

Las Huelgas Codex

VOL I

ARMONIOSO INCANTO

Franco Radicchia *conductor*

GRUPPO VOCALE GARDA TRENTO

Enrico Miaroma *conductor*

LAS HUELGAS CODEX

volume 1

1. Kyrie, Rex virginum, ff. 1-1v	4'24
2. Conditor Kyrie, ff. 1v-2v	4'39
3. Kyrie, fons bonitatis, ff. 2v-3v	6'14
4. Kyrie eleison, f.3v	3'03
5. Kyrie eleison, f.4	2'54
6. Gloria in excelsis, Spiritus et alme, ff. 4-5v	6'45
7. Benedicta et venerabilis, Virgo Dei genitrix, ff. 5v-6	4'26
8. Iam nubes dissolvitur/Iam novum sydus oritur/Solem, ff. 120-121	3'10
9. Ave verum corpus/Ave, vera caro Christi, ff. 122v-123	1'38
10. Ave gloriosa/Salve, Virgo regia Mater, ff. 100v-101	2'50
11. Celi solem imitantes, f.58v	3'14
12. Confessorum agonia modulata symphonia, ff. 65-65v	3'49
13. Virgines egregie, virgines sacrate, ff. 67v-68	3'19
14. Iocundare plebs fidelis, f.60	4'34
15. Salve porta regem gloriae/Salve salus gencium/Salve sancta parens, f.119	1'45

Armoniosoincanto

Sabrina Alunni (tr. 1-3 & 5)

Marta Alunni Pini (tr. 1-9)

Caterina Becchetti (tr. 1-10, 13 & 15)

Elisabetta Becchetti (tr. 1-10, 13 & 15)

Stefania Cruciani (tr. 1-7)

Francesca Maraziti (tr. 1-3 & 5)

Francesca Piottoli (tr. 1-3, 5-10, 13 & 15)

Brunella Spaterna (tr. 1-3 & 5)

Andreina Zatti (tr. 1-3, 5, 11 & 14)

featuring Khaterina Ghannoudi (tr.12)

Franco Radicchia *conductor*

16. Verbum bonum et suave personemus illud ave, ff. 36v–38	3'22
17. Flavit auster flatu, f.45	4'42
18. Angelorum laude digna, virgo, ff. 48–51	5'13
19. Eterni numinis, f.38v	7'33
20. Salve, sancta Christi parens, salve, virgo / Salve, virgo singularis, salvatorem, ff. 35v–36v	5'22
21. Eya mater fidelium / Ave regina gloriae, f.46v	9'14
22. In virgulto gratie arbor pudicitie / circumsepta surculus exornatur flosculus, ff. 33v–34v	2'49
23. Stabat juxta Christi crucem, f.51	7'38
24. Promereris summe laudis tu que Deum / Nam, ut Gabrielem audis te salvantem, ff. 33–33v	3'32
25. Nobis cedunt vetera, f.40	6'58
26. Maria, virgo virginum, ora pro nobis / Fundamentum ecclesiae, fons ipsa sapientie, ff. 34v–35	3'42

Gruppo Vocale Garda Trentino

Lucilla Avogadro (tr.26)

Melissa Boole Raskina

Laura Crippa (tr. 20, 23)

Angelica Fazzolari (tr.20)

Lisa Lotti (tr. 17, 21, 25, 26)

Alessandra Marocchi

Livia Masia (tr. 18, 22, 23)

Lucrezia Masia (tr. 18, 19, 24)

Caterina Miaroma (tr. 22, 24)

Egle Rigatti (tr.23)

Enrico Miaroma *conductor*

and *portative organ* (tr. 17, 19, 21, 23, 25)

Discussing performance practice in relation to music that was first played centuries ago is always difficult and, in my view, rather subjective. The sources we have provide us with a somewhat schematic – and far from exhaustive – codification of a practice that was constantly evolving. Only by weighing up various historical, ethnological, religious, scholarly and, why not, even musical parameters, can we attempt to form our own interpretation of these sources and of the iconography of the time. It seems to me that those who believe they can actually reproduce the past, rather than the music of the past, are well wide of the mark. Anyone genuinely engaged with history, however recent or remote, will analyse it, study it, evaluate it, and so – rather than overly identifying with it – will distance themselves from it to a certain degree. If we therefore consider a performance of medieval music as an ‘interpretation’ in the true sense of the word, we must acknowledge it to be a decidedly modern activity. The search for the colour and soundscape of music of this period is heavily influenced by religious passions, both monastic and popular. This music still has the power to captivate us today in the way that it creates moments of purity that are more acoustic and less technological. In developing performance practice for medieval music, it is important to consider the practical and emotional conditions under which it was originally played: a specific nexus between the musical event and the social situation, whether sacred or secular. The music of this time included a significant amount of improvisation linked to ethnological factors whose spontaneous and interpretative character gets somewhat lost when they are ‘caged’ in the formulae of transcription and codification. I completely see the point of critics who argue that these musical testimonials cannot be performed in a standard concert, at least not without attempting to reconstruct the original historical and emotional context. A prime example of this is the performance of Gregorian chant outside of the liturgy. However, if we are to attempt to overcome the problems of performance practice, we must emphasise the importance of the symbiosis between sound and words. This relationship has deep roots: it goes back to Ancient Greece and has been the subject of debate between theorists and musicians since the time of Plato. It went on to become the core component of Gregorian chant and is vital for authentic interpretation of this music. Far from uncoupling the bond between sound and words, the development of polyphony from the 9th century onwards strengthened it further, reaching its zenith in the 16th century. *Ars dicendi*, or ‘the art of speaking’ – that unrivalled power of eloquence to stir the emotions that informs musical expression – contributed in no small way to accelerating the process of verbalisation in sacred and secular music, which found its culmination in the expert hands of Monteverdi. The testimonials on this topic from the theorists Guido d’Arezzo and Johannes Cotto are particularly important. In his *Micrologus*, Guido asserts that just as in poetic metre there are letters and syllables, parts and feet and lines, in music there are sounds, one, two or three of which are grouped together in syllables. One or two of these syllables are combined in a neume, part of a *cantilena* or chant. One or more of these parts then form a *distinctio*, or an opportunity for the singer to take a breath.

Here, we present a special project that I would describe as epic: a recording of the entire Codex of Las Huelgas. One of the most important sources to be copied in the 14th century, it is an anthology of chants from the 13th century that are prime examples of the *Ars Antiqua*. This collection includes many original pieces, as well as some that can be found elsewhere in various Spanish sources, and others that originally came from the Notre-Dame school.

The manuscript was produced in the Cistercian monastery of Santa María la Real de Las Huelgas in Burgos, northern Spain, and was authorised by King Alfonso VIII of Castile and his wife Eleonora, who together supported the foundation of the Abbey in 1187. It was discovered centuries later and was published in 1931 by the Catalan musicologist Higinio Anglès in his work *El Còdex Musical de Las Huelgas (Música a veus dels segles XIII–XIV)*.

This first volume contains two albums with recordings of performances by Armoniosoincanto and the Garda Trentino Vocal Group. The two performance styles are tonally different, but share similarities in their approach to interpreting the various pieces. The young voices of the Garda Trentino Vocal Group offer a luminosity and a rhythmic effect that creates a brilliant, precise vocal quality, always expressive and communicative. Armoniosoincanto presents interpretative impulses that are more reflective and controlled – partly in response to the texts, and partly due to the group’s vocal timbre, which is more mature in certain respects. That is not to say that this timbre is any less brilliant where required, nor any less mellow in the psalmodic formulations. These performances are based on the transcriptions by Anglès and on Juan Carlos Asensio’s work *El Códice Polifónico de Las Huelgas: aspectos codicológicos y notacionales – La Música en el Monasterio de Las Huelgas en tiempos de su Códice Polifónico* (Editorial Apuerto 2001).

My most heartfelt thanks go to Maestro Enrico Miaroma, conductor of the fantastic Garda Trentino choir, who collaborated with me on this first volume with virtuosity, dedication and skill. Many thanks also to Maestro Juan Carlos Asensio, who awakened my curiosity in the Codex by giving me his book, thus inspiring my slightly mad idea of recording the entire work and preserving my interpretation of it for posterity.

Finally, a warm and affectionate THANK YOU to all the members of Armoniosoincanto vocal group, who have put up with and supported my ideas and all the artistic projects they are involved in.

