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BRILLIANT
CLASSICS

ALONSO LOBO

SACRED
VOCAL
MUSIC

Coro Victoria
Ana Fernández-Vega

victoria

Alonso Lobo (1555-1617)
Sacred Vocal Music

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|---|------|---|------|
| 1. Ave Regina Caelorum a 5 | 3'00 | 7. Regina Caeli Lactare | 2'30 |
| <i>From Missa O Rex Glorïae</i> | | | |
| 2. Kyrie | 2'40 | 8. Credo Romano | 6'45 |
| Christe: Èlia Casanova <i>soprano</i> | | <i>Incipit: Jagoba Fadrique baritone</i> | |
| Julieta Viñas <i>mezzo soprano</i> | | 9. Cum audisset Ioannes | |
| Francisco Braojos <i>tenor</i> | | in vinculis | 2'31 |
| Jagoba Fadrique <i>baritone</i> | | <i>From Missa Petre ego pro te rogavi</i> | |
| 3. Gloria | 3'51 | 10. Sanctus-Benedictus | 4'24 |
| Incipit: Jagoba Fadrique <i>baritone</i> | | Benedictus: Èlia Casanova · Manon | |
| 4. Ave Maria a 8 | 4'01 | Chauvin <i>sopranos</i> | |
| Èlia Casanova · Manon Chauvin | | Julieta Viñas <i>mezzo soprano</i> | |
| <i>sopranos</i> | | Francisco Braojos <i>tenor</i> | |
| Julieta Viñas · Beverley Green <i>mezzo</i> | | 11. Versa est in luctum a 6 | 4'25 |
| <i>sopranos</i> | | Èlia Casanova · Manon Chauvin | |
| Hugo Bolívar <i>countertenor</i> | | <i>sopranos</i> | |
| Francisco Braojos · Emiliano Cano <i>tenors</i> | | Hugo Bolívar <i>countertenor</i> | |
| Pablo Acosta <i>bass</i> | | Francisco Braojos · Emiliano Cano <i>tenors</i> | |
| 5. Vivo Ego, dicit Dominus | 2'32 | Jagoba Fadrique <i>baritone</i> | |
| 6. Erunt signa in sole | 3'13 | 12. Libera me, Domine a 5 | 8'17 |

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| <i>From Missa Simile est regnum caelorum</i> | 14. Ego Flos Campi | 2'07 |
| 13. Agnus Dei | | |
| Agnus Dei II a 6: Èlia Casanova · Manon | | |
| Chauvin <i>sopranos</i> | 15. O quam suavis est Domine | |
| Hugo Bolívar <i>countertenor</i> | Bonus Track | 3'53 |
| Francisco Braojos <i>tenor</i> | Èlia Casanova <i>soprano</i> | |
| Jagoba Fadrique · Oriol Mallart <i>baritones</i> | Manuel Minguillón <i>vihuela</i> | |



Èlia Casanova · Manon Chauvin & Cristina Teijeiro *sopranos*
Julieta Viñas · Beverley Green *mezzo sopranos*
Hugo Bolívar *countertenor*
Francisco Braojos · Emiliano Cano & Jesús Navarro *tenors*
Jagoba Fadrique · Oriol Mallart *baritones*
Pablo Acosta *bass*
Ana Fernández-Vega *conductor*

Manuel Minguillón (15) *vihuela*

Born in Osuna (Seville) in 1555, **Alonso Lobo de Borja** first studied in Seville under Francisco Guerrero, the cathedral's *maestro de capilla*. He returned to Osuna, graduating from the university where he subsequently took a position as *maestro de capilla* of the collegiate church in 1581. Between 1591 and 1593 he served in Seville as master of the boy choristers and assistant to Guerrero. From there he moved to Toledo cathedral as master of its famous choir until 1604 during which time he published an important collection of works. He returned to Seville cathedral in 1604 where he remained until his death in 1617, having held the two most important posts a Spanish musician could aspire to. He was Guerrero's most famous disciple and worked in close collaboration with Tomás Luis de Victoria on editorial tasks. During his lifetime he was praised by poets such as Lope de Vega and José de Valdivieso (and satirized by Góngora for double-dealing); he was also cited as a model by several music theoreticians until Antonio Soler appeared on the scene in the second half of the XVIIIth century when he was virtually ignored in musical literature until his rediscovery in the latter third of the XXth century, thanks mainly to U.S. and U.K. musicologists such as Robert Stevenson and Bruno Turner. Despite Hilarión Eslava publishing several of his works and Francisco Asenjo Barbieri even conducting some of them, his music did not attain a place in the standard repertoire of the Catholic music reformists nor in the nationalist historiography. It is likely that the reputation he was given by Soler as a writer of convoluted canons, distanced him from the ideals of both the former (austerity and clarity of text) and the latter (expressiveness as opposed to technical dexterity). Thus, virtually the only reference to him in the widely used *History of Spanish Music* published by Alianza Editorial is as an example of the outdated continuance of the use of canons. So, banished from the Olympian Trinity of classical Spanish polyphony (Morales, Guerrero, Victoria), Alonso Lobo is still today, except within specialist circles, a virtually unknown composer.

