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Recent recordings of plainchant

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The most significant new approach to chant recording in some years comes from Johannes Berchmans Göschl, who has begun a series of recordings sung from the newly published *Graduale Novum*, volume 1. Devoted to Mass Propers of Sundays and feast days, this is the first of a series of releases that formalise the work of the International Association for Gregorian Chant Studies (AISCGre), which has been published in *Beiträge zur Gregorianik* beginning with Heft 21 in 1996. These 'restitutions' of chant melodies are based on neumed manuscripts interpreted according to the semiology of Dom Eugène Cardine, and its joint publication by ConBrio and Libreria Editrice Vaticana confers a certain official status on this edition of the Gradual. The first disc (no. 1 in the following list) offers the three Masses of Christmas and Epiphany, while the second (no. 2) contains the Sundays of Advent and the Christmas vigil. It is interesting that, while most of these were among the first restitutions published in Heft 21 and 22, the vigil of Christmas has just been published in Heft 51 and will only appear in volume 2 of *Graduale Novum*. Both discs are examples of Göschl's familiar excellence in chant interpretation.

Göschl has also recently recorded three other discs. With the same Munich schola, he has chosen three groups of chants: for the Passion, Easter and the Dedication of a Church (no. 3). The three offertories each have a single verse. With the nuns at Kellenried, who are recording for the first time, he has selected Mass Propers for Sts Benedict, Scholastica, Maurus and Placidus (no. 4). The two offertories each have a verse, *Immittet angelus* being a first recording. With the nuns of Eibingen, with whom Göschl had previously recorded the music of Hildegard (1993, no. 6), the chants are drawn entirely from Holy Saturday (no. 5), some in unfamiliar post-1970 guises.

Heading in the opposite direction are two systematic, decade-long efforts to preserve the traditional Solesmes interpretation of chant in the pre-Vatican II calendar as printed in the *Liber Usualis*. One set of discs by the monks of Triors, a daughter house of Fontgombault, has just been completed after eleven years. The discs (nos. 6 to 17) are listed here according to the liturgical year, but the series actually started with the Sundays after Pentecost, doubtless because those first five discs covered Sundays that were hardly represented on records. (Among the few previous recordings, Dom Gajard recorded six of the Sundays on two LPs, **20218** and **7515** in my discography,[1] but they were issued on CD only recently: 2008, no. 25.) The final disc for the second half of Paschal time has been recorded but not yet been issued.

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[1] Jerome F. Weber, *A Gregorian Chant Discography*, 2 vols., Discography Series 20 (Utica, NY, 1990). See also the new web resource, chantdiscography.com (accessed 23 November 2011), which analyses over a thousand chant CDs issued since 1990.

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The next six items are a continuation of a similar series cited previously (2005, nos. 45 and 46; 2008, no. 46; 2010, no. 12). It should be noted that 'Le Temporal – 1' (no. 18), recorded in 2008, replaces the first issue in the series, recorded in 1998; it is sung, unaccompanied, by two professional singers, including Hervé Lamy. 'Le Temporal – 1' (no. 19) was recorded in 2009 with three professionals, again including Lamy, but like the original release is organ accompanied. All three issues vary slightly in content: the first and third include the second Mass of Christmas, while the second replaces it with St Stephen. The outward appearance of the two later issues is identical except for the timing on the back, '2hr 20min' in 2008, '2hr 33min' in 2009. The dates are printed only on the inside leaflet.

'Kyriale' (no. 20) is also a newer version with the same professional singers; the prior version was made with older schoolboys. Both versions include eighteen Mass Ordinaries and six Credos, but the earlier one had some organ pieces inserted, while the later adds the two versions of *Asperges me*. 'Les Fêtes des Saints – I' (no. 21) is also a new version of an earlier issue, adding St John the Baptist to the seven feasts of the Sanctoral cycle that are repeated from the other discs. The earlier recording was unaccompanied; the later has organ accompaniment. Two more issues by the same singers and director are new, with the Requiem Mass and other chants for the Dead filled out with the brief Nuptial Mass (no. 22). The other is Sunday Vespers and Compline, supplemented by a second disc with twenty-three hymns for Vespers during the year (no. 23). The latter is especially interesting, for Vespers as recorded so often are nearly always sung according to the monastic rite. (About 1961, Dom Pellegrino M. Ernetti recorded an LP of Sunday Vespers *more romano* on one side and Vespers of the Blessed Virgin on the other, but it was never widely available.) These two services, so familiar to generations of seminarians and parishes, are very different from the monastic rite, notably in the use of the *tonus peregrinus* in the fifth Psalm, *In exitu Israel*. Recordings of this interesting Psalm tone are very difficult to find. The collection of hymns is also unusual, for Office hymns are more often recorded from monastic books, but these are the humanist revisions found in the *Liber Usualis.* At least eight of the hymns have never been recorded before; all are sung complete.

