

**James Weeks**

# **Ave maris stella**

**arrangement of the medieval hymn  
for mixed choir or upper voices, violin and organ**

**2003/2017**

# Ave maris stella

Mixed choir with 3 female soloists, violin and organ

2003/2017

Duration: 8 minutes

## Notes for performance

There are six verses of the hymn, performed in alternation by a Main Choir (mixed voices) and a *Coro Favorito* (3 female soloists and violin). The two choirs should stand far apart from each other in the space. The organ should ideally be far away from both performers and audience, and seem to come from a point in the far distance.

There are two organ Interludes, after Verses 2 and 4, and a final, short organ Amen which follows Verse 6.

All other performance instructions are detailed on the score pages.

The piece may also be performed by upper voices only.

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*Ave maris stella* was originally written for the Choir of Thetford Grammar School and their director Jane Huntington, who gave the first performance in the Basilica di S. Marco, Venice, July 2003.

The present version, which retains only the outline concept of the original as well as the melody of the even-numbered verses, was written for performance by participants on the CoMA Summer School, who gave the first performance in St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall, Orkney, on 29 July 2017.

*Ave maris stella,  
Dei mater alma,  
atque semper virgo,  
felix celi porta.*

*Sumens illud Ave  
Gabrielis ore,  
funda nos in pace,  
mutