



audite

Gregor Joseph

WERNER

Salve Regina · Pastorellas

Harer · Euler · Poplutz · Flaig
la festa musicale
Lajos Rovatkay

GREGOR JOSEPH WERNER
(1693-1766)

Salve Regina III/104

- I. Salve Regina –
Ad te clamamus^{*1-4} 1:26
II. Eja ergo^{*1} 0:40
III. Et Jesum^{*2-3} 0:36
IV. O clemens^{*1-4} 0:44

Pastorella III/299

- I. Vivace^{*5/8} 1:41
II. Siciliana^{*5/8} 1:47
III. Allegro^{*5/8} 2:20

Salve Regina III/127

- I. Salve Regina^{*1-2} 0:46
II. Ad te clamamus^{*1-4} 0:49
III. Eja ergo^{*3/6-7} 1:55
IV. Et Jesum^{*1-2} 0:56
V. O clemens^{*1-4} 2:42

Pastorella III/298

- I. Tempo ordinario – Largo 1:59
II. Allegro 2:00

Salve Regina (Eisenstadt)

- I. Salve Regina^{*1} 1:50
II. Ad te clamamus^{*1} 1:20
III. Eja ergo^{*1} 0:55
IV. Et Jesum^{*1} 0:34
V. O clemens^{*1} 1:10

Pastorella (Eisenstadt)

- I. Andante^{*5/8} 2:16
II. Larghetto^{*5/8} 1:58
III. Allegro^{*5/8} 1:38

Pastorella III/289

- I. Andante moderato^{*8} 1:19
II. Larghetto^{*8} 1:41
III. Allegro^{*8} 1:18

Salve Regina III/III

- I. Salve Regina –
Ad te clamamus^{*1-4} 1:11
II. Eja ergo^{*1} 0:38
III. Et Jesum^{*2-4} 0:33
IV. O clemens^{*1-4} 0:52

Pastorella III/301

- I. Andante^{*5/8} 2:19
II. Larghetto^{*5/8} 1:31
III. Allegro^{*5/8} 1:47

Salve Regina III/130

- I. Salve Regina^{*1} 1:51
II. Vita dulcedo^{*1} 0:39
III. Ad te clamamus^{*4} 1:11
IV. Eja ergo^{*1} 1:11
V. Et Jesum^{*3} 1:15
VI. O clemens^{*1-4} 0:45
VII. O clemens
(Fugato)^{*1-4} 1:03

Pastorella III/300

- I. Larghetto^{*5} 2:32
II. Largo^{*5} 1:37
III. Allegro^{*5} 0:55

Salve Regina III/121

- I. Salve Regina^{*1-4} 1:03
II. Ad te clamamus^{*1-4} 0:57
III. Eja ergo^{*1-4/8} 0:34
IV. Et Jesum^{*1} 0:55
V. O clemens^{*1-4/8} 0:53

„O clemens, o pia ...“

- ‘Alla capella’^{*1-4/7} 3:16

- ^{*1} soprano **Magdalene Harer**
^{*2} countertenor **Johannes Euler**
^{*3} tenor **Georg Poptutz**
^{*4} bass-baritone **Markus Flaig**
^{*5} organ solo **Lajos Rovatkay**
^{*6} cello **Christoph Harer**
^{*7} organ **Daniel Trumbull**
^{*8} hammered dulcimer **Margit Übellacker**

violin I
**Anne Marie Harer • Iris Maron •
Alexandra Wiedner**

violin 2
**Katharina Lobé • Karoline Stemberg •
Wiebke Corßen**

viola **Maria Pache • Bettina Ihrig**
cello **Christoph Harer**

double bass **Christine Sticher**
hammered dulcimer **Margit Übellacker**

organ
Lajos Rovatkay (Pastorellas)
Daniel Trumbull (Salve Reginas)

leader / conductor
Lajos Rovatkay

Gregor Joseph Werner (1693-1766), a major figure at the birth of Viennese classicism, has until now remained in the shadow of music history. His rich compositional art was directly rooted in the late baroque style, whilst also drawing from much earlier sources as well as pointing far ahead into the romantic era. Firmly anchored in the great contrapuntal tradition, Werner underpins the gripping progressivity and expressivity of his tonal language.

