For more than three decades now, The Hilliard Ensemble has been active in the realms of both early and contemporary music. As well as recording and performing music by composers such as Pérotin, Dufay, Josquin and Bach the ensemble has been involved in the creation of a large number of new works. James MacMillan, Heinz Holliger, Arvo Pärt, Steven Hartke and many other composers have written both large and small-scale pieces for them.

The ensemble’s performances frequently include collaborations with other musicians such as the saxophonist Jan Garbarek, violinist Christoph Poppen, violist Kim Kashkashian and orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the Philadelphia Orchestra.

John Potter’s contribution was crucial to getting the Hilliard Live project under way. John has since left to take up a post in the Music Department of York University. His place in the group has been filled by Steven Harrold.

www.hilliardensemble.demon.co.uk
The **hilliard live** series of recordings came about for various reasons. At the time self-published recordings were a fairly new and increasingly common phenomenon in popular music and we were keen to see if we could make the process work for us in the context of a series of public concerts. Perhaps the most important motive for this experiment was our desire to capture the atmosphere and excitement of concert performances of some of our favourite repertoire. Performance rather than recording is, after all, what music is about. There is the unavoidable risk that all will not be perfect; audience noise or human frailty on our part may detract from the polished perfection that can be achieved with a studio recording but such risks are part of our daily life of concert giving and lend to the event an added degree of excitement and, we hope, engagement with the audience.

We are happy to make this series of discs more widely available on CORO.

Gordon Jones

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The history of late-twelfth-century polyphony was first written a hundred years after the event by a monk who may have come from Bury St Edmunds; history has not entrusted us with his name and he is usually referred to by the title he received when his treatise was first published in the nineteenth century: Anonymous IV. Anonymous as he was, he tells us about two of the most important composers of the fifty years either side of 1200: Léonin and Pérotin.

Léonin, we are told, wrote a cycle of two-part settings of the most important chants in the liturgical year - Christmas, Easter, Assumption and other feasts; this cycle was called the Magnus liber organi - the great book of organum. Pérotin played an important role in the careful recasting and elaboration of this repertory. According to the monk from Bury St Edmunds, he either shortened or edited (interpretations vary) Léonin's organa; whether the two-part types that make up Léonin's Magnus liber organi or the four-part Viderunt omnes and Sederunt principes. These works were quite possibly performed respectively in 1198 and 1199, and represent the best guesses we have about fixed points in the chronology of the works of both Pérotin and Léonin Organa; whether the two-part types that make up Léonin's Magnus liber organi or the four-part Viderunt and Sederunt are polyphonic settings of plainsong. The original chants employ two musical styles: the solo sections are elaborately melismatic and contrast with the simpler, more syllabic, sections sung by the schola. It is the melismatic solo sections of the chant that are set polyphonically. The result is that a performance of organum involves polyphony and plainsong. Viderunt and Sederunt are both graduals and have the overall structure respond – verse – respond. Within each of these main sections are settings of both solo and choral chants; the respond consists of polyphony followed by the remainder of the chant, and the same pattern is followed in the verse, and of course in the return of the respond. Usually, the second respond is simply a repeat of the first one. However, in the case of Sederunt principes, the second respond is composed anew. On major feasts, when the gradual was followed by an alleluia, the repeat of the respond was usually omitted. In Paris around 1200, however, the practice was different. Léonin's organa dupla of the Magnus liber organi took the plainsong and did one of two things with it: for the more syllabic sections of the chant that he set, he laid out the lowest part (the tenor) in long notes and wrote highly elaborate, rhapsodic lines above it (the duplum). Alternatively, he took the long melismas of the chant and organised them into repeating rhythmic cells and wrote a correspondingly tight rhythmic duplum above it. The rhythmic organisation of this procedure gave rise to what are called the rhythmic modes. Both types of music exist within the same composition: the sections based on highly melismatic chants that use the rhythmic modes are called clausulae.

