

*A Millennium of Music in
The Benedictine Tradition*

I

Adoration: Music of Worship

**Gregorian Chant from the liturgical year
and in honor of the saints of the Church,
sung by eleven different Benedictine
monasteries and convents worldwide**

**Bach preludes from the Orgelbüchlein
played by Vatican organist,
James E. Goettsche,
on the organ of Sant'Anselmo, Rome**

ADORATION: Music of Worship

*For the Liturgical Year
and in honor of
the Saints of the Church*

Sung by monks and nuns from the
Benedictine Abbeys of
*Sant'Anselmo, Rome, Italy;
Triors, Chatillon-St. Jean, France; Notre Dame, Fontgombault,
France;*

*Saint-Benoît-du-Lac, Québec, Canada; São Bento, São Paulo, Brazil;
Maria Laach, Maria Laach, Germany; Mariendonk, Kempen,
Germany;
St. Hildegard, Eibingen, Germany; Regina Laudis, Bethlehem, CT,
USA;
Santa Escolastica, Buenos Aires, Argentina;
Niño Dios, Victoria-Entre Rios, Argentina*

with

Organ Preludes from the Orgelbüchlein by J.S. Bach
played on the pipe organ of Sant' Anselmo, Rome,
by James E. Goettsche, Vatican organist

ADORATION: Music of Worship

1. Bells from Sant' Anselmo Abbey 1:00
2. *Beatus Anselmus* 1:59

ADVENT

3. J.S. Bach. *Praise to the Almighty God* 1:03
4. *Populus Sion* 1:14
5. *Conditor alme siderum* 1:56

CHRISTMAS

6. J.S. Bach *The day is so joyous* 2:13
7. Reading from Isaiah 40 1:31
8. *Dominus dixit ad me* 3:40

9. *Alleluia, Dies sanctificatus* 2:44

EPIPHANY

10. *Ecce advenit dominator* 3:18

PRESENTATION OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

11. J.S. Bach *Lord God, open the heavens* 2:28

LENT

12. *Cum invocarem te* 1:16

13. *Christus factus est* 2:14

EASTER

14. J.S. Bach	<i>Christ lay in the bonds of death</i>	1:21
15.	<i>Salve festa dies</i>	1:33
16.	<i>Alleluia. Haec dies</i>	2:35
17.	<i>Alleluia, Pascha nostrum</i>	2:16
18.	<i>Regina caeli</i>	:40
19.	<i>Kyrie, eleison and Pater noster</i>	2:42

FOR THE SAINTS OF THE CHURCH

20.	<i>Te, Joseph</i>	3:19
21.	<i>Tu es Petrus</i>	:33
22.	<i>Te, Mater alma Numinis</i>	1:59
23.	<i>Columna es immobilis</i>	:45
24.	<i>Salve Regina</i>	2:34

PENTECOST

25. J.S. Bach *Come, Creator God, Holy Spirit: 50*

In closing we return to the beginning...

26. *Beatus Anselmus* 2:32

Abbeys Contributing to this Recording

1. Abbey of Sant'Anselmo, Rome, Italy

1893. The Primatial Abbey. Abbot Marcel Rooney, OSB,
former Abbot Primate of the Benedictine Confederation

2. Abbey of Saint-Benoît-du-Lac, Québec, Canada

ca. 1912. Solesmes Congregation. Abbot Jacques Garneau

*3. Abbey of Notre Dame de Triors, Chatillon-St. Jean,
France*

1984. Solesmes Congregation. Abbot Hervé Courau

4. Abbey of São Bento, São Paulo, Brazil

1598. Brazilian Congregation. Abbot Isidoro Oliveira

Preto

5. *Abbey of Maria Laach, Maria Laach, Germany*
1093. Beuronese Congregation. Abbot Anno Schoenen

6. *Abbey of Notre Dame, Fontgombault, France*
1091. Solesmes Congregation. Abbot Antoine Forgeot.