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Translation: Rebecca Lockhart-Morley

È sempre difficile e, direi, soggettivo parlare di prassi esecutiva quando trattiamo espressioni musicali così lontane nel tempo. Le fonti ci riportano una codificazione piuttosto schematica e certamente non esaustiva di una pratica sempre in evoluzione. Solo valutando vari parametri storici, etnici, religiosi, scientifici e perché no, anche musicali potremmo tentare una nostra interpretazione del contenuto delle fonti a noi giunte e dell'iconografia. A mio parere chi si illude di recuperare il passato e non la musica del passato, commette un errore grossolano. Colui che si occupa onestamente del passato, prossimo o remoto che sia, non si colloca in simbiosi con esso, ma lo analizza, lo studia, lo giudica e, così facendo, in buona misura se ne allontana. Se si considera dunque una proposta esecutiva di musiche medievali come una vera e propria "interpretazione" si deve ammettere che essa rappresenta un'operazione decisamente moderna. La ricerca di un colore e di un paesaggio sonoro di quest'epoca è fortemente condizionata da passioni religiose di carattere monastico e popolare e inoltre, affascina oggi la nostra mente stimolando situazioni utili a ritrovare una dimensione pura, più acustica e meno tecnologica. Le problematiche esecutive della musica medievale devono tener conto della situazione reale ed emozionale in cui l'evento si proietta; vi è un preciso connubio tra momento musicale e momento sociale sia esso sacro o profano. Nelle musiche dell'epoca è presente una forte componente di improvvisazione legata a fattori di caratterizzazione etnica che perdono una precisa identità interpretativa e spontanea quando vengono "ingabbiati" in formule di trascrizione e di codificazione. Sono in perfetta sintonia con chi afferma che queste testimonianze musicali non possono essere presentate in un semplice concerto, quanto meno provare a ricostruire l'aspetto storico ed emozionale generatore. Ne è un classico esempio l'esecuzione del Canto Gregoriano al di fuori della liturgia. Se vogliamo comunque affrontare problematiche di prassi esecutiva, occorre sottolineare l'importanza della simbiosi tra suono e parola. Questo rapporto ha radici profonde: risale all'antica Grecia e, fin dai tempi di Platone, non ha mai mancato di accendere il dibattito fra teorici e musicisti. Tale rapporto è divenuto l'elemento sostanziale del Canto Gregoriano, nesso imprescindibile per una sua autentica interpretazione. Con l'avvento della Polifonia a partire dal IX secolo, il legame non si spezzò, ma al contrario, si irrobustì ancor più, fino a toccare il culmine nel corso del sec. XVI. *L'ars dicendi*, ovvero l'arte del parlare, il potere incontrastato dell'eloquenza nel muovere gli affetti, che informa l'espressione musicale, contribuisce non poco ad accelerare quel processo di verbalizzazione della musica sacra e profana, che conoscerà il suo culmine nelle esperte mani di Monteverdi. Importanti sono le testimonianze su questo tema dei teorici Guido d'Arezzo e Johannes Cotto. Nel suo *Micrologus* Guido afferma che, come nella metrica ci sono lettere e sillabe, parti e piedi e versi, così nella musica ci sono suoni dei quali uno, due o tre si raggruppano in sillabe; e una o due di quest'ultime in un neuma, cioè costituiscono la parte di una *cantilena*; una o più parti, poi, formano una *distinctione* ovvero un luogo opportuno per respirare.

Presentiamo un lavoro particolare, direi epico: l'incisione dell'intero codice di Las Huelgas, una delle più importanti fonti copiate nel Trecento, un'antologia di canti dei secoli XIII rappresentativi dell'Ars Antiqua. Parliamo di brani originali di questa raccolta, altri che si trovano in varie fonti spagnole e altri ancora che provengono dalla Scuola di Notre-Dame.

Il manoscritto fu scritto nel monastero cistercense di Santa Maria la Real de Las Huelgas a Burgos, nel nord della Spagna con l'autorizzazione di Alfonso VIII Re di Castiglia e della sua sposa Eleonora che promossero la fondazione dell'Abbazia nel 1187. La scoperta venne resa pubblica anni dopo dal musicologo catalano Higinio Anglès nella sua opera *El Còdex Musical de Las Huelgas (Música a veus dels segles XIII–XIV)*, pubblicata nel 1931.

Questo primo volume contiene due album con esecuzioni del Gruppo Vocale Armoniosoincanto e del Gruppo Vocale Garda Trentino. Troviamo due tipologie esecutive timbricamente diverse, ma unite nelle forme interpretative dei vari brani. Le giovani voci del Garda Trentino offrono una luminosità e una consecutio ritmica caratterizzante una vocalità brillante e precisa, sempre espressiva e comunicativa. Armoniosoincanto presenta pulsioni interpretative più riflessive e controllate, legate ai testi e al timbro vocale per vari aspetti, più maturo. Un timbro che, comunque, non perde brillantezza nei punti dove richiesto e morbidezza nelle formule salmodiche. Le esecuzioni hanno preso spunto dalle trascrizioni del citato Anglès e dalla realizzazione fatta da Juan Carlos Asensio: *El Còdice Polifonico de Las Huelgas: aspectos codicológicos y notacionales – La Música en el Monasterio de Las Huelgas en tiempos de su Còdice Polifónico*, Editorial Apuerto 2001.

Il mio ringraziamento più sentito al Maestro Enrico Miaroma che con il fantastico coro Garda Trentino, mi ha affiancato in questo primo volume dell'opera con maestria, serietà e competenza. Il mio ringraziamento anche al Maestro Juan Carlos Asensio che donandomi il libro frutto del suo lavoro, ha acceso in me la curiosità nell'affrontare questo codice stimolando il mio pazzo proposito di tramandare ai posteri, la mia interpretazione esecutiva dell'intera opera.

Infine, un caro e affettuoso GRAZIE a tutte le componenti il Gruppo Vocale Armoniosoincanto che da anni sopportano e supportano le mie idee e i progetti artistici che le vedono coinvolte.

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The **Gruppo Vocale Garda Trentino** was born within the SMAG Scuola Musicale Alto Garda from Riva del Garda (TN - Italy) and consists of 12 girls and boys from all the towns in the part of the Trentino that lies near the shores of Lake Garda, known precisely as Garda Trentino. Having sung from an early age in the Garda Trentino children's choir – winner of first prizes at national and international choral competitions such as those in Arezzo, Quartano, Riccione, Vittorio Veneto and Vienna – for special projects the most senior 12 girls and boys in the choir appear in an elite formation called the Garda Trentino Vocal Group.

Eight recordings so far, always with a monographic theme, on works by Italian composers and contemporaries who have written and dedicated their works to the choir and pieces by Mendelssohn, including the *Three motets* Op.39.

Under that name and components, the group won first prize at the Vittorio Veneto Choral Competition in 2021, in the vocal group category, and second prize at the Concorso polifonico Guido d'Arezzo in 2022. In April 2023, they won first prize at the 18th Budapest International Choral Competition and at the 2nd Giuseppe Savani Choral Competition in Carpi. They have performed in concerts in Italy, Austria, Slovenia and Hungary.

The present recording, consisting entirely of excerpts from the 14th-century *Las Huelgas Codex*, is a prestigious undertaking for the Group that will earn them recognition among medieval music lovers the world over.



Since its founding, the group has been directed by Maestro Enrico Miaroma. **Enrico Miaroma** graduated in Piano, Choral Music and Choral Direction and in Composition, at the Conservatories of Piacenza, Trento and Bolzano.

He studied composition with Salvatore Sciarrino, Franco Donatoni, and Ennio Morricone at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena, Fondazione Romanini in Brescia and Festival delle Nazioni of Città di Castello.

He won several awards in national and international competitions: as a pianist, composer and choral director in the most important competitions in Italy.

As pianist and choral director, he performed in more than 800 concerts in Europe, Ukraine and Taiwan. His choral works are published by Sulasol in Helsinki, Edizioni Carrara in Bergamo, À Cœur Joie in Lyon, Pro Musica Studium in Rome, Edizioni Federazione Cori del Trentino in Trento, Edizioni Musicali Europee in Milan, Choraliter – Feniarco, Tourdion – Associazione Regionale Cori Valle d’Aosta, EdizioniCorali.It and Ut Orpheus-Bologna.