In three and four-part organum the elaborate, rhapsodic dupla of Léonin's pieces are not practical because of the co-ordination of the three upper parts; all the polyphony is organised along the lines of the rhythmic modes. The differences between clausulae and the rest of the piece is that, in a clausula, the tenor moves at more or less the same speed as the upper voices and in the rest of the piece the tenor is deployed in long, sustained notes. Clausulae may be heard, for example, in Viderunt omnes on the word dominus and in Sederunt principes on the words [domi]-ne deus meus. The result of the exclusive use of the rhythmic modes in the three and four parts is that it frees up additional compositional resources, and it is perhaps one of Pérotin's greatest contributions to the history of music to have exploited imitation and even canon for the first time in these four-part compositions. It used to be thought that the sustained notes in organum duplum, triplum and quadruplum were to be held relentlessly; a
challenge to breath control and the sanity of the singer taking the part. Re-readings of thirteenth-century theory suggest that the tenor is responsible for contributing with great subtlety to the texture of the work by breaking the sound, at the same time as one or more of the upper voices, and this is the procedure that the Hilliard Ensemble employ in the recording here. By any standards, Pérotin must have been an extraordinary composer. He wrote and revised organa in two to four parts, but also contributed to the other main genre that was cultivated in Paris around 1200: the conductus. Conducti were newly-composed settings of non-liturgical texts in Latin; they could be composed in anything from one to four parts. Pérotin’s Beata viscera is a magnificent example of what the monk from Bury St Edmunds called a conductus simplex - a piece in one part only. This recording includes all three surviving four-part conducti: Mundus vergens and Deus misertus alongside two three-part specimens: Veni creator and Procurans odium.

Conductus texts were non-liturgical, rhymed and constituted part of the corpus of medieval rithmi or accentual poetry. Their regular poetic structures give rise to regular phrase length, and their stanzaic structure is reflected directly in the musical setting in that the music for the first stanza is usually repeated for subsequent ones; this is the case for all conducti recorded here. The subject matter for conducti varies widely, and has little relationship with the number of voice-parts or the musical style of the composition. The first two four-part conducti, Mundus vergens and Deus misertus play off Old and New Testament imagery. In the case of Vetus abit littera, Christ’s nativity is characterised by the replacement of the Old Law with the New Gospel with a passing allusion to Isaiah XL, 4; in Deus misertus, which deals with sin and the cleansing of sin, the third stanza has the poet alluding to the story of Elisha’s difficulty in raising a dead boy after his servant, Gehazi, had tried, and to how the boy was only restored when Elisha himself lay across the boy’s body. Veni creator spiritus, on the other hand, extensively tropes odd words of the Pentecost hymn of the same title; and it focuses extensively on the sevenfold gifts of grace from the third stanza of the hymn. Mundus vergens is however topical; the poem, of which some stanzas may be missing, seems to refer to a period when France was experiencing a time of trouble after a period of peace although the final line of the third stanza - which continues a maritime metaphor - suggests that she does not lack a rudder. Commentators have suggested a variety of occasions to which this text might refer: Philip Augustus disagreements with Richard I after 1189, the Norman wars, the Battle of Bouvines, and so on.

There are two manners of performing conducti, and the recordings here exemplify both; they are termed isosyllabic and modal. In an isosyllabic performance, each syllable of the poetry is rendered approximately equal, and groups of two or three notes are fitted in accordingly; Deus misertus and Mundus vergens are performed this way. In a modal performance, the rhythmic modes familiar from the clausulae in organa are superimposed on the music in an attempt to reflect the perceived accentual qualities of the poetry. Veni creator and Procurans odium are performed this way; Vetus abit littera, because of its musical structure requires a hybrid treatment.

The decoration of plainsong with polyphony was as important to the embellishment of the liturgy as was stained glass to the windows of the cathedral whose name was appropriated by scholars looking for a peg on which to hang this repertory: the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. It’s certainly true that almost all the evidence surrounding Pérotin’s later contributions to Léonin’s Magnus liber organi seem to centre on the cathedral and its immediate surroundings. The Hilliard Ensemble contrast this Parisian centrality of organa and conducti with works from the south-west of present day France and from England. The three-part setting of the alleluia for the feast of the Nativity of The Blessed Virgin Mary, Alleluia. Nativitas, appears to have been composed in England and to have incorporated one section of the music of Pérotin’s setting of the same chant; the text to this section was new; Pérotin’s clausula: Ex semine is effectively trooped by being supplied with a new text - Ex semine Habrahe / divino moderamine / ignem pio numine: From the seed of Abraham, by divine management you bring forth a fire.
The troped Gloria: Redemptori meo survives in Parisian sources but is here performed in an English version known only in a manuscript in Cambridge. This is a setting of the first few phrases of the Gloria interspersed with new text (the original is italicised)

Gloria in excelsis Deo, redemptori meo, Galileo, sidero, bine maiestatis, et in terra pax hominibus non tamen omnibus! Ergo quibus? Fidelibus bone voluntatis....

and, as can be seen from the translation of this passage

Glory in the highest to God, my redeemer, man of Galilee, starlike one, twofold majesty; and on earth peace to men, but not to all.

