

Recent recordings of plainchant

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The two series of recordings using new editions of the Mass Propers, noted last year, are continuing, but only one disc is at hand at the moment. 'Quoniam in Me Speravi' (no. 1 in the Discography) offers the first four Sundays of Lent, directed by Stephan Zippe, a pupil of Johannes Berchmans Göschl. The four Sundays of Lent are represented by the expected five chants each with the addition of the alternate introit for the Second Sunday, 'Reminiscere'. The quality of the schola's singing remains on the highest level, the verses are well sung by soloists, the semiological interpretation is skilled and the melodic restitutions found in the *Graduale Novum* are available for comparison with the new *Liber Gradualis* and the *Graduale Triplex*.

A new series from Gloriam Dei Cantores, an ecumenical community on Cape Cod in Massachusetts that uses the complete daily Office in chant, was represented last year by 'The Chants of Mary' (2012, no. 8). This series gives each member of the chant schola the opportunity to prepare and direct some of the chants. The first disc issued was 'The Chants of Angels' (no. 2) and the latest is 'The Chants of the Holy Spirit' (no. 3). The first disc groups various chants of Mass and Office around the title theme, with some antiphons sung with a psalm or canticle. The other focuses on Mass Propers of Pentecost and its vigil, adding a Dufay three-voice hymn at the end. This is one of the most accomplished American chant scholas, with excellent soloists in the verses and semiological interpretation taught by Mary Berry. Men and women of the schola alternate, occasionally singing in octaves.

A concert in St Stephan's Cathedral in Vienna directed by Franz Karl Prassl has been issued by the Austrian Academy of Musicology (no. 4). Its focus is chant variants found in manuscripts in six Austrian archives. I was present for this concert, sung in conjunction with the meeting of the IMS study group 'Cantus Planus'. The distinctive feature of the programme was the responsory 'Media vita' sung with a 'Requiem aeternam' verse for László Dobszay, one of the founders of Cantus Planus, who had passed away the day before. The troped 'Kyrie fons bonitatis' is sung with organum. Some of the Mass chants include tropes, and the First Vespers antiphons for a late Office of St Augustine, not found in Andrew Hughes's *Late Medieval Liturgical Offices*, are taken from Klosterneuburg 1012.

The most notable recording yet for the feast of St Charlemagne has appeared on a label based in Liège but sung by an American schola that has performed the music

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in Aachen (on the feast day) and other cities in the area (no. 5). The emperor was canonised in 1165 by an antipope at the behest of Frederick Barbarossa for his own political ends and is celebrated now only in the region around Aachen. The Offices of First Vespers and Compline are sung in chant with some polyphonic works by Johannes Mangon and others. The nine voices form a fine vocal ensemble and the packaging is elegant.

Sequentia's complete set of the works of Hildegard of Bingen was long ago promised, but the passing of Barbara Thornton seemed to put an end to the project, one disc short of completion. St Hildegard's elevation to the rank of Doctor of the Church in late 2012, however, gave new impetus to the completion, and the result has just been issued (no. 6). Her feast is now celebrated in the calendar of the universal church rather than just four German dioceses and the Benedictine order. The final disc consists not just of chants left over at the end but also of a unified group of antiphons and responsories for saints from Hildegard's *Scivias*. Benjamin Bagby directs an ensemble of seven women in fine fettle. Two antiphons are sung with gospel canticles and three pieces are accompanied by a single instrument.

A solo Hildegard programme comes from Sabine Lutzenberger, one of the singers on the preceding disc (no. 7). She recorded it barely a week after the previous disc, joined by Baptiste Romain, a soloist on fiddle and lyre. She sings both solo and accompanied, while he plays three tracks alone. Two of the antiphons are sung with psalms. The source used is the Dendermonde Codex, significant because one antiphon, 'Laus Trinitati', is found only there, not in the Riesencodex. The singing is stylish without exaggeration and the playing is discreet.

Another Hildegard programme is sung by four women accompanied by two players who founded the medieval ensemble Estampie (no. 8). The singing has much to recommend it, though it is overlaid with organum in a few pieces and a variety of instruments in all of them. The first track is repeated at the end, recorded this time with a *Kunstkopf*, a technique popular in Germany in the early days of stereo that optimises the sound for headphones, something that should work well now with portable devices that use earbuds.

The largest monastery in the United States is St John's in Collegeville, Minnesota, where the liturgy has been sung mostly in English. Fr Anthony Ruff pursued chant studies with Franz Karl Prassl and published his dissertation as *Sacred Music and Liturgical Reform* (Chicago, 2007). He has made a first recording with a schola of students at the university along with three monks and a nun (no. 9). They sing in octaves unaccompanied in a variety of styles. One antiphon may be sung in alternation with the verses of a psalm; another will frame a psalm sung in English; several chants have drones added. The antiphons are sung from the *Liber Antiphonarius* (2007) and some Mass Propers from *Graduale Novum*. Ruff follows semiology and the singers, both solo and ensemble, are well trained. Three chants have never been recorded before.