After citing several recordings from the monks of Randol, another daughter house of Fontgombault (**8506** in my discography; 1998, nos. 38 and 41; 2005, no. 28), the latest of the series failed to arrive and I finally had to seek it out (no. 24). Like the others, it focuses on a major feast, but it goes beyond the Propers for the Mass of Pentecost (with the Ordinary from II and III) to add three Propers each for the vigil, the Monday, the Tuesday and the Wednesday Masses. This makes the disc more inclusive than any other Pentecost programme. The singing is superb.

Meanwhile, the monks of Fontgombault continue to record regularly. The two latest discs focus on the Blessed Virgin, the earlier one (no. 26) including the Common of the Blessed Virgin with Mass X, Vespers of the Blessed Virgin, and a selection of antiphons and Mass Propers; two responsories included on the disc, *Hortus conclusus* and *Salve virginale*, have rarely been recorded. The more recent release (no. 25) has an unusual collection of processional responsories and antiphons along with some

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Mass Propers. The most unusual is called a *salutatio*, *Ave sponsa insponsata*, a long hymn the text of which may be found in *Analecta Hymnica*; fortunately, the unfamiliar music for this and the rest of the chants is printed in the booklet. This is an unusual programme of largely unfamiliar chants.

The same monks, having previously recorded the monastic Mass of the Dead (2005, no. 27), now give us the more familiar version, here called the Roman rite (no. 27). The melodic differences are subtle and slight (both sets of chants may be found in the *Graduale Romanum,* 1974/79). The *Dies irae* is included, and seven responsories are added. Two more discs are organ accompanied, as we sometimes hear from this abbey. Their recording of chants for St Benedict (no. 28) marked the election of the current pope, who took the founder as his patron, using chants from the Mass and Office of all three feast days and concluding with an antiphon for St Joseph, his baptismal patron. The Dedication of a Church (no. 29) includes the Ordinary and Proper of the Mass, antiphons from Vespers and Lauds, and the invitatory from Matins, unusually solemn at twelve minutes in length.

A novel thematic programme (no. 30) selects twelve chants on texts from the epistles of St Paul (except for the last, the antiphon *Sancte Paule Apostole* with its Magnificat). The Matins responsories *Bonum certamen* and *Salvatorem exspectamus* are first recordings. The fine women's vocal ensemble under Christoph Hönerlage's direction is new to records.

Stefan Morent's male vocal ensemble (no. 31), which has already made several recordings, focuses on Notker Balbulus with five sequences known to be his work and four tropes attributed to him. This is not the first time most of these have been recorded, but the emphasis on his role as composer is unusual.

The Scola Metensis, directed by Marie-Reine Demollière, which recorded a disc devoted to Messine chant and the Carolingian schola of Metz (2005, no. 6), does something similar for the Three Dioceses, a name commonly used for Upper Lorraine until that region became part of France in 1648 (no. 32). The diocese of Metz was the most prominent, but Toul's bishop became Pope Leo IX (r. 1049–54, born Bruno of Eguisheim-Dagsburg). Verdun is also significant to this recorded programme for possessing Bibliothèque municipale, MS 759, a missal (available in facsimile),[2] which serves as the source of several chants on this disc. The historical approach and the mostly unfamiliar chants make this programme unusually interesting.

Two of the most frequently recorded Masses – Easter Sunday and the Mass of the Dead – are paired on CD by a new men's ensemble from Washington, DC (no. 33). The interpretation is not just traditional Solesmes, but rendered in a style of singing reminiscent of chant as it might have been performed in parishes in the mid-twentieth century. The *Dies irae* and *Libera me* are included; the Easter Mass intersperses the Ordinary Mass I without the Credo.

An unusually fine presentation of a late liturgical Office is devoted to St Clare of Assisi (no. 34). The Vespers antiphons have two Psalm-verses each; the invitatory is complete; the antiphons of Matins also have two verses and the responsories fall into

[2] Verdun, Bibliothèque municipale 759: Missale, ed. Nino Albarosa and Alberto Turco (Padua, 1994).

