

CANTORAL
Tracks for Galway European Early Music Broadcast
March 21, 2020

Let the Joyous Irish Sing Aloud!
Laetabundus Decantet Hybernicorum Cetus

Programme

Chorus Noster Recolat (Versus, London British Library Add 36881, 12th c.)
Ecclesie Pastores (Antiphon, Office for St.Gall, Einsiedeln, 14c.)
Parentes Vero Beati Galle (Responsory, Office for St. Gall, Einsiedeln, 14th c.)
Virgo Decoratur (Responsory, Office for St. Brigit TCD80, Dublin, 15th c.)
Virgo Rosa (Conductus, Oxford, 13th c.)
Christus Resurgens and verse *Dicant Nunc* (Bodleian, 12thc. Irish manuscript)

Timing of Tracks

Chorus noster recolat. 2.01
Ecclesie pastores. 1.26
Parentes vero beati Galle. 2.18
Virgo decoratur. 1.37
Virgo rosa, Flos radices. 0.56
Christus resurgens. 3.28
Total. 11.46

Notes on the Programme

CANTORAL is an all female vocal ensemble from the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick, Ireland. Directed by Catherine Sergent, the ensemble specializes in Western plainchant and early polyphony, with a particular interest in medieval Irish repertoire.

A central facet of Irish spirituality was the veneration of the saints who, with Mary, the mother of God and Jesus, God's Son, were viewed as important intermediaries between humankind and God.

The opening polyphony, *Chorus Noster Recolat*, calls on the choir to celebrate and, with diverse sounding harmony, drive away sadness. The faithful church is asked to applaud God, who has given so many signs, such as the sign of the angels that he gave to the shepherds.

The next two chants celebrate the work of the Irish medieval missionary saints who established monastic foundations across Europe.

Ecclesie pastores tells of the work of St. Gall and picks up on the theme of the shepherds, saying that, on hearing Gall speak, the shepherds of the church declared that the Holy Spirit was speaking through him.

Parentes vero beati Galle speaks of the relationship between St. Gall and his teacher, St. Columbanus, when Gall's parents bring him to Columbanus' monastery to learn from him.

The next chant celebrate the Irish saint Brigid and is followed by a polyphony in honour of Mary.

Virgo decoratur, tells the story of how Brigid received the honorific title "Mary of the Gaels", with the choir singing and celebrating her holiness.

Virgo rosa , Flos radice is a polyphony in honour of the Virgin Mary, declaring that the flower of the root gives birth to the fruit.

The final chant is a reminder that Easter is on its way, with its promise of resurrection and renewal.

Christus resurgens is from the oldest surviving Irish liturgical source with staff notation. The verse for *Christus resurgens (Dicant nunc)* is a rare example of polyphonic chant from an Irish source.

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Translations

Chorus noster recolat (Polyphonic Versus, London, British Library, Add. 36881, 12th c.)

Chorus noster recolat sancti viri festum;
dissonando consonans pellat omne mestum,
diligendo et tenendo quicquid est honestum.
Eya, fidelis ecclesia deo plaudat auctori,
qui tot signa tribuit facere pastori.

*Let our choir celebrate the feast of holy men;
Let diverse-sounding harmony drive away sadness from all,
Esteeming and embracing whatever is right.
Eya, let the faithful church applaud God the Creator,
Who gave so many signs to the shepherd.*

Ecclesie pastores (Antiphon, Saint Gall 388, Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek codex 611, 12th c.)

Ecclesiae pastores audientes sancti Galli doctrinam dixerunt:
Vere spiritus sanctus hodie locutus est per os viri istius.
V. Dixit dominus domino meo sede a dextris meis.

*The shepherds of the church, hearing St Gall's teaching, said:
"Truly the Holy Spirit today has spoken through the mouth of this man."
Ps. The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand."*

Parentes vero beati Galle (Responsary, St. Gall 388 Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek codex 611, 12th c.)

Parentes vero beati Galle filium suum prime etatis flore nitentem cum oblatione Domino offerentes
Columbani magisterio commendaverunt.
V. Erant enim religiosi atque nobiles unde et filium suum.

