

University of California, Davis
The Department of Music
presents



UCD Early Music Ensemble
David Nutter, *director*

Johannes Ockeghem
(ca. 1410–1497)
Missa Pro Defunctis

Motets and Chansons



FRIDAY, 2 DECEMBER 1988
8:00 P.M.

ST. MARTINS EPISCOPAL CHURCH
HAWTHORN LANE, DAVIS
ADMISSION FREE.

CONCERTS
CONDUCTED
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The University of California, Davis
The Department of Music
presents the

UCD EARLY MUSIC ENSEMBLE

David Nutter, *director*

in a program of works by

JOHANNES OCKEGHEM

(ca 1410-1497)

PROGRAM

Mort, tu as navré de ton dart

INTEMERATA DEI MATER

Petitte Camusette

L'autre d'antan

Je n'ay dueil

SALVE REGINA

* *intermission* *

MISSA PRO DEFUNCTIS (REQUIEM)

Introit: *Requiem aeternam*

Kyrie

Gradual: *Si ambulem*

Tract: *Sicut cervus*

Offertory: *Domine Iesu Christe*

UCD EARLY MUSIC ENSEMBLE

David Nutter, *director*

Soprano: Stephanie Holm, Carole Hom*, Sue Kim, Helen Nutter*, Hannah Wolf

Alto: Violet Grgich, Pam Lindquist, Rebecca Littman, Mary Kramer

Tenor: Calvin Fan, Shane Snyder*, Brook Ostrom*, Neil Willits*

Bass: Ron Alexander*, Chris Johnson, Simon Justice, Don Meyer*, Lee Riggs

* = soloist

PROGRAM NOTE

Flemish by birth, Johannes Ockeghem spent most of his creative career at the court of the French monarchy. His early life is sparsely documented; he served at the Cathedral of Our Lady, Antwerp in 1443 and three years later he had joined the chapel of Charles I, Duke of Bourbon, at Moulins. Shortly thereafter he became attached to the French court. By 1454 he had risen to the pre-eminent position of *premier chapelain* of the royal chapel, a position he maintained under three successive kings: Charles VII, Louis XI and Charles VIII. The esteem he enjoyed at the French court is indicated by his appointment as treasurer of the Abbey of St. Martin, Tours, and of which the king of France was titular abbot (Molinet's lament on Ockeghem's death, *Nymphes des bois*, punningly refers to the composer as the "true treasurer of music").

Ockeghem's name is invariably linked with those of Binchois, Busnois and Dufay by contemporary writers. For Tinctoris (*Liber de arte contrapuncti*, 1477), Ockeghem's works were distinguished by their extraordinary sweetness and beauty. Though Ockeghem's "subtle songs, artful masses, and harmonious motets" (Molinet) place him first among the most celebrated composers of his time, his musical output, or what survives of it, is not vast: a dozen masses, a handful of motets, and some 20 chansons of which we present a sampling tonight.

Ockeghem's chansons are set to the French *formes fixes* of rondeau (*Je n'ay dueil; L'autre d'antan*), ballade (*Mort, tu as navré*) and bergerette (*Petite Camusette*), lyric constructs in which the same music serves successive verses. *Mort, tu as navré de ton dart*, a lament on the death of Gilles Binchois (died 1460), has an archaic flavor with its combination of treble-dominated style, dual text, and tenor cantus firmus technique (the melody and words of the tenor are traceable to the Te Deum and to the Dies irae, the sequence of the Mass for the Dead).

Ockeghem's motets are among the most diverse and inventive of his works. *Intemerata Dei mater* is one of the most extended free compositions of the period. Each of the three sections reveals a careful sense of symmetry and climax achieved through a characteristic stretto-like acceleration of melodic and harmonic rhythm. The control of pace and texture is masterly, varying complex polyphony with luminous chordal passages. The downward expansion of musical space is innovative. The dark, sombre, low tessitura explores the lower range of male voices, descending to sub-bass C (we sing it transposed up a fourth). Ockeghem was apparently a fine bass singer. Teofilo Folengo remarked of him:

"You would say upon hearing him that he must be a Fleming, for his gullet is disposed as it were a great organ pipe; it is nothing for him to sing low G (*gamma-ut*); he will sing lower, down to the very bottom of the cellar."

Salve Regina, a complex and richly ornate setting of the Marian antiphon, paraphrases the chant melody in the bass voice. Though this procedure, typical of the medieval motet, determines basic harmonic progressions, Ockeghem's setting is unconstrained, exploring as it does distant modal reaches with surprising ingenuity.

Ockeghem's Requiem is the earliest extant polyphonic setting of the Mass for the Dead. A setting by Guillaume Dufay (died 1477), mentioned in the composer's will, is now lost. However, it has recently come to light that Dufay's Requiem, for three voices compared to Ockeghem's four, was sung during the week-long convocations of the Order of the Golden Fleece, a chivalric order founded in 1430 by Philip the Good of Burgundy. Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that masses based on a popular French tune known as "The Armed Man" (*L'homme armé*) were sung at the order's meetings. The unique source of Ockeghem's Requiem, the Chigi codex, a presentation manuscript originating at the Burgundian court and now in the Vatican library, contains five *L'homme armé* masses, including Ockeghem's own, as well as the motet, *Intemerata Dei mater*, an altogether extraordinary work whose text is humanistic rather than biblical or liturgical. Ockeghem's contact with composers of the Burgundian court is well established, and there is reason to suspect his works in the Chigi codex may too have been sung during the order's functions.

Renaissance composers enjoyed some freedom in setting polyphonically the various texts that comprise the established liturgical order of the Requiem. Ockeghem left the Sequence (*Dies irae*), *Sanctus*, *Agnus Dei*, and *Communion* (*Lux aeterna*) to be sung in plainsong. Before the liturgical reforms enacted by the Council of Trent (16th century), the *Gradual* (*Si ambulem*) and the *Tract* (*Sicut cervus*) were alternatives, deriving from Sarum use (Salisbury Cathedral), to the usual *Gradual* (*Requiem aeternum*) and *Tract* (*Absolve, Domine*).

Ockeghem's Requiem mass is based on the appropriate plainsong melodies that churchgoers of the period would have instantly recognized. These centuries-old melodies, embellished and given rhythmic shape by the composer, are heard for the most part in the highest voice; but it is Ockeghem's multi-stranded and labyrinthine music that imbues them with deeper significance: the "endless melody" (Bukofzer) of Ockeghem's flowing, long-limbed melodic lines that in their asymmetric design seem sprung free of earthly concerns for temporality.

Traditional liturgical usage also determines the shape of each movement, here dictated by the structural alternation of soloist(s) and full choir of the chants themselves. The *Gradual*, for instance, follows the scheme: *Si ambulem* (solo); *in medio umbrae mortis* (choir); *Virga tua* (solo verse = duet); *consolata sunt* (choir). Ockeghem adopts a variety of scoring (duets, trios) and compositional devices (canon; parallel first-inversion chords, or *fauxbourdon*). There are also complex rhythmic patterns present in the original notation that lie in wait for the unwary singer (*Quam olim*).

Ockeghem's handling of text illustration--the enhancement of verbal sense by musical gestures expressive of the words--is in general responsive to mood (*ubi est Deus tuus?*, "Where is thy God?") and at times graphically illustrated (the singer's stark terror of the "hand of hell and the deep pit" as the music suddenly unravels during the *Offertory*). Gradually, as the work unfolds, the higher, brighter sounds heard at the outset give way to somber lower registers, leaving the listener with a profound sense of brooding contemplation of the hereafter.

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Texts and translations are provided overleaf.

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

MORT, TU AS NAVRÉ DE TON DART

Mort, tu as navré de ton dart
 Le pere de joyeuseté
 En desployant ton estandard
 Sur Binchois, patron de bonté.
 Son corps est plaint et lamenté
 Qui gist soubz lame
 Helas, plaise vous en pitié
 Priez pour l'ame.

En sa jonesse fut soudart
 De honnorable mondanité
 Puis a esleu la milleur part
 Servant Dieu en humilité.
 Tant luy soit en chrestienté
 Son non est fame
 Qu'i detient de grant voulente
 Priez pour l'ame.