7. *Abbey of Santa Escolastica, Buenos Aires, Argentina*
1941. Cono-Sur Congregation. Abbess Maria Leticia
Riquelme

8. *Benedictine Abbey, Mariendonk, Kempen, Germany*
1900. Abbess Luitgardis Hecker

9. Benedictine Abbey, St. Hildegard, Eibingen, Germany
1165. Beuronese Congregation. Abbess Edeltraud
Forster

10. Abbey of Regina Laudis, Bethlehem, CT, USA
1947. Abbess emerita-foundress Benedicta Duss

11. Abbey of the Niño Dios, Victoria-Entre Rios, Argentina
1899. Cono-Sur Congregation. Abbot Carlos Martin
Oberti

Adoration: Music of Worship
Liner Notes

Church Bells

The bells of the abbatial church of Sant'Anselmo introduce our recording of Gregorian chant. Their rich vibrant thrust calls us to attention and to worship. The kaleidoscopic pattern of sounds melting one into the other announces to us and to the world the continued rejoicing at the presence of God throughout all time and space.

From as early as the fifth century the sound of bells all across Europe extended the message of the church as far as the wind would allow. In the monastery, in the absence of mechanical clocks, it was the call to prayer, repeated seven times in daytime and rousing the monks

from their beds in the dark of night. Bells from the parish church announced the services, alerted the town to imminent danger, tolled to solemnize a time for mourning, rang in joyful profusion to signal public rejoicing.

Each bell traditionally has its own name, received at its “baptism”---a ceremony of blessing and consecration where the bell is washed, unctions are applied, and divine protection is asked against the evil influences of the air—the storms, the lightning and, today, one would have to add, the pollution. A large number of bells are dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary or to the Angel Gabriel of the Annunciation. Considered *Peace* or *Angelus* bells, they sound at dawn, at noon, and after the afternoon service of Vespers.

Each bell has not only its own name but also its unique voice or tone appropriate to its message: the curfew, a warning to return home and extinguish fires and lights; the passing bell, used in monastic orders to call the community to the bedside of a dying member; the *tocsin*, or alarm bell, the *salva terram*, providing protection in times of storm or danger; the *classicum*, several bells ringing at once to announce a solemn feast or the presence of honored guests. As proclaimed at their baptism, bells are *Vox Domini in virtute, vox Domini in magnificentia*, “the voice of the Lord in power; the voice of the Lord in magnificence.”

Church bells cannot be ignored. Their sound resonates within our own substance, reminding us to

awaken and respond to their call. Here they will ring in the song of the ancient chant and begin our music of worship.

The Orgelbüchlein

The organ interludes played for this recording by Vatican organist James E. Goettsche are taken from the *Orgelbüchlein*, the “Little Organ Book,” by J.S. Bach. The name of the collection of preludes refers to the small size of the manuscript (15.5 x 17 cm) rather than to the project itself, which was originally to encompass one hundred sixty-four titles—music from the entire ecclesiastical year as well as other subjects of liturgical importance. Begun in 1713 and continued for about three years when Bach was court organist at Weimar and at the height of his activity as

virtuoso organist, the book's purpose was to provide guidance to student organists on the best way to develop a chorale instrumentally and, also, to become practiced in the art of using the pedal.

Chorales or sacred hymns dominated the musical activities of German Protestant organists in Bach's time. Like Gregorian chant, they were first sung in unison, by the congregation, and unaccompanied. Words and melodies were closely associated and reflected the general mood of the season when they were used. As time went on, the organ was increasingly introduced to provide harmony and support for the singers, to create elaborate interludes between verses, and generally to enhance the feeling of the text. Eventually the preludes were used

alone as a way to further interpret and illuminate the themes of worship.

Selection #3, *Lob sei dem allmächtigen Gott*, “Praise to the almighty God,” is inspired by the traditional Gregorian hymn for the First Sunday of Advent, *Creator Alme Siderum*, “Creator of the Stars of Night,” and sung by monks from the Abbey of Saint-Benoît-du-Lac as selection #5. Bach metricized and paraphrased this free-flowing chant perhaps to suggest that the Son of God has descended from the heavens and now accompanies us, walking the earthly path. We hear his careful, measured steps.

Representative of the ten preludes of the *Orgelbüchlein* written for the Christmas season is *Der*

Tag, der ist so freudenreich, “The Day is so joyous,” selection #6. The chorale, a pre-Reformation translation of the Latin hymn *Dies est laetitia* is clearly heard and strongly evokes the holiday spirit.

Selection # 11, *Herr Gott, nun schleuss den Himmel auf*, “Lord God, now open wide the heavens,” inspired by the *Nunc dimittis* or Canticle of Simeon, pictures the aged man, who has realized his desire to see the Christ Child, now preparing for death. His plodding steps, heard in the organ pedal, are contrasted with the airy, swift notes of the left hand which, for Bach, symbolized the moving clouds of heaven.

The season of Easter is represented by one of the most majestic of the choral preludes, *Christ lag in*

Todesbanden, “Christ lay in the bonds of death,” selection #14. This ancient hymn celebrating the Resurrection of Christ from the dead is played with full organ. The strong, insistent pedal suggests the rolling away of the heavy stone from his tomb.

The final selection, #25, is a Latin hymn traditionally sung for the feast of Pentecost, *Komm, Gott, Schöpfer, Heiliger Geist*, “Come Holy Ghost, Creator, come.” This festival, celebrating the moment when the third person of the Holy Trinity, God’s eternal presence, descended upon the apostles with tongues of fire, receives special rhythmical treatment. Writing with twelve beats to a measure, Bach gives the third of each three-note set of quarter notes, the “Trinitarian beat,” a particular pedal

thump!

These preludes are played by Mr. Goettsche on the organ of Sant' Anselmo's Church. Made in Austria, the instrument, originally mechanical but now electrified, is very well adapted to the music of Bach.

St. Benedict of Nursia

Known not only as the father of Western monasticism but also named by Pope Paul VI as "the principal, heavenly patron of the whole of Europe," St. Benedict was born in the Umbrian town of Nursia around AD 480. Turning his back on a worldly career promising success in business or government, he devoted himself to a life of prayer and devotion to God. He founded a number

of monasteries in Italy, at Subiaco and finally at Montecassino, where he composed his famous *Rule*. The Rule crystallized the monastic discipline of Benedict's time and, for more than fifteen hundred years, has provided spiritual and practical guidance to his Benedictine followers, even to the present day.

Following the Biblical injunction, "Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous ordinances," (Psalm 119:164) Benedict's monks met together in the monastery oratory to chant the Lord's praise seven times during the day and once during the night, using as primary source the Book of Psalms. This faithful musical praying of the word of God known as the *Opus Dei*, "Work of God," before which nothing else might come, forms the very basis of

Christian worship and its elaboration throughout the centuries.

Gregorian Chant

Gregorian chant was once the sole sung prayer of the Christian church. It is monophonic or one-part music that has been sung in Latin, the Western Church's traditional language of worship, by monks and nuns for more than a thousand years. Some of the earliest chants, dating from the first centuries after the birth of Christ, match with Jewish melodies of the period.

By the time of Pope Gregory I (540-604) the chant repertory, the continuing work of anonymous composers passed down from one generation to another, was already

a rich musical heritage sung not only throughout the day in monasteries but also accompanying the Mass. Pope Gregory was neither composer nor singer, although it is clear that he played a significant role in the formation of liturgical worship. It is rather for his many gifts as writer, diplomat, administrator, and disseminator of the Christian faith throughout the Roman Empire that his name has traditionally been associated with the chant repertory.

Much of what gives chant its unique quality is that it is written in modes (patterns of notes played over the span of an octave and generally containing no sharps or flats) rather than keys. There are eight basic chant modes which allow for a very free flowing melody line, not subjected to the bar lines and measures which characterize

modern music. Though a system of notation was gradually devised, chant relied as much on an oral tradition of interpretation that permitted much variation in its performance depending on the choir that sang it and the qualities of the space in which it was sung.

The eleven Benedictine choirs heard on this recording, coming from abbeys worldwide, illustrate the regional pronunciation of Latin typical of Italy, France, Canada, Brazil, Argentina, Germany, or the United States. However, today their musical interpretation is based on the work of restoration begun during the nineteenth century at the Abbey of Saint Pierre de Solesmes in France. The chant, although carefully protected in Benedictine monasteries for a thousand years, had over the centuries

taken on many flowery decorations, more accretions to the original form than early eighth- to eleventh-century manuscripts indicated. When the Abbey of St. Pierre de Solesmes was restored in 1833 after many vicissitudes, its abbot, Dom Guéranger, recognized the need to renew the chant as well. He therefore set himself the task of reinvigorating liturgical music in France, an effort which would eventually have universal applications throughout the Church.

Dom Guéranger and his monks revived the lost accent and rhythm of Gregorian chant and in restoring the true text of the chants laid down the principle to which they have always strictly adhered—that when various manuscripts of different periods and places agreed on a

version, that was the most correct.

Early efforts at restoration carried out by Dom Jausion (1834-70) and Dom Pothier (1835-1923) emphasized the necessity of referring to the ancient manuscripts for melodic line and notation, and the need for good phrasing in performance. In 1900 Dom André Mocquereau (1849-1930) became leader of the work. His far-reaching contribution was the personal training of the Solesmes *Schola*, which, through the years, influenced many others. With his publication of *Paléographie musicale*, containing photographic reproductions of scores of manuscripts from all the principal libraries of Europe, a far greater degree of exactness was possible than with mere transcripts which might contain copyist's errors.

These reproductions have been brought together and are studied at Solesmes even to our day. This work received the highest possible recognition in 1904, when Pope Pius X entrusted Solesmes with the work of preparing an official Vatican edition of the Church's chant, appointing a commission for the purpose with Dom Pothier as president.

Today the community of Solesmes has achieved a worldwide reputation for its erudition and its devotion to monastic and liturgical studies. The Gregorian chant sung at Solesmes represents a standard to which all other *scholae cantorum* aspire.

The profound religious wisdom that is expressed in chant, combined with its musical particularities, may

explain much of the revived interest in chant today. It is intriguing and inspiring not only to Christian monks and nuns but to people of many tastes, beliefs, and philosophies. Surely it is one of the great achievements of the human spirit, uplifting, calming, and satisfying the deepest longings of the heart. Abbot Marcel Rooney speaks of chant in this way:

To grasp its fullest sense, to penetrate its riches is to be exposed to the consequences of one of the most mysterious lines uttered in the Christian scriptures: “The Word became flesh,” (John 1:14). In this succinct phrase John the Evangelist expresses what never could have been imagined: that God himself comes among us and expresses

his being in human terms. Chant is the embodiment of this belief in music.

In this recording are presented musical selections appropriate to the seasons of the liturgical year: Advent, the days of preparation leading to the birth of Jesus; Christmas, his nativity, Epiphany, the arrival of the three Wise Men from the East coming to adore the Christ Child; Lent, the forty penitential days preceding Easter, the celebration of the Resurrection; Pentecost, the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples, and the Festival of All Saints' and All Souls,' when the Church remembers those who have died. Included also are chants dedicated to specific Christian saints.

Taken from the *Opus Dei* are hymns and antiphons (short liturgical texts sung before a Psalm or other song and related to the feast being celebrated)—from the service of Lauds, sung at sunrise, Vespers, occurring in the late afternoon; and Compline, the last prayers sung before retiring. Texts are chosen from the Proper of the Mass, which changes from festival to festival—Introits, which introduce the Mass and state the essence of what is to follow; Alleluias and Graduals, elaborately melismatic chants interspersed between the scriptural readings, and several Communion chants when the gifts of bread and wine are presented and received. From the closing prayers of the Vesper service composed by Hildegard of Bingen we have included a Kyrie or prayer for mercy and the

Lord's Prayer, which always concludes this service.

The recording begins and ends with an antiphon in honor of the feast day of St. Anselm for whom the Primatial Abbey is named. It is followed by two verses of the Canticle of Zachary (Luke 1:68-79) sung at Morning Prayer each morning of the entire year by the monks of the Abbey. It is the canticle of the dawning of our salvation, bringing light to those who live in darkness.

Hildegard of Bingen

Benedictine Abbess Hildegard of Bingen is considered one of the most influential women to have lived in Germany during the Middle Ages. Born in Bermersheim near Alzey in Rheinhessen in 1098 and the

youngest of ten children, she was placed at an early age in the care of the recluse Jutta von Sponheim. Probably between 1112 and 1115 she resolved to lead a monastic life in accordance with the Benedictine Rule. After the death of Jutta she became the spiritual leader of her convent community.

A woman of transcendent vision, making astonishing contributions in vocations as distinct as theologian, adviser to bishops, popes, and kings, writer, poet, and even naturopath/herbalist, she was also a composer of extraordinary renown. Many of her compositions, which included seventy-seven songs and a sacred morality play, *Ordo Virtutum*, were intended for liturgical use. She composed, in particular, songs to the

saints who were especially revered in the convents she knew well or those such as Mary and Ursula who were held in great honor in the twelfth century.

The *Kyrie* and *Pater Noster* included here are part of the traditional plainchant closing prayers of the Vesper Service added to *O Vis Aeternitatis*, “O Strength of Eternity,” composed by Hildegard. They are sung by sixty Benedictine sisters of an abbey reconstructed above one of Hildegard’s original convents and under the supervision of Abbess Edeltraud Forster, thirty-eighth successor to Hildegard herself.