Werner's surviving oeuvre, largely unknown today, comprises approximately 420 works; his instrumental music, however, is mostly lost. With around seventy mass settings, three requiems, four Te Deums, many antiphons, hymns and motets, psalms, eighteen German-language oratorios for Holy Week and occasional works, Werner's output of Latin sacred music was almost unrivalled during his time.

Born in the Lower Austrian town of Ybbs on the Danube, GJ Werner was appointed *Kapellmeister* at the Esterházy court in Kismarton in western Hungary (Eisenstadt in Austria's Burgenland as of 1921) in 1728, and was thus the direct predecessor of Joseph Haydn (1732-1809; *Kapellmeister* at the Esterházy court from 1761), in the service of this powerful, art-promoting Hungarian noble family. The ancient cultural landscape on the western edge of the Carpathian Basin and the former Roman province of Pannonia, with its mostly German and Hungarian-speaking population, increasingly became a melting pot of European culture. From the seventeenth century onwards, the princes of the Esterházy dynasty became the main political support of the Viennese emperor, who traditionally was also king of Hungary. After 1700, the Esterházy court with its magnificent ancestral palace in Kismarton (Eisenstadt) became a cultural centre of the extended Vienna region – indeed the entire empire. From 1730 onwards it was, alongside the imperial Habsburg court in Vienna, a musical hotbed of “Viennese classicism”.

For a long time Werner's musical origins were uncertain. We know that in 1727 he was married in Vienna, whereupon he was employed at the Esterházy court. With the exception of a few pioneers, twentieth century music scholars have mostly only cursorily researched Werner; his considerable contrapuntal skill was nevertheless noted and assumed to be the result of tuition by the imperial chief *Kapellmeister*, Johann Joseph Fux. However, Werner's tonal language, as well as the unravelled mystery of his requiem in G minor (discovered around 1985 by this author) reveal that he was a pupil of the Viennese deputy court *Kapellmeister* and great Venetian musician, Antonio Caldara. In fact, Werner's music can be seen as a highly individual, perfected version of the diverse sacred style of Caldara, who himself is little known today. Some harmonic-expressive characteristics, initially perceived as being typically “Viennese”, which then turn out to be genuinely Venetian in Caldara's music, are raised to another level in Werner's music. At times Werner almost anticipates the late Mozart, including the latter's synthesis of the “learned” and the “galant” styles, which was clearly already inherent in Werner's music. GJ Werner, the proto-musician and mystic, the all-rounder and visionary, is a newly found shining light who puts Viennese classicism into a new perspective. The historical greatness of this nameless giant ultimately manifests itself as Venice's final word and swan song after centuries of providing musical stimuli for Europe.

Nevertheless, GJ Werner's disappearance from musical consciousness was fatefully pre-ordained. Although his original manuscripts, which had previously been in the possession of the princes, became generally accessible in the Budapest National Library after 1950, the sensation of the countless Haydn autographs – all full scores, made accessible in the same place at the same time – completely obscured Werner, whose music is almost only available in individual parts and who was, as Haydn's predecessor, only ever assumed to have been a “minor master”. This assumption, which still persists today, is an irony of fate, for Haydn greatly admired his predecessor and teacher, from whom he profited considerably. This writer has been studying Werner's music for over forty years.

The twenty or so surviving Christmas Pastorellas – composed for the celebration of Christmas Eve in the palace chapel – demonstrate Werner's potential in purely instrumental music. Based on the Austrian *Pastorellas* of the seventeenth century (Schmelzer and Biber), Werner confronted two contrasting levels: he imagined the world of rustic, down-to-earth pastoral music in conjunction with the three-movement Venetian concerto genre. Werner convincingly designed the dualism of the rural-peasant and the urban-artistic styles: the vehemence of the rustic entailed a drastically abbreviated, concise formulation of the three-movement cyclical framework and the ritornello structure of the fast movements. The vivacious soundworld of the hurdy-gurdy, fiddle, bagpipes and alphorn represents the folk music colours not only of the Alpine, but also of the equally native Hungarian and Slovakian milieu. Recent discoveries of Werner's temporary employment in Dresden and Poland – perhaps parallel to his time in Vienna – provide a biographical basis for the Polish and Moravian colouring in some movements. The influence of these *Pastorellas* is significant. Haydn's Hungarian elements and other Central European colourings, for example, were probably at least in part inspired by Werner. The *Pastorellas* with *concertante* organ use the solo instrument to underline the festive and sacred nature of the music. The musical integration of the eloquent organ part is of particular creative mastery.