To which, then? To the faithful men of good will....
the poet makes the new text elide with the liturgical text of the Gloria.

Christus surrexit is a monophonic sequence from twelfth-century Aquitaine, and accompanies the sequence: Stirps Iesse. This is something of a curiosity. It is a monophonic sequence with a polyphonic Amen. This means that the six stanzas of the poem employ three musical units: the first for the first two stanzas, the second for stanzas three and four and the third for the last two stanzas. The austere monophony of this sequence is contrasted with the three part polyphonic Amen which is every bit as complex as the three-part discant produced by Pérotin and his contemporaries. The piece is found in a collection of hymns and sequences now preserved in a manuscript in the British Library in London. Among these monodies are eight monophonic sequences which end with polyphonic Amens. All are in two parts with the exception of Stirps Iesse, recorded here.

The Old Law passes away, the rite of the ancients has gone, a virgin in childbirth gives to us a new son, a salvation-bearing gift, a king and high priest who, making the rough places plain, strengthens the bond of peace, the cleanser of our sins.

Vetus abit littera

Vetus abit littera, ritus abit veterum, dat virgo puerpera novum nobis puerum, munus salutiferum, regem et presbyterum, qui complanans aspera firmat pacis federa, purgator et scelerum.

Felicis puerpere felix puerperium Babilonis misere revocat exilium, iam plebs ceca gentium, videns lucis radium, fracto mortis carcere, non adheret littere propter evangelium.

Funic pene rumpitur nato rege glorie, mortis torrens bibtur data lege gratie, dies est lettie, lux iugis psallentie, munus festi solvitur, gaudeamus igitur culpa data venie.

Mark Everist

Anon. (C13th)

Punishment’s cord is broken by the new-born King of Glory; the flood of death is swallowed up by the gift of the law of grace; this is a day of joy, the perpetual light of singing, for the reward of the feast-day is granted; let us rejoice, therefore, since our guilt has been forgiven.

TEXTS and TRANSLATIONS

Vetus abit littera

Vetus abit littera, ritus abit veterum, dat virgo puerpera novum nobis puerum, munus salutiferum, regem et presbyterum, qui complanans aspera firmat pacis federa, purgator et scelerum.

Felicis puerpere felix puerperium Babilonis misere revocat exilium, iam plebs ceca gentium, videns lucis radium, fracto mortis carcere, non adheret littere propter evangelium.

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Anon. (C13th)
Deus misertus hominis

God, pitying man,
washed man charged with Eve’s guilt,
through a virgin’s son:
O what a sweet remedy!
that sin
should be purged by a contradiction;
may salvation come to the elect,
lest tedium
should overwhelm the runner of the course
if a reward is to be disbursed.

A virgin conceived a son,
to whom testify
the Father and the Gospels;
those whom the serpent has defiled,
he heals
who, being holy, has made them holy;
without faith there is no profit,
but loss,
because he who casts off faith
does not make himself faithful.

Not by Elisha’s rod,
nor by Gehazi’s sign,
but by the covering of the Cross
is the young boy returned to life.
Christ is believed,
he is sent, born of the Father;
and while he suffers on the Cross
and dies,
the moon suffers an eclipse,
for the sun is hidden by a cloud.

Veni creator spiritus

Come, creator spirit,
recreator spirit,
you give, our heavenly gift;
you are the gift, you are the giver,
you are the king, you are his finger,
nourishing and nourished,
breathing and breath,
the breathed and the breather.

Visit the minds of your people,
visitor of minds,
dwell where you visit,
dweller with those visited.

You are the fountain, you are the stream,
the shrub and the shoot,
the teacher and the pupil,
the crowner of servants.

You by your sevenfold grace,
giving a sevenfold gift,
of sevenfold virtue
of the seven petitions;
you are the snow that does not melt,
the fire that does not destroy,
the fighter who does not fear,
the deliverer of discourse.
Tu gratis data gratia, 
et tu faciens gratos, 
tu primo purgas vitia, 
post conservas purgatos, 
absolue debita, 
extolle merita, 
virtute solita 
salvans predestinatos.

Ergo accende sensibus
hi te lumen et flamen, 
hi te inspira cordibus 
qui es vite spiramen; 
tu sol, 
mittens et nuntius, 
persona tertius, 
salva nos. Amen, amen.

You are the free gift of grace, 
and you are the one who makes us grateful:
first you purge our sins, 
then you save the purged. 
Forgive our trespasses, 
praise our good deeds, 
and by your accustomed virtue 
save those predestined for salvation.