*In truth the parents of the blessed Gall entrusted their brilliant son in the prime of his life to the guidance of Colombanus, offering him as a gift to God.
V. Whence indeed religious and noble people came as well as their son.*

Virgo decoratur (Responsory, Office of St. Brigit TCD80, Dublin, 15th c.)

Virgo decoratur
Honor amplius ei cumulatur;
Synodus instabat
nova Brigida stella micabat;
Sacra Chorus plaudit
Quia signum celitus audit.
V. Presbyter hanc aliam denunciat esse Maria.

*The maiden shows in splendour;
Greatest honour is heaped upon her;
The synod cries out in fervour;
Brigit blazes as a new star;
The sacred choir acclaimed her,
For it heard a sign from heaven.
V. The priest proclaimed
That Brigit was another Mary.*

Virgo rosa, flos radicis (Polyphonic Conductus, Oxford, CCC 489, 13th c.)

Virgo rosa, flos radicis, Deum fructum protulit.

The virgin rose, the flower of the root, gave birth to the divine fruit.

Christus resurgens /verse Dicant nunc (Processional antiphon, Oxford Bodleian, Rawlinson C 892, 12th c.)

Christus resurgens ex mortuis, jam non moritur: mors illa ultra non dominabitur;
Quod enim vivit, vivit Deo, Alleluia, Alleluia.
V. Dicant nunc Judæi, quomodo milites custodientes sepulchrum perdidērunt Regem, ad lapidis positionem; quare non servabant Petram justitiæ? Aut sepultum reddant, aut resurgentem adorant nobiscum dicentes:
Alleluia, alleluia, quod enim vivit, vivit Deo, Alleluia, Alleluia.

*Christ rising again from the dead, dies now no more;
death shall no more have dominion over him;
for in that he lives, he lives unto God, alleluia, alleluia.
V. Let the Judaeans now tell us, how the soldiers guarding the sepulchre lost the King with the rock in its place. Why did they not keep the Rock of justice? Either let them restore the buried One, or adore with us the risen One, saying: Alleluia, Alleluia.*

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CANTORAL is an all female vocal ensemble from the University of Limerick, Ireland. Founded by Catherine Sergent and Helen Phelan, the ensemble specializes in Western plainchant and early polyphony, with a particular interest in medieval Irish repertoire. Formed in 2008 at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick, in

consist of graduates, doctoral students and members of faculty from Ireland, England, France, Poland, Holland, the United States, Japan and Mexico. The ensemble had its first international appearance in March, 2009 at the *Centre Culturel Irlandais* in Paris. Other highlight performances include *Imbolc*, a programme of chant and Irish language song for St. Brigit premiered in New York in 2010, as well as a programme for the Galway Early Music Festival entitled *...sed diabolus irrisit* ('...but the devil laughed') in the same year. In 2011, Cantoral sang for the Dalai Lama during his visit to Ireland and in 2012 sang a programme of Irish medieval music for Holy Week entitled *Planctus* for the Yale Institute of Sacred Music. In 2013, the ensemble was invited to perform at the Class of 1959 Chapel in Harvard and the Bebartolo Performing Arts Centre at the University of Notre Dame in the US. In 2014 Cantoral produced its first CD recording, *Let the Joyous Irish Sing Aloud/Laetabundus Decantet Hybernicorum Cetus*. The CD was recorded on location at Ballintubber Abbey, Co. Mayo with the assistance of the Keough Naughton Institute of Irish Studies at the University of Notre Dame. In September, 2015, Cantoral was invited to perform at one of France's most prestigious early music festivals, *Festival Voix & Route Romane*. More recently, its programme *Navigatio*, featuring music inspired by the voyages of St. Brendan, has toured venues across Ireland including St. Patrick's College Chapel, Maynooth; St. Finbarre's Cathedral, Cork; Kylemore Abbey, Galway; St. Martin's Fair: Festival of Medieval Limerick and the St. Brendan Festival, Kerry.