The *Pastorella* III/298 deviates from the overall design of the form. It largely avoids the down-to-earth element and thus also avoids the clear three-movement structure as well as the ritornello structure. Instead, this piece is dedicated to the spirit of celebration and allows counterpoint to come to the fore without omitting the festive-pastoral element. The sonorous and lively introduction leads abruptly to the expressive, quasi late-Mozartian transition and to the concluding magnificent fugue as the actual focal point of the work.

GJ Werner's rich and profound creative nature only fully manifests itself in his sacred vocal-instrumental works. His sixty or so settings of the most famous Marian antiphon, *Salve Regina*, reveal a special devotion to this incomparable medieval text. Its mindset proves to be timeless and deeply existential, especially in the longing for the transcendental, which is ultimately interdenominational. Our selection of six settings conveys a quintessence of Werner's *Salve Regina* cosmos. Werner sets the five contrasting strands of thought of the antiphon to music, each with a different emphasis and corresponding dramaturgical profile.

As soon as the opening greeting of the Queen of Heaven, *Salve*, is heard it becomes apparent that these settings are a treasure trove of musical expression and "affects", with a remarkable seamlessness between baroque, "galant" and even more progressive styles. The multifaceted characters, the musical variety in the vocal solos and the dramaturgy of the vocal ensemble reflect Werner's invention in melody, harmony and structure. The function of the technically elaborate violin parts alternates between providing another dimension of rhythm and sound, delivering contrapuntal juxtaposition and intensifying expression and mixing timbres. The intonation of the Gregorian chant – as though it were sung by nuns – accompanied by the baroque andante bass, at the beginning of the relatively early III/127, is exceptional.

Werner reacts to the emotional vehemence of the words *Ad te clamamus* – a dramatic climax of the antiphon – with rhythmic force and intense harmony. The images of misery and the tumultuous cry for help are matched by the abundance of tonally tense sounds, rich in dissonances. The augmented sixth chord, which seems very progressive, stands out – also as a symbol of Caldara's legacy.

The invocation of Mary as mediator in the central *Eja ergo advocata nostra* section inspires Werner to design lovely melodic openings with plenty of triads for the respective solos. With the major triad radiating blissfulness and purity – in contrast to the clear-cut sound of the preceding section – they act as a marker of the Virgin, like the blue of her robe in the paintings of the time.

The section *Et Jesum benedictum* with the concluding *O dulcis, o pia* is marked by a sense of mystical immersion and transfiguration, with a broad spectrum of expression. The expansive, rapturous final movement of III/127 is juxtaposed with the spirited, "galant" conclusion of III/111, as well as with the solemnly introduced, profound final fugato of III/130. The late setting III/121 (1764), possibly Werner's final composition, has several unique features. The succinct chorale-like unison passages of the four-part vocal ensemble at *Eja ergo* and at the final *O dulcis* develop an overwhelming pull of collective devotion reaching beyond tonal conventions.

The six *Salve Regina* settings are exemplary for Werner's seamless transfer of the "madrigalistic" means of expression of the musical tradition into the new sound world of Viennese classicism and romanticism. The fact that, in the process, they lost none of their identity was thanks to their manifold and trenchant conciseness. These qualities are also the common denominator of all the works in this recording.

The polyphonic, motet-like "alla capella" movement *O clemens, o pia, o dulcis Maria*, heard as an addendum to our album, is the final movement of a very early large-scale *Salve Regina* setting (1729) by Werner, characterised by extreme contrasts. The work's polar tension reflects a hidden current of energy in European music development: Palestrina's sixteenth century immaculate sound technique – which remains the basis of a composer's craft even today – produced the dialectical field of tension of the purity after 1600 as a continued practice of the "stile antico", which determined and stimulated the changing "modern" styles for epochs. Werner's "stile antico" (or "alla capella") setting of the final words of the *Salve Regina* antiphon is of special rank among his numerous compositions written using this technique. The piece, an artful contrapuntal paraphrase of the Gregorian melody lines of the antiphon and a sound analogue of purity, also in accordance with the textual content, is ultimately a profound apotheosis of the "stile antico" itself. The enormous musical tension in relation to what has been heard before – a current projection of the historical mission of pure polyphony – at the same time illuminates the composer's radius, culture and profundity.