That his style cannot be reduced to a complex, arid calculation of contrapuntal possibilities is clearly evident in his better known works: the *Credo romano* and

the motet *Versa est in luctum*. The first was the object of a proposal in 1648 by the archdean of Seville cathedral, Mateo Vázquez de Leca, that it should be sung on numerous occasions during the liturgical year due to its being a “devout and solemn work, pleasant to the ear”. The second was composed for the funeral of Philip II in Toledo cathedral and forms an integral part of the traditional Spanish repertoire of funeral music, standing alongside the Requiem masses of Morales and Victoria. These two very different works are written in a style that can be described as anything but cold or erudite; they arouse contrasting emotions thanks to their rich harmony which requires accidentals to be added continually to the Gregorian melody of the the IVth Credo intoned as a cantus firmus by the tenor in the *Credo romano*, while the remaining voices sing metrically aligned but very varied melodic lines.

Versa est in luctum, however, leaves no room for homophony. It begins with a theme that passes through all the voices in direct and contrary motion (a typical hallmark of Lobo's composing) and evolves into a dense mesh of contrapuntal lines which at times seem chaotic, although when heard together effectively convey the emotion of a text bordering on nihilism.

It is true, of course, that other works of his are characterized by imitative complexity, as in the case of his *Ave Maria* in which four voices are derived in canon from a further four producing an eight voice polyphonic texture in a single choir, a device learned from his teacher, Guerrero, who had employed this technique in his *Pater noster* of 1555.

Indeed it is difficult to talk of a Lobo style since variety is one of his foremost characteristics. Lobo himself compiled the main body of his work into one of the few collections of polyphony printed in Spain in the XVIIth century and the only one he himself edited: the *Liber primus missarum* (Madrid, 1602), containing six masses and seven motets, as well as a frontispiece decorated with three canons. All the masses use the parody or imitation technique; that is, they are based on other works, in this case motets by Guerrero and Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina. It was a way of paying

homage to the great masters and of showing his skill at reworking material they so masterfully employed. Just one hearing of the opening of the *Kyrie* and *Gloria* of the *Missa O Rex Glorïae* is enough to show that they are almost identical, the only difference being the shortened notes that facilitate the singing of the long text of the *Gloria*. But they are equal in that they both refer to the opening of the Palestrina motet on which the mass is based. And since this motet, published in 1563, was written for the Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord (forty days after the Resurrection) the mass would be destined for the same liturgical use.

In the two *Agnus* of the *Missa Simile est regnum*, Lobo shows his command of counterpoint by using two secular devices that hark back to the Franco-Flemish masters of the XVth century. In the *Agnus I* he uses the theme from the Guerrero motet on which the mass is based as a *cantus firmus* in the tenor voice, keeping the original text (a polytextuality that had supposedly disappeared decades earlier and which he uses in other *Agnus*). The mass ends with a grandiose final *Agnus* with two further voices added in canon quoting the Guerrero theme, with its characteristic initial repeated note, conveying the meaning of the word "simile".

According to the volume's index, the seven short, devout motets, all in one part, were written to be sung during the masses pertaining to various general feast days in the Catholic calendar such as Corpus Christi, the feast days of the Virgin, All Saints and, particularly, St. Ildephonsus of Toledo. As well as the canon techniques use in the aforementioned *Ave Maria* or the strict canon shared between the two upper voices of the *Ave Regina coelorum*, distinguishing features of Lobo's style are his jagged melodic lines, a far cry from Palestrina's smooth curves, notably in the opening of *Vivo ego, dicit Dominus*, and his more animated endings, with their scalic melismas, heard to great effect in the same motet, underlining the meaning of the word "vivunt".