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place; the antiphons of Lauds also have two verses. The antiphon for the Magnificat for Second Vespers is supplied, and the disc ends with five Mass Propers, only the Alleluia *O gemma virginea* being unfamiliar. Unless one prefers to hear a snatch of the lessons before the responsories, this is a neatly balanced presentation of an Office found in the Franciscan church in Graz. (Andrew Hughes indexes this office as CL11.)[3]

Another late Office is the oldest extant composition from Hamburg, Germany (no. 35). Like the St Clare Office, this has the invitatory (with just two verses), the nine antiphons with a few Psalm-verses for each and the nine responsories in their places. Not one of the five Compassion Offices that were indexed by Hughes, this is represented less fully than the St Clare Office. The five male singers on this disc are known for good work from their previous recordings of later repertoire.

A different approach than these two gives us a late Office of St Martin not indexed by Hughes (no. 36) consisting of nine responsories, the last one in each nocturn endowed with prosae and organum. The final responsory, *Martinus igitur*, is unusually elaborate with three prosae lasting twelve minutes. The disc is filled out with three processional chants, the invitatory (with two verses) and the *Te Deum*. Among several known Offices for this saint, this one is based on Tours, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 159.

Another kind of late Office was composed by the Hieronymite friar Hernando de Talavera to mark the fall of Granada in 1492 (no. 37). The Office was edited by Maria Julieta Vega García-Ferrer in 2004 in a volume that included parts of the Office recorded under the direction of the editor, while Juan Carlos Asensio later recorded a partly different selection of these chants (2011, no. 1). While the singing on the earlier disc may not equal the superb work of Asensio's Schola Antiqua, it is more than adequate to furnish a hearing of the pieces that are not included in the other disc.

In 2002, a German film producer, Philip Gröning, after waiting eighteen years, was allowed to film a documentary of life in La Grande Chartreuse. The film, *Into Great Silence*, was released in 2005 (2007 in the United States) to remarkable critical and commercial success, despite the running time of over two and a half hours of mostly silent monastic life. A spin-off recording (no. 39) is the typical assemblage of excerpts from the film soundtrack. I have identified ten chants sung in the Carthusian rite, only some of them variants of Gregorian chants. Given the nature of the documentary, this is not as effective as the DVD of the film itself (2008, no. 43). That DVD comes with a supplementary disc of the first nocturn of Matins, although the visuals accompanying the singing are made up of pages of chant notation and Scriptural texts from a French Bible, not the monks in chapel. The complete Matins can be heard on two CDs (no. 38), but while the Carthusian rite is of some interest and we have never had such a lengthy recording of a Matins service on records, one must

[3] See Hughes's *Late Medieval Liturgical Offices, Resources for Electronic Research: Texts and Sources and Chants*, Subsidia Mediaevalia 23–24 (Toronto, 1994 and 1996).

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caution that this is simply a document of a typical night in the monastery. No attempt was made to come close to the quality of a studio recording or even of a live recording made for commercial release. The singing is of everyday quality, the sound recording is on the amateur level, and the ambient noise is distracting.

Four recordings of polyphonic Vespers with chanted antiphons should be noted. Such issues have not been consistently reported here, but the website www.chantdiscography.com now lists twenty-two such versions of the Monteverdi Vespers of 1610 alone, more than one-third of the total number of recordings of that work (search the keyword '1610'). The latest (no. 40) is a set of the entire 1610 publication directed by Roberto Gianotti; the antiphons for the feast of the Assumption are sung from a Mantuan source. The third disc in the set has the *Missa In illo tempore* with Mass Propers for the local feast of St Barbara from another Mantuan source. The same forces compiled a Vespers from later works of the same composer (2008, no. 38). Those later works, published as *Selva morale e spirituale*, have been recorded in substantially complete form several times recently. Claudio Cavina has grouped the works into two sets of Vespers for Gabriel the Archangel and St Joseph, each furnished with appropriate antiphons (no. 41). Gabriel Garrido, who earlier recorded the Monteverdi Vespers of 1610 with antiphons, has taken the antiphons for the Common of Martyrs from a 1585 Venetian antiphoner to accompany a set of the Psalms in his boxed set (no. 42). The last of these four issues hints erroneously that Vivaldi might have written a Vespers for St Mark's Basilica (no. 43). A group of his Vespers Psalms has been fitted with the antiphons for St Mark in a programme that approximates a service, even if the Psalms are not the precise group.

Recordings of Hispanic chant have regularly been unaccompanied, but Eduardo Paniagua has recorded a great deal of medieval Spanish music with a large array of period instruments. At the Hispanic symposium in León in March 2011, he presented a paper defending the use of instruments in Hispanic music and displayed his newly released recording (on his own label) illustrating his technique (no. 44). The performances by his professional ensemble, especially his excellent soloist in several lamentations, are persuasive.