He is the Artistic Director of the Il Garda in Coro, National and International Choral Competition for Children’s Choir in Malcesine (Verona), former Board Advisor of IFCM, National Competition for Male Choirs ‘Luigi Pigarelli’ in Arco, EdizioniCorali.It and ‘Concorso Internazionale di Riva del Garda’.

Nowadays he is a professor in Composition at the Conservatory of Trento.



Founded in 1997, **Armoniosoincanto** is made up of variable ensembles with a prevalence of female voices who work, seeking a vocal purity as closely as possible to the interpretative canons of medieval and Renaissance music. The study of pure vocality is characterized by the linearity and timbral particularity of the voices that communicate a precise transparency and a sound useful to revive the essence of prayer and the word of sacred texts amplified by ancient melodies. The research concerns music taken from the ancient codes of the Carolingian era, from medieval laudariums and from ancient liturgical and non-liturgical texts, from the medieval era with reference to those of the Umbrian and Tuscan areas. In 2010, it received the 1st prize for the category of Christian Monodic Singing at the Concorso polifonico 'Guido d'Arezzo' and the mention for the most interesting music research program that is added to the other prizes at the 'Guido D'Arezzo' in 2002 and 2006, as well as the II prize at the 'Seghizzi' International Choral Singing Competition in the category Gregorian chant in 2001 in Gorizia. It carries out an intense concert activity in Italy by participating in musical festivals of particular importance, and abroad: Sweden, Belgium, France, Hungary, Switzerland, Austria in collaboration with the Chamber Orchestra of Austria and in the United States. He recently performed concerts at the Saint James's Church in Stockholm, the Église du Saint-Esprit in Aix-en-Provence and the Church of San Vitale in Ravenna for the Ravenna Festival. To consolidate the research and study work, the Association organizes seminars on Gregorian chant and early music with industry experts.

The group has recorded albums with the record companies Tactus, Bongiovanni, Brilliant Classic, Amiata Records and Hyperprism: the Ritmico Office of Saint Francis of Assisi, O Roma Nobilis, Songs of pilgrimage in collaboration with the Ensemble Orientis Partibus; Ave Donna Santissima, Musical itinerary on the Madonna in the Middle Ages; the two Masses of François Couperin for organ and Gregorian alternatim together with the organist Adriano Falcioni, Requiem in collaboration with the Mancuso brothers and the collection of 12 Bicinia by Orlando di Lasso. In 2015, the group made the impressive engraving of the complete Laudario di Cortona codex n° 91 and the complete work of Monteverdi's three-part *Canzonette* for Brilliant Classics. In the 2016 edition of the Umbrian Music Festival, the group participated in the 'Altissima Luce' artistic project on music from the Laudario di Cortona together with Paolo Fresu and Daniele Di Bonaventura in collaboration with the Perugia Chamber Orchestra, a project that is performed in various festivals in Italy such as Umbria Jazz Spring, Jazz Narrations in Turin, Milan Jazz, or in Alghero, Cortona, and at the Sacred Night in Rome. The album published by Tuk Music is on the market for this project. They also collaborated in the engraving of sacred works: *La Sapienza di Rosvita*, music by Ferdinando Sulpizi, oratory *La Beata Angela da Foligno*, music by Carlo Pedini. Also, by Sulpizi, they recorded the 13 motets of the *Confessions of St. Augustine*, in April the new release of the album *Amorose Faville* for Brilliant Classics on the three-part songs of Gaspare Torelli (1608). The group often collaborates with renowned musicians and frequently premieres works by contemporary composers.

www.armoniosoincanto.it

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Recordings: 16–19 May 2023, Chiesa Abbaziale di San Secondo, Gubbio (Perugia), Italy (1–15);

13–15 January 2023, Chiesa di Santa Maria al Lago, Torbole (Trentino), Italy (16–26)

Recording, editing and mixing: David Giacchè (1–15); Diego Ceruti (16–26)

Mastering: Fabrizio De Carolis – Reference Mastering Rome (1–15);

Andrea ‘Bernie’ De Bernardi & Diego Ceruti at Eleven Mastering (16–26)

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