As well as the masses and motets included by the composer in his printed anthology, dozens of manuscript copies of other motets, hymns, passions,

lamentations and sequences are still extant, an indication of his fame, though some later copies are of questionable authenticity. Some include instrumental accompaniments and others have double choirs which indicates their adaptation to more updated musical practices.

A separate issue are the works popularized in instrumental collections used by more or less contemporary strolling players, though the majority have been lost. Since the instrumental repertoire per se was scant, minstrels resorted to copying vocal works. The particular works chosen for these collections indicate the success they enjoyed, a fame Lobo shared with his mentor Guerrero and other greats such as Orlando de Lasso and Philippe Rogier, though not Victoria. As instrumental pieces, these copies lack text, so to perform them in their original choral version, the underlay, identified solely by the title, must be restored, a tricky task, subject to some intuitive guesswork, successfully carried out by Bruno Turner whose vocal editions have allowed us to recover these works. Two of these collections, preserved in the collegiate church of San Pedro de Lerma (Burgos) and Segovia cathedral, have provided four of the motets included here, unknown in other sources. They are all four part pieces in which, apart from the imitative beginnings of each line, the four voice texture is constant, rarely leaving more than a breathing space, though on a few occasions thinning out to two voices, for example in *Cum audisset Ioannes*, justified by the text "mitens duos de discipulos", sung at that point by the two upper voices. But on the whole, Lobo seems averse to facile madrigalistic word-painting effects: an exception could be the suggestive strings of half-minims on the word "fluctum" in the motet *Erunt signa in sole*, despite the uncertainty of how the text may have been underlaid in the original vocal version.

The aim of this recording by the Coro Victoria is to offer a cross-section of the differing styles used by Lobo in his output of Latin masses and motets (his works in Spanish are all lost). But it also illustrates the variety of interpretative practices of the period, an example being a six voice piece sung by a single soprano while the vihuela

accompaniment covers the remaining five parts. These were ways of introducing great church music into different contexts: church choirs sang it in the liturgy, minstrels played it during processions, and adaptations like the aforementioned for chamber ensembles introduced it into more domestic environments.

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Sources:

- From **Liber Primus Missarum, Madrid 1602**, transcribed and edited by Bruno Turner: Missa O Rex Glorïae, Ave Maria, Credo Romano, Versa est in luctum, Missa Petre ego pro te rogavi, Vivo ego, dicit Dominus, Missa Simile est regnum caelorum and O quam suavis est, Domine.
- From **San Pedro de Lerma (Burgos)**, transcribed and edited by Douglas Kirk, text restored by Bruno Turner: Ego flos campi, Regina caeli laetare and Cum audisset Ioannes.
- From **Toledo Cathedral**, Libro de polifonía no. 24, transcribed and edited by Bruno Turner: Libera me, Domine.
- From **Segovia Cathedral**, Libro de polifonía no.6, transcribed, edited and text restored by Bruno Turner: Ave Regina caelorum and Erunt signa in sole.



Coro Victoria is a choral ensemble specialized in Early Music which takes its name from the great Spanish Renaissance master Tomás Luis de Victoria. The musical goal of Coro Victoria is, in the first place, to recover, study in depth and open to a wider audience the polyphonic music of the Spanish Renaissance which is wide and has a very important musical value. Coro Victoria is a flexible choral group which is able to perform in several formations, from the chamber choir one to various combinations of soloists. The flexibility of this choral group to work in several formations is its identity sign. It is also a necessity, considering the wide repertoire Coro Victoria deals with, a repertoire that requires the ability of adaptation.

www.corovictoria.org

Ana Fernández-Vega graduated from the Madrid Royal Conservatory of Music in choral and orchestral conducting, piano teaching and pedagogy, improvisation and accompaniment. She later took up the harpsichord and began singing lessons while continuing her studies of choral conducting, first at the Sibelius Akatemian in Helsinki (Finland) and then at the Kodaly Institute in Kecskemet, (Hungary). She has conducted many choirs and orchestras in Madrid and also in Finland and Hungary. Since 2008 she has held a permanent teaching post at the Joaquín Turina Professional Conservatory of Music in Madrid and is currently the resident conductor of both the Children's choir and the Youth Choir of the Community of Madrid.

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**Comunidad
de Madrid**



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