The Cantus Planus meeting last August was saddened by the passing of László Dobszay, one of the leading organisers of the study group since its inception. His most recent recording to be issued, made in 2008 (in 2009 he told me that he had already completed two more), is devoted entirely to Epiphany in the Milanese rite (no. 45), a beautiful example of his interpretive style.

A notable feature of the latest recording of Beneventan chant (no. 46) is *Armenia felix tellus*, an antiphon for St Mercurius discovered in a Naples source after Thomas Forrest Kelly had completed his collection of Beneventan chants for *Paléographie Musicale*.[4] In its middle ground between the fast Schola Hungarica and the slow Ensemble Organum, this new recording is more like the disc by Jean-Pierre Noiseux (2004, no. 17).

[4] *Les témoins manuscrits du chant Bénéventain*, Paléographie Musicale I/21 (Solesmes, 1992).

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More complete and precise analyses of all of these recordings can be found on the Chant Discography website, as well as all the recordings listed in this journal since 1992.

Discography

All record numbers in the following list refer to the compact disc format unless otherwise noted; record retailers will be able to advise about the availability of other carriers. 'T' indicates that the accompanying booklet includes full texts of vocal works in the original language. Where translations are also supplied, these are indicated as follows: e English; f French; g German; s Spanish; m Magyar.

1 Exsulta Fila Sion
Schola Gregoriana Monacensis, dir. Johannes Berchmans Göschl
EOS. EOSCD 7409; SACD 9205. (Recorded 2009) Teg

2 Prope est Dominus
Schola Gregoriana Monacensis, dir. Johannes Berchmans Göschl
EOS. EOSCD 7456; SACD 9214. (Recorded 2010) Teg

3 Mysterium Salutis
Schola Gregoriana Monacensis, dir. Johannes Berchmans Göschl
EOS. EOSCD 4059; SACD 9179. (Recorded 2006) Tg

4 Inclina Aurem Cordis
Nuns of St Erentraud, Kellenried, dir. Johannes Berchmans Göschl
EOS. EOSCD 7410; SACD 9204. (Recorded 2009) Teg

5 Novi Diluculo
Schola of St Hildegard, Eibingen, dir. Johannes Berchmans Göschl
EOS. EOSCD 7449; SACD 9213. (Recorded 2010) Teg

6 Les Dimanches de l'Avent
Monks of Notre Dame de Triors
Ass. Abbé de Lessains BMT 11-D. (Recorded 2008) Tef

7 Les Dimanches autour de Noël
Monks of Notre Dame de Triors
Ass. Abbé de Lessains BMT 10-D. (Recorded 2007) Tef

8 Temps de l'Épiphanie
Monks of Notre Dame de Triors
Ass. Abbé de Lessains BMT 13-D. (Recorded 2009) Tef

9 De l'Hiver au Printemps
Monks of Notre Dame de Triors
Ass. Abbé de Lessains BMT 07-D. (Recorded 2004) Tef

10 Printemps – I
Monks of Notre Dame de Triors
Ass. Abbé de Lessains BMT 08-D. (Recorded 2005) Tef

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11 Printemps – II
Monks of Notre Dame de Triors
Ass. Abbé de Lessains BMT 09-D. (Recorded 2006) Tef

12 Temps Pascal I
Monks of Notre Dame de Triors
Ass. Abbé de Lessains BMT 12-D. (Recorded 2009) Tef

13 Messes des dimanches d'été – I
Monks of Notre Dame de Triors
Ass. Abbé de Lessains BMT 02-D. (Recorded 2000) Tef

14 Messes des dimanches d'été – II
Monks of Notre Dame de Triors
Ass. Abbé de Lessains BMT 03-D. (Recorded 2000) Tef

15 Messes des dimanches d'été – III
Monks of Notre Dame de Triors
Ass. Abbé de Lessains BMT 04-D. (Recorded 2001) Tef

16 Messes des dimanches d'automne – I
Monks of Notre Dame de Triors
Ass. Abbé de Lessains BMT 05-D. (Recorded 2001) Tef

17 Messes des dimanches d'automne – II
Monks of Notre Dame de Triors
Ass. Abbé de Lessains BMT 06-D. (Recorded 2002) Tef

18 Le Temporal – 1
Schola Bellarmina, dir. Bernard Lorber
L'Année Liturgique ALGC 01 (two discs). (Recorded 2008) –

19 Le Temporal – 1
Schola Bellarmina, dir. Bernard Lorber
L'Année Liturgique ALGC 01 (two discs). (Recorded 2009) –

20 Kyriale
Schola Bellarmina, dir. Bernard Lorber
L'Année Liturgique ALGC 08 (three discs). (Recorded 2009) –

21 Les Fêtes des Saints – I
Schola Bellarmina, dir. Bernard Lorber
L'Année Liturgique ALGC 09 (two discs). (Recorded 2009) –