So inflame our senses, 
you our light and flame; 
inspire our hearts, 
you who are the breath of life. 
You are the sun, you are the ray, 
the sender and the messenger; 
third person of the Trinity, 
save us. Amen, amen.

Viderunt omnes
R. Viderunt omnes fines terrae 
salutare Dei nostri: 
iubilate Deo omnis terra.

V. Notum fecit Dominus salutare 
suum: ante conspectum gentium 
revelavit iustitiam suam.

All the ends of the earth have seen the 
salvation of our God: 
rejoice in God, all the earth.

The Lord has made his salvation known: 
he has revealed his justice in the sight of 
the gentiles.

Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo, 
redemptori meo, 
Galileo, sidereo, 
bine maiestatis, 
et in terra pax hominibus 
non tamen omnibus! 
Ergo quibus?
Fidelibus bone voluntatis, 
hinc amor, inde tremor; 
inter utrumque premor.

Praise the invisible 
Father, and the Son, 
the great Spirit, 
fiery and humble.

Christe, nostrum electum 
you are the plectrum of our lyre; 
made us angelic, 
reform our form, 
make us like the angels, 
by the capture of captivity.

Therefore glory be to the Father and to the Son, 
and the third praise be 
to the third flame 
by the power of the Father; knowledge by the Son, 
and goodness by the Spirit.

His grace is threefold, his being is one, 
his godhead equal.
The world, turning in revolt,
proving its destruction by its result,
shakes itself free from falsehood.
For it is removed from the art of deceit to
obliterate us, by strength or by art; what is
now obvious is added on.
And while it applies itself to these ends,
it unfolds what is the end.
The world which for a long time flourished
in peace is now inflamed by the torch of war,
and Gaul dies before her time;
and now the ship, given to the sea,
in desperation lacking a harbour,
is shaken by the tempest
and, shattered by the storm,
has no need of a rudder.

Oves virgo decorata
lux in patria,
nobis testis vite data,
luminaria.
Esto nobis preparata
inter agmina,
ut ex nobis sociata,
sis in gloria. Amen.

Rejoice, O virgin,
light and adornment of our land,
given to us
as an illustrious witness of life.
Be ready for us
in the battle ranks,
that, though parted from us,
you may be our glorious ally. Amen.

From the bosom of Jesse
sprang a shoot in the East;
a radiant star
is risen from the bridal bed.
The sun shines upon earth,
making the shadows flee,
and from her son Christ
thus appears this miraculous lady.
Mother of the king,
exalted above all things,
and ever shining
brighter than the stars.
Sweetly attend to us
in this our fatherland
that our flesh may not prevail
in the midst of confusion.

This is the day which the Lord has made:
let us rejoice and be glad in it
Let us put our faith in the Lord,
for he is good.

Confitemini Domino
quoniam bonus.

Mundus vergens in defectum
casum probans per effectum,
se fallacem exuit.
Nemotrem fracta arte
nos delere vi vel arte
quod iam patet astruit.
Et dum hie se applicat,
quod explicit explicat.
Mundus flores diu pace,
iam accensus belli face,
Gallia praemortur.
Et iam navis marl data
portu carens desperata
procelis concitatur
et fractatur turbine,
non eget regimine.

This is the day which the Lord has made:
let us rejoice and be glad in it
For it is removed from the art of deceit to
obliterate us, by strength or by art; what is
now obvious is added on.
And while it applies itself to these ends,
it unfolds what is the end.
The world which for a long time flourished
in peace is now inflamed by the torch of war,
and Gaul dies before her time;
and now the ship, given to the sea,
in desperation lacking a harbour,
is shaken by the tempest
and, shattered by the storm,
has no need of a rudder.

Rejoice, O virgin,
light and adornment of our land,
given to us
as an illustrious witness of life.
Be ready for us
in the battle ranks,
that, though parted from us,
you may be our glorious ally. Amen.

Stirps lesse
Stirps lesse de gremio,
foret in aurora
oritur ex thalamo,
stella radiosa.
Sol fulget in solio,
fugans tenebrosa
et ex Christi filio,
sic miraculosa.
Mater regis exaltata
super omnia,
et semper illuminata
supra sydera.
Amene nobis nosima,
in hac patria
ne valeat per turbare
nostra viscera.

Stirps Iesse de gremio,
foret in aurora
oritur ex thalamo,
stella radiosa.
Sol fulget in solio,
fugans tenebrosa
et ex Christi filio,
sic miraculosa.
Mater regis exaltata
super omnia,
et semper illuminata
supra sydera.
Amene nobis nosima,
in hac patria
ne valeat per turbare
nostra viscera.

Mundus vergens
Mundus vergens in defectum
casum probans per effectum,
se fallacem exuit.
Nam remota fraudis arte
nos delere vi vel arte
quod iam patet astruit.
Et dum hie se applicat,
quod explicit explicat.
Mundus flores diu pace,
iam accensus belli face,
Gallia praemortur.
Et iam navis marl data
portu carens desperata
procelis concitatur
et fractatur turbine,
non eget regimine.

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Mundus flores diu pace,
iam accensus belli face,
Gallia praemortur.
Et iam navis marl data
portu carens desperata
procelis concitatur
et fractatur turbine,
non eget regimine.
Inciting hatred,
the act of pulling people apart
scarcely rejoices at its own effect
upon those it divides;
the binding together of hearts
is its own act of separation:
thus, through a contradiction
by an ignorant enemy,
what in one case is foresight
becomes in another case
the happy condition of lovers.

I perceive that the insults
of such people are profitable
and the opportunity drips away
of removing tediousness.
They defer their happiness
by a perverse resolution,
but longing
is increased by delay.
By such a cure,
I gather grapes
from an enemy’s thorn-bushes.

Anon. (C13th)

Procurans odium

Anon. / Pérotin

Alleluia. Nativitas

Alleluia.
Nativitas gloriosae
virginis Mariae
ex semine Habrahæ
divino moderamine
ignem pio numine
producis, Domine,
hominis salutem,
paupertate nuda,
virginis nativitate
de tribu luda.
iam propinas ovum
per natale novum;
piscem, panem dabis
portu sine semine,
orta de tribu luda,
clara ex stirpe David.
Alleluia.

Nativitas

Anon. / Pérotin

Alleluia.
The nativity of the glorious
virgin Mary
from the seed of Abraham,
by divine management
you bring forth a fire,
O Lord;
and the salvation of man
in his naked poverty,
by the birth of the virgin
of the tribe of Judah.
Now on this new birthday
you promise us an egg,
and you will give us fish and bread
by this immaculate birth,
sprung from the tribe of Judah
and of the bright stock of David.
Alleluia.
A concert given during the 1996 Hilliard Summer School

The Hilliard Ensemble

David James countertenor
Rogers Covey-Crump tenor
John Potter tenor
Gordon Jones baritone

Recorded on 1 August 1996
in the chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge
by kind permission of the Master and Fellows
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www.goldmarkart.com

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b

Sederunt principes

R. Sederunt principes, et adversum me loquebantur: et iniqui persecuti sunt me.
V. Adiuva me Domine Deus meus: salvum me fac, propter misericordiam tuam.

Pérotin

Kings sat in counsel against me and dealt wickedly with me.
Help me, O Lord my God:
save me, according to your mercy.

Christus surrexit

Christus surrexit ex mortuis
mortis contractis vinculis
gaudentes angeli voce
in altissimis proclamant dicentes: Alleluia!
Carmina laudum suscipe,
redempta ab arche superna
Annum sancti martiris
nam festa conciliata.
Orris in romulea urbe
fulsit splendida ut lucerna.
Urbs vertebat orbita Roma
cum millesimam monarchiam.
Tormentorum genera superata
omnia
Regna triumphali redimitus trabea.

Chant (C13th)

Christ is risen from the dead,
breaking the bonds of death.
Rejoicing, the voices of angels
in the highest shout out saying:
Alleluia!
Accept their songs of praise
redeemed from the supreme rule.
The city of Rome has reversed its orbit
having overcome all manner of torments,
it is decked triumphantly in the royal robe
of state.

Christus surrexit ex mortuis
mortis contractis vinculis
gaudentes angeli voce
in altissimis proclamant dicentes: Alleluia!
Carmina laudum suscipe,
redempta ab arche superna
Annum sancti martiris
nam festa conciliata.
Orris in romulea urbe
fulsit splendida ut lucerna.
Urbs vertebat orbita Roma
cum millesimam monarchiam.
Tormentorum genera superata
omnia
Regna triumphali redimitus trabea.

Sederunt principes

R. Sederunt principes, et adversum me loquebantur: et iniqui persecuti sunt me.
V. Adiuva me Domine Deus meus: salvum me fac, propter misericordiam tuam.

Pérotin

Kings sat in counsel against me and dealt wickedly with me.
Help me, O Lord my God:
save me, according to your mercy.