* (9vv) (1646) '
(P-Cug M.M. 234, ff. 41v-42r and 48r-48v)
Alleluja

SUNG TEXTS

Arise, my love,
my fair one, and come,
Lo, now the winter is past,
the rains are over and gone.
Flowers have sprung up in our land,
the time of pruning is come.

On this day the Virgin Mary was born
of the house of David,
through whom the saviour of the world
appeared to believers.

[Romance]
The loveliest shepherdess
who brought from her sorrows
admiration to the eyes
and envy to beauty.

[Estrillo]
Shepherds,
if you want life don't look at her
for then you will die,
in seeing such a beautiful murderer.

Anonymous
Villancico *Ai dina dina dana* (7vv) (1646) '
(P-Cug M.M. 239, ff. 48v and 21v)

Anonymous
Missa *La zagala mas hermosa* (9vv) (1646) '
(P-Cug M.M. 234, ff. 42v-48v)

Pedro de Cristo
Motet *Stabat Mater dolorosa* (4vv) (c.1580) '
(P-Cug M.M. 33, ff. 6v-7r; y P-Cug
M.M. 53, ff. 10v-11r)

Anonymous
Missa *La zagala mas hermosa* (9vv) (1646) '
(P-Cug M.M. 234, ff. 49r-50r)
Sanctus

Anonymous
Marian Antiphon *Regina caeli* (8vv) (1650) '
(P-Cug M.M. 51, ff. 33v-34v)

Anonymous
Missa *La zagala mas hermosa* (9vv) (1646) '
(P-Cug M.M. 234, ff. 50v-51v)
Agnus Dei

Anonymous
Tono [al divino] *Las zagalas del valle* (8vv) (1646) '
(P-Cug M.M. 229, ff. 20r-22r)

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee;
blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

Glory be to God on high,
and on earth peace, good will towards men.
We praise thee, we bless thee,
we worship thee, we glorify thee,
we give thanks to thee for thy great glory.
O Lord God, heavenly King,
God the Father Almighty.
O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ.
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,

that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.
Thou that sittest at the right hand of
God the Father,
have mercy upon us.
For thou only art holy,
thou only art the Lord,
thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost,
art most high in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

Look all black people
that are in this land,
Let us go with revelry
make a feast at the nativity scene.

Who demanded the gathering
of the black people from this land?
Who demanded it?
With revelry of Angola
we will go to sing in Bethlehem,
Because a white person from above
said that he was born.

[Resposta]
Y le le le, y samba
y le le le le, y samba
because he was born
y lo lo la, y le ha ha ha
because he is born
Y ha ha ha, with cold he shivers
samba, samba, with cold he shivers
y samba, and with love ablaze
Y le le le, because he was born.

[Volta]
Beautiful boy
laid on the straw,
he looks at us
as if he is in love.

My little one
shivers with cold.
Your heart today
is burning from inside.
Look, don't cry
my little one.
Turn your face
and you will see the little black people.

And look at that feast,
don't distrust the black people,
because if the color is black,
my soul is white.

Be quiet my life,
Look, don't cry,
otherwise I will call the bogyman
to eat you.

Hallelujah.
On this day was born Mary,
Queen of heaven,
she who gave birth to the Christ,
incarnate from her substance.
Hallelujah.

Oh dina dina dana,
The heavens rejoice and the earth dances.
Oh dina dina dana,
for good, the Lady raises this Prince.
Oh dina dina dana,
The whole world is already hopeful.
Oh dina dina dana,
our old Adam is resurrected today.
Oh dina dina dana,
For good, the sun wants to sleep in the straw.
Oh dina dina dana,
I'm to blame for the boy not playing.
So help me God,
if night is day,
Oh, let the bells ring
and the boy will live.

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord,
Jesus Christ,
Only begotten Son of God,
Begotten of his Father before all worlds.
God of God, light of light,
Very God of very God.

Begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father;
by whom all things were made.
Who for us men
and for our salvation
came down from heaven.
And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost
of the Virgin Mary:
And was made man.
And was crucified also for us under Pontius
Pilate:
suffered, and was buried.
And the third day He rose again
according to the scriptures.
And ascended into heaven,
and sitteth at the right hand of the Father
And He shall come again
with glory to judge the living and the dead:
His kingdom shall have no end.

