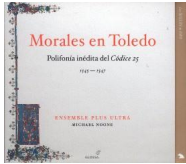


Cristóbal de Morales - Morales En Toledo: Polifonía Inédita Del Códice 25 (2005)



1 *Asperges Me* 5:32 2 *Et Factum Est Postquam* 11:47 3 *Sacris Solemniis* 5:45 4 *Eripe Me* 10:11 5 *Urbs Beata Jerusalem* 5:43 6 *Nova Resultent Gaudia* 2:48 7 *Felix Per Omnes* 6:02 8 *Nunc Dimittis* 6:07 9 *Gloria Laus Et Honor* 4:23 10 *Et Incarnatus Est* 1:38 11 *Jam Christus Astra Ascenderit* 2:11 12 *Veni Redemptor Gentium* 4:10 13 *Monstra Te Esse* 1:44 14 *Ave Maris Stella* 9:03 Ensemble Plus Ultra: Alto Vocals – Clare Wilkinson, David Martin, Mark Chambers Baritone Vocals – Eamonn Dougan, Matthew Brook Bass Vocals – Charles Gibbs, Robert Macdonald Soprano Vocals – Grace Davidson, Susan Hamilton Tenor Vocals – Angus Smith, Ashley Turnell, Tom Phillips, Warren Trevelyan-Jones Michael Noone - director

The discovery of an unknown letter or biographical document pertaining to a major composer is sufficient to set musicological circles buzzing. So imagine Spanish Renaissance specialist Michael Noone's exhilaration on identifying a sizeable clutch of motets as the work of the great Spanish polyphonist Cristóbal de Morales. There are more new discoveries than could fit onto a single CD, but for once the much-misused marketing label 'world premiere recording' is actually justified. What's more, most of the 'new' works appear to date from Morales's time at Toledo Cathedral (1545-47) when it had been previously been assumed that he had nearly ceased composing, probably for reasons of health. So Noone's discovery really is something to celebrate.

There is considerable variety in the techniques, scorings and liturgical destination of these 14 pieces; in fact, several are specific responses to the demands of the local liturgy. The mood ranges from the solemnity of an extended Lamentations setting (and a free-standing setting of the Credo verse 'Et incarnatus est') to the exultantly ornate *Asperges me* and *Ave maris stella*. Never less than workmanlike, the music is often deeply involving, and on a purely musical level the value of Noone's finds is beyond question. He is surely right, by the way, to place the *Asperges me* at the start of this anthology, for it is both contrapuntally intricate and wonderfully expressive.

But for all the commendable neatness and legibility of the performances, a more robust, even militant Counter-Reformation spirit would not have come amiss: the satisfaction at the recovery of such fine music would have been that much greater. ---Fabrice Fitch, gramophone.co.uk

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