TENOR: Miserere, miserere pie...
 Quem in cruce redemisti precioso sanguine
 Pie Jhesu Domine dona ei requiem.

*Death, you have wounded with your dart
 the father of all happiness;
 you have spread your standard
 over Binchois, model of goodness.
 Mourned and lamented,
 he lies under the tomb.
 Alas, may you in pity
 pray for his soul.*

*In his youth he was a soldier
 of honorable worldliness.
 Then he chose the better course,
 serving God in humility.
 Justly is his name famed
 throughout Christendom
 All men of goodwill,
 pray for his soul.*

*Have mercy...
 give rest to him whom Thou hast redeemed upon
 the Cross with Thy precious blood, Holy Jesus.*

INTEMERATA DEI MATER

Intemerata Dei mater, generosa puella,
 quam stipant agmina divum,
 respice nos tantum,
 si quid iubilando meremur.
 Tu scis, virgo decens,
 quantum discrimin agatur exilibus
 passimque quibus iactemur arenis

Nec sine te manet ulla quies,
 spes nulla laboris;
 nulla salus patrie,
 domus aut potiunda parentis,
 cui, regina, praeas:
 dispensans omnia laeto
 suscipis ore pios
 dulci quos nectare potas, et facis
 assiduos epulis accumbere sacris.

Aspiciat facito miseros pietatis
 ocello Filius: ipsa potes.
 Fessos hinc arripe sursum diva,
 virgo manu, tutos et in arce locato.

*Undefiled mother of God, noble maiden,
 around whom the heavenly host throng with
 their songs, pray look down on us,
 if in our joyous praise we earn any merit.
 You know, beauteous maiden, how dreadful is
 the risk run by exiles on the various shores
 on to which we are cast.*

*No peace remains without you,
 no hope of work;
 no safety for our country,
 nor parental home for our possessions,
 of which you, O queen, are at the head:
 watching over all things,
 you lift up the righteous with a glad smile,
 feed them with your sweet nectar, and seat
 them in constant attendance at the sacred feast.*

*We beseech you to make your Son look upon
 us compassionately: this is within your power.
 Snatch us up away from here with your godly
 hand, maiden, weary as we are, and set us
 down in a place of safekeeping.*

PETITTE CAMUSETTE

Petite Camusette, j'ay
Proposé me mettre en essay
D'acquerir quelque peu vo grace:
Force m'est que par la je passe.
Ceste foys j'en feray l'essay.

Petite Camusette, a la mort m'avés mis.
Robin et Marion s'en vont au boys jouer.
Ilz s'en vont bras a bras; ilz sont endormis.
Petite Camusette, a la mort m'avés mis.

L'AUTRE D'ANTAN

L'autre d'antan, l'autrier passa
Et en passant me trespercha
D'ung regard forgié a Melan
Qui me mist en l'arriere ban,
Tant malvais brassin me brassa.

Par tel fachon me fricassa
Que de ses gaiges me cassa;
Mais, par Dieu, elle fist son dan.
L'autre d'antan . . .

Puis après nostre amour cessa,
Car, onques puis qu'elle dansa
L'autre d'antan, l'autre d'antan,
Je n'eus ne bon jour ne bon an,
Tant de mal enuy amassa.
L'autre d'antan . . .

JE N'AY DUEIL

Je n'ay dueil que je ne suis morte;
Ne doyje pas vouloir morir?
Dueil a mon cuer voulu saisir,
Qui de tous biens me desconforte.

Ma doulour est plus que trop forte
Car sans avoir aucun plaisir
Je n'ay dueil...

Je n'ay rien qui plus me conforte.
De oeil ne voy plus que desplaisir.
Mort est le plus que mon desir.
Car quelque chouse qu'on m'aporte.
Je n'ay dueil...

SALVE REGINA

Salve, Regina, mater misericordiae:
Vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.
Ad te clamanus, exsules, filii Hevae.
Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes
in hac lacrimarum valle.
Eia ergo, Advocata nostra, illos tuos
misericordes oculos ad nos converte.
Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,
nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.
O clemens: O pia:
O dulcis Virgo semper Maria.