A new foundation in the United States was established from Fontgombault in 1999 and is already a flourishing abbey. The monks have made their first recording

(no. 10), issued privately but quickly picked up for distribution by Jade. The programme is unified around the feast of the Annunciation, with Mass Propers, Vespers antiphons and other chants. The monks have brought their training over from the mother house, assimilating their American novices into the community. One rare item, 'Ave Sponsa insponsata', has been recorded before (at greater length) only by the monks of Fontgombault. The antiphon 'Pax aeterna' has been recorded by Fontgombault twice, by the daughter house of Randol, and twice by Dom Gajard.

The Hungarian Norbertine canons who fled after the 1956 revolution have flourished in southern California ever since. Jade has issued several of their recordings, the latest a collection ranging from the most familiar to the rare, a hymn 'Anima Christi' heard on two other records, each to a different melody. The Premonstratensian editions are used.

This annual summary of chant recordings originally served to continue *A Gregorian Chant Discography*, newly published when *PMM* was launched, though it never attempted the detail of a true discography. Now, after four years of data entry, chant-discography.com serves the purpose of continuation in full detail, as well as providing *addenda et errata* for the original book. At present, the website provides analysis of about 2,000 records and about 25,000 chants in even greater detail than the book provided, spanning the period from 1904 to the present, and data entry continues. Some interesting details have emerged. Overlooked was a nineteenth-century chant edition used by Alessandro Moreschi in 1904 for the first lamentation (abridged) of *Tenebrae*, the only known recording that used a source preceding the Vatican Edition. (The edition is not yet identified, but it is not Pustet [1871].) On the Solesmes recording of 1930, the antiphon 'Montes Gelboe' was sung from the *Liber Antiphonarius* (1891). The recordings made at the Vatican Congress in 1904 were mostly sung from a special printing drawn from *Liber Usualis Missae et Officii* (1903), an interesting if short-lived edition edited by Dom André Mocquereau, not at all like the *Liber Gradualis* of 1895 or the Vatican Editions of *Kyriale* (1905) and *Graduale Romanum* (1908), all edited by Dom Joseph Pothier. Dom Pothier's 1904 recording of Propers of the Assumption, however, was sung from his 1895 edition. It is astonishing to hear Dom Pothier interpreting the Assumption chants with *coupure neumetique*, long before Dom Cardine.

Chant recordings by the score that might have been listed here in the last two decades have come on loan only recently for analysis on the website, demonstrating, as we suspected, that not nearly all new records have been listed here. They are too numerous to list here.

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; d Dutch.

- 1 Quoniam in Me Speravit
Schola Gregoriana Monacensis, dir. Stephan Zippe
EOS EOCD 7572. (Recorded 2012) Teg
- 2 The Chants of Angels
Gloriae Dei Cantores schola, dir. various
Gloriae Dei GDCD 051. (Recorded 2010) Te
- 3 The Chants of the Holy Spirit
Gloriae Dei Cantores women's schola, dir. various
Gloriae Dei GDCD 057. (Recorded 2012) Te
- 4 Gregorianischer Choral aus Quellen österreichischer Bibliotheken
Grazer Choralschola, dir. Franz Karl Prassl
ÖAW. OEAW PHA CD 31. (Recorded 2011) Tg
- 5 O Rex Orbis: Officium in festo sancti Karoli
Exsultemus, dir. Shannon Canavin and Eric Rice
Miusique en Wallonie MEW 1267. (Recorded 2008, issued 2012) Tefgd
- 6 Hildegard von Bingen: Celestial Hierarchy
Sequentia, dir. Benjamin Bagby
Deutsche Harmonia Mundi 88765468642. (Recorded 2012) Te
- 7 Hildegard von Bingen: Kiss of Peace
Sabine Lutzenberger (s); Baptiste Romain (vielle, lyre)
Christophorus CHR 77376. (Recorded 2012) Tg
- 8 Inspiration: Hildegard von Bingen
VocaMe, dir. Michael Popp
Berlin Classics 0330425BC. (Recorded 2012) Teg
- 9 Singing with Mary and the Saints
Gregorian Chant Schola of Saint John's Abbey and University, dir. Anthony Rupp
Jade M2-36651. (Recorded 2013) Te
- 10 Ecce Fiat: The Annunciation
Monks of Clear Creek Abbey
Jade M2-36656. (Recorded 2012) Te
- 11 Together on the Way
Norbertine Fathers of St Michael's Abbey
Jade M2-36607. (Recorded 2012) Te