And [I believe in] the Holy Ghost,
Lord and giver of life:
Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son.
Who with the Father and Son
together is worshipped and glorified:
Who spake by the Prophets.

And in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
I acknowledge one baptism
for the remission of sins.
And I look for the resurrection of the dead
And the life of the world to come.
Amen.

The grieving Mother
stood weeping beside the cross
where her Son was hanging.

Through her weeping soul,
compassionate and grieving,
a sword passed.

Holy, holy, holy
Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he that cometh
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Queen of Heaven, rejoice,
Hallelujah.
For He whom you were worthy to bear,
Hallelujah. Has risen, as He said,
Hallelujah.
Pray for us to God,
Hallelujah.

Duration: 65'

Transcriptions from the archives of the General Library of the University of Coimbra.

Transcriptions:

- (1) Tiago Simas Freire (2017-2023)
- (2) Luís Toscano (2018)
- (3) Manuela Lopes (2015)
- (4) Owen Rees (1998)
- (5) Hugo Sanches (2018) / Tiago Simas Freire (2023)

This concert by Capella Sanctae Crucis is part of the "Bridging Musical Heritage" project, hosted by the University of Coimbra and sponsored by the European Union (Creative Europe 2021 Programme).

More information at bridgingmusicalheritage.com

Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.

Go, it is the dismissal.
Thanks be to God.

[Romance]
The shepherdesses of the valley,
the shepherds of the mountains,
the nymphs of the forests,
the goddesses of the fountains,

[Estrillillo]
jump, dance and play,
jingle and sing joyfully. Mountain women,
shepherds,
goddesses of the fountains,
with beautiful crowns
and various flowers
of a thousand inventions
adorning their foreheads,
repeat loudly:
Long live Mary!

CAPELLA SANCTAE CRUCIS is a laboratory of study and performance focused on the Portuguese polyphony of the 16 and 17 centuries, created by Tiago Simas Freire in 2012. Part of the vast multidisciplinary project *Mundos e Fundos* of the Centre for Classical and Humanistic Studies of the University of Coimbra (CECH-UC), it builds bridges connecting research and musical practice, seeking a sound result that revives the value of Portuguese musical heritage that remains little known.

It owes its name to the musical chapel of the Monastery of Santa Cruz in Coimbra, centre of an extraordinary artistic activity, namely in the 16 and 17 centuries, from where the musical sources that constitute the main study objects come from.

The passions that drive the team are evident: the emotion of maximum proximity to the sources; constant questioning and experimentalism; the admiration of the harmony of the spheres represented by Renaissance music; the enthusiasm for the emotional metamorphoses of early Baroque music; and the ambition to discover Portuguese repertoires that are little known to musicians and the general public.

Working mostly on unpublished manuscripts preserved in the General Library of University of Coimbra, the programmes are conceived to recreate the richness of the work's original context. Faithful to a philosophical approach, historically and culturally formed beyond what is expressed in the sources, the interpretation challenges and explores sound texture and balance, discourse and phrasing, instrumentation, and ornamentation. Present-day Man is thus transported, through aesthetic experience, to a widening of his imaginary, past, present, and future.

It performs in several international festivals and its projects are hosted in artistic residencies at CCR de Ambronnay (EEEmerging), Riga's Mazā Gilde, Pavia Barrocca Festival, Cité de la Voix de Vézelay, Royaumont Foundation, CNCM Voce de Pigna and University of Coimbra, and receive sponsorships by Bullukian Foundation, Renaud Foundation, BCP bank, Centre National de Musique, DRAC Rhône Alpes, Caixa Cultura Programme, Direção Geral das Artes and Creative Europe.

After the release of its first album "Zuguambé" by Harmonia Mundi, CAPELLA SANCTÆ CRUCIS is behind the creation of a series of CD-books "Mundos e Fundos" in a partnership between the University of Coimbra and Artway Records, devoted to the rediscovery of Portuguese musical heritage.

More than an ensemble, it is a project to rescue a very rich and little-known musical heritage. Each concert is a new discovery of true sound cathedrals sleeping in the Portuguese archives.

Each programme is a new page in its Music History.