MAGDALENE HARER soprano

As an internationally sought-after concert singer, for many years Magdalene Harer has been regularly engaged to perform the central roles in the great oratorios. Her extensive repertoire ranges from the music of the Middle Ages to contemporary works of the twenty-first century. In concerts in Europe, Israel and the USA she performs as a soloist with orchestras such as Concerto Köln, Lautten Compagny, Academy for Early Music Berlin, la festa musicale, North West German Philharmonic, Göttinger Symphonieorchester, Neue Philharmonie Westfalen, Neue Düsseldorfer Hofmusik and Munich Chamber Orchestra.

Another focus of her work is ensemble singing. Magdalene Harer is a permanent member of the six-part ensemble Polyharmonique, with whom she performs on the stages of the major concert halls and at renowned festivals. Polyharmonique's extensive discography, which includes many award-winning releases, testifies to the ensemble's high artistic reputation.

Magdalene Harer has also worked closely for many years with the conductor and early music specialist Konrad Junghänel and his solo vocal ensemble Cantus Cölln. Magdalene Harer is a music graduate of the Musikhochschulen in Detmold and Hanover.



JOHANNES EULER countertenor

After his first singing lessons with Prof. Charlotte Lehmann, Johannes Euler entered the “Institute for the early tuition of the musically gifted” at the Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien Hannover, where he also completed his singing studies in 2016. His course was supplemented by tuition from Prof. Markus Schäfer and Ralf Popken, as well as by master classes with Evelyn Tubb, Anthony Rooley, Lynne Dawson, Maria Husmann and Michael Chance.

In 2013 Johannes Euler made his opera debut at the Osnabrück Theatre. Since 2014 he has been a member of the Munich ensemble “Die Singphoniker”. Regular international concert tours have taken him not only to Europe but also to Japan, Taiwan and China.

Euler currently focuses on the traditional repertoire of his vocal range, performing oratorios and cantatas by JS Bach and GF Handel. In addition, he is particularly interested in the music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, which is reflected in his intensive collaboration with various composers, including Oscar Strasnoy and Wilfried Hiller, as well as in numerous premieres he has given.



GEORG POPLUTZ tenor

Georg Poplutz studied singing in Frankfurt am Main and Cologne with Berthold Possemeyer and Christoph Prégardien after completing a teaching degree. Since 2010, he has been advised vocally by Carol Meyer-Bruetting.

Known for his “expressive yet sensitive interpretation”, Poplutz has performed at renowned festivals and in distinguished concert halls and churches in Germany and abroad with Rudolf Lutz, Hermann Max, Ralf Otto, Hans-Christoph Rademann, Michael Alexander Willens and Roland Wilson, among others.

More than 90 CD and DVD as well as numerous radio recordings document Poplutz’s solo work, including several cantatas for the J.S. Bach Foundation St. Gallen and various works for the complete Heinrich Schütz recording, for which he was awarded the “Opus Klassik” in 2020. He is also much in demand as an ensemble singer and performs with the Johann Rosenmüller Ensemble and Cantus Cölln, among others. In addition, Poplutz devotes himself to a broad *Lied* repertoire together with his longstanding piano partner Hilko Dumno, his organ partner Jürgen Banholzer and his guitar partners Antje Asendorf and Stefan Hladek, as well as the duo Morat-Fergo: several of these projects have also been recorded on disc.



MARKUS FLAIG bass-baritone

Since his success at the Leipzig Bach Competition, Markus Flaig has been one of the most sought-after singers of his generation. Concert tours have taken the bass-baritone all over Europe, to Colombia, Mexico and Korea as well as to Japan for a tour under Masaaki Suzuki, and most recently to Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina for performances of JS Bach's B minor Mass with the Thomanerchor Leipzig. Numerous recordings for radio, television as well as on disc under conductors such as Thomas Hengelbrock, Hermann Max and Konrad Junghänel document his wide-ranging repertoire.

Markus Flaig came to music via the organ, and to singing via his music teaching and church music degree courses. Whilst still at university, he received his first guest contract at the Städtische Bühnen Freiburg for the role of Azarias in Benjamin Britten's church parable *The Burning Fiery Furnace*. Since then he has appeared in operas by Monteverdi, Purcell, Rameau, Strauss and Britten on the stages of Baden-Baden, Schwetzingen, Bayreuth, Hanover, Freiburg and Frankfurt, as well as in rediscoveries of long-forgotten operas such as Joseph Schuster's *Il marito indolente* and Christian Ludwig Boxberg's *Sardanapalus*. During the last five years, Flaig has completed a Latin degree course at the University of Frankfurt and has since been researching musical recitation of poetry in antiquity. He presents his research results on his YouTube channel "Musiis amicus".



LAJOS ROVATKAY leader / conductor

The harpsichordist, organist, chamber musician, ensemble director, music researcher and educator Lajos Rovatkay studied at the conservatories of his native Budapest as well as in Frankfurt am Main, and played a prominent role in establishing historically informed performance practice in Germany. His detailed knowledge of the vocal and instrumental music of several centuries is fundamental both to his artistic work – concerts in Germany and abroad, as well as several CD recordings – and to his research activities.

The focal points of his work are the Venetian early baroque period, late baroque church music in Venice and Vienna, the Caldara pupil and Haydn predecessor Gregor Joseph Werner, as well as Agostino Steffani, whose first Hanoverian opera *Henrico Leone* Rovatkay presented as a modern premiere in 1989 at the 300th anniversary of the Hanover Opera House with Capella Agostino Steffani (founded by Rovatkay), and performed in concert at the Boston Early Music Festival.

In 2014 Rovatkay founded the Forum Agostino Steffani for the public communication of the high baroque musical culture of the Welf court in Hanover. He is currently focused on recording the music of Gregor Joseph Werner.

As a professor of harpsichord and organ, Rovatkay taught at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hannover, where he directed the “Studio for Early Music”, whose former participants have become indispensable pillars in renowned baroque ensembles in Germany and abroad.



LA FESTA MUSCALE

The North German baroque ensemble *la festa musicale*, founded in 2014, stands for excellent artistic standards, which are reflected in creative, cross-disciplinary concert formats and top-class cooperation projects. Concertmaster Anne Marie Harer is the artistic director.

The ensemble has appeared at major festivals including the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, the Handel Festival Halle, the Tage für Alte Musik Knechtsteden and the Niedersächsische Musiktage.

la festa musicale regularly performs with internationally renowned soloists such as Anna Dennis, Peter Kooij, Joanne Lunn, Klaus Mertens, Alex Potter, Andreas Scholl and Zachary Wilder. Joint projects have connected *la festa musicale* to conductors such as Jörg Breiding, Lajos Rovatkay, Hermann Max and Jörg Straube.

Concerts performed by the ensemble have been recorded by Deutschlandfunk and Norddeutscher Rundfunk. *la festa musicale* has already released several CD recordings, including a much-praised album of concertos by Francesco Venturini (audite 97.775), motets by JS Bach (together with the Kammerchor Hannover) and church music by Bonifazio Graziani (alongside Collegium Vocale Hannover), Diogenio Bigaglia and Antonio Lotti (together with Knabenchor Hannover).

The musicians enjoy sharing their enthusiasm for early music with diverse and inquisitive audiences. They are particularly interested in creating their own programmes and performance formats. Creatively curated programmes, music education projects as well as family and children's concerts bring musicians and listeners together in an intensive way.

la festa musicale is an official partner of the UNESCO City of Music Hannover and cooperation partner of the Forum Agostino Steffani.



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St Stephen's Collegiate Church, Hanover

recording producer:

Dipl.-Tonmeister Ludger Böckenhoff

sound & editing:

Dipl.-Tonmeister Justus Beyer

recording format:

pcm, 96kHz, 24 bit

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detail of tendril from the treasury chamber's vaulted ceiling at Forchtenstein Castle, c.1696; picture credit: Esterházy private foundation, photo credit: Manfred Horvath

photos:

p. 12: Esterházy Palace, Eisenstadt; engraving by Carl Franz Rohrich after a drawing by Ludwig Rohbock, mid-19th century

p. 5: Christian Palm

p. 7: Jochen Kratschmer

p. 8: Carl Brugger

p. 11: Jérôme Gerull

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trailer on



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