*Little Snubnose, I have
Proposed at least to try
To obtain, however little, your grace;
Needs be that I pass that way -
This time I'll make the try.*

*Little Snubnose, you've put me to death.
Robin and Marion are going to the woods to play.
They're going off, arm in arm; they've gone to sleep.
Little Snubnose, you've put me to death.*

*The other year, the other day, she passed by
And, in passing, pierced me through
With a glance forged in Milan
That knocked me into the rear ranks
So rude a blow she dealt me.*

*She destroyed me so thoroughly
That she dismissed me from her troops;
But, by God, she did her damage.
The other year . . .*

*And then our love ended,
For, ever since she did her dance,
The other year, the other year,
I've had neither good day nor good year,
So much bad luck has piled up.
The other year . . .*

*I am sorry only that I am not dead.
Should I not wish to die?
Sorrow has gripped my heart
and bereft me of all good things.*

*My pain is more than acute,
for, having no pleasure at all,
I am sorry only that I am not dead...*

*Nothing can comfort me now.
My eye sees nothing but vexation.
Death is the greatest of my desires,
for, whatever befalls me,
I am sorry only that I am not dead...*

*Hail, Queen, mother of pity!
Our life, sweetness and hope, hail!
To thee we cry, exiles, son of Eve.
To thee we sigh, lamenting and weeping
in this vale of tears.
Well then, our advocate, turn
thy pitiful eyes upon us.
And show us, after this exile,
Jesus, the blessed fruit of thy womb.
O merciful, O pious,
O ever sweet Virgin Mary.*

REQUIEM (MISSA PRO DEFUNCTIS)

INTROITUS

Requiem * aeternam dona eis Domine:
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Ps. Te decet hymnus in Sion, * et tibi
reddetur votum in Jerusalem.
Exaudi orationem meam;
ad te omnis caro veniet.

Requiem * aeternam dona eis Domine:
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

KYRIE

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

GRADUALE

Si ambulem * in medio umbrae mortis
non timeo mala:
quoniam tu mecum es Domine.

Virga tua et baculus tuus
ipsa me consolata sunt.

TRACTUS

Sicut cervus desiderat ad fontes aquarum,
ita desiderat anima mea ad te Deus.

Sitivit anima mea ad Deum vivum,
quando veniam et apparebo
ante faciem Dei mei?

Fuerunt mihi lacrimae panes et die ac nocte
dum dicitur mihi per singulos dies:
ubi est Deus tuus?

OFFERTORIUM

Domine Iesu Christe, * Rex gloriae,
libera animas omnium fidelium defunctorum
de manu inferni, et de profundo lacu;
libera eas de ore leonis,
ne absorbeat eas tartarus, ne cadant
in obscura tenebrarum.

Sed signifer sanctus Michael
repraesentat eas in lucem sanctam;

Quam olim Abrahae promisisti,
et semini eius.

Hostias et preces tibi Dominum offerimus,
tu suscipe pro animabus illis,
quarum hodie memoriam agimus; fac eas,
Domine, de morte transire ad vitam;

Quam olim Abrahae promisisti,
et semini eius.

INTROIT

Rest eternal give them, O Lord,
and perpetual light shine on them.

Thou shalt be hymned O God in Sion, and unto
thee shall a vow be paid in Jerusalem.
Hear my prayer;
unto thee shall all flesh come.

Rest eternal give them, O Lord,
and perpetual light shine on them.

KYRIE

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

GRADUAL

Yea though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death I will fear no evil:
for thou art with me, O Lord.

Thy rod and thy staff
they comfort me.

TRACT

Like as the hart desireth the water brooks,
so longeth my soul after thee, O God.

My soul thirsteth for the living God,
when shall I come and appear
before my God?

My tears have been my meat day and night,
while they daily say unto me:
where is thy God?

OFFERTORY

Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory,
free the souls of all the faithful departed
from the hand of hell, and from the deep pit;
free them from the lion's mouth,
lest hell swallow them up, lest they
fall into darkness.

But let the standard-bearer Saint Michael
bring them into the holy light;

which of old Thou didst promise to Abraham
and his seed.

Sacrifice and prayer to thee Lord we offer,
receive them for the souls
whom this day we commemorate; make them,
O Lord, to cross over from death into life;

which of old Thou didst promise to Abraham
and his seed.