22 Cérémonies des Funérailles, Messe de Mariage
Schola Bellarmina, dir. Bernard Lorber
L'Année Liturgique ALGC 11. (Recorded 2009) –

23 Les Vêpres et Complies du Dimanche
Schola Bellarmina, dir. Bernard Lorber
L'Année Liturgique ALGC 12 (two discs). (Recorded 2010) –

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24 Pentecôte
Monks of Randol
Art & Musique AM/CD 107/39810. (Recorded 1998) Tef

25 Louange de la Vierge Marie – 2
Monks of Fontgombault
Art & Musique AM/CD 107/30901. (Recorded 2008) Tef

26 Louange de la Vierge Marie
Monks of Fontgombault
Art & Musique AM/CD 107/30701. (Recorded 2007) Tef

27 Liturgie des Défunts dans le rite romain
Monks of Fontgombault
Art & Musique AM/CD 107/30105. (Recorded 2001) Tef

28 Saint Benoît
Monks of Fontgombault
Art & Musique AM/CD 107/30601. (Recorded 2006) Tef

29 Fête de la Dédicace
Monks of Fontgombault
Art & Musique AM/CD 107/30402. (Recorded 2003) Tef

30 Paulus
Frauenschola Exsulta Sion Freiburg, dir. Christoph Hönerlage
Christophorus CHR 77299. (Recorded 2007) Tefg

31 Notker Balbulus
Ordo Virtutum, dir. Stefan Morent
Christophorus CHR 77341. (Recorded 2010) Tefg

32 Chants des Trois Évêchés
Scola Metensis, dir. Marie-Reine Demollière
Ligia 0202224-11. (Recorded 2010) Tf

33 Mors et Resurrectio
Ensemble Torculus, dir. Haig Mardirosian
Centaur CRC 3028. (Recorded 2009) Te

34 Clarae Claritas
Choralschola Graz, dir. Franz Karl Prassl
Franziskaner OFM-1. (Recorded 2010) Tg

35 Historia de Compassione Gloriosissimae Virginis Mariae
Amarcord
CPO 777 604-2. (Recorded 2009-10) Teg

36 Historia Sancti Martini
Diabolus in Musica, dir. Antoine Guerber
Aeon AECD 1103. (Recorded 2009) Tef

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37 Isabel la Católica y Granada
Schola Gregoriana Iliberis, dir. Maria Julieta Vega García-Ferrer
Book with CD, SGAE CD 751. (Recorded 2004) Ts

38 Office of the Night
Monks of La Grande Chartreuse
Jade 73138 36382 2 (two discs). (Recorded 2002) Te

39 Into Great Silence
Monks of La Grande Chartreuse
Jade 73138 36272 2. (Recorded 2002) T

40 Monteverdi, Vespro della Beata Vergine
Gruppo Vocale Laurence Feininger, dir. Roberto Gianotti (for chant antiphons)
Dynamic CDS 656/1-3 (three discs). (Recorded 2006) –

41 Monteverdi, Selva morale e spirituale
La Venexiana, dir. Claudio Cavina
Glossa GCD 920914 (three discs). (Recorded 2005) Tef

42 Monteverdi, Selva morale e spirituale
Ensemble Elyma, dir. Gabriel Garrido
Ambronay AMY 001 (four discs). (Recorded 2004) Tef

43 Vivaldi, Vespro a San Marco
Choeur de Chambre de Namur, dir. Leonardo García Alarcón
Ambronay AMY 029 (two discs). (Recorded 2010) Tef

44 Canto Visigótico-Mozárabe
Música Antiqua, dir. Eduardo Paniagua
Pneuma PN 1270. (Recorded 2009-10) Ts

45 Ambrosian Chants for Epiphany
Schola Hungarica, dir. László Dobszay, Janka Szendrei
Budapest BMC CD 165. (Recorded 2008) Tem

46 Canto Beneventano
Ensemble 1521; CCM Early Music Lab, dir. Matthew Peattie
Torculus 1521-002. (Recorded 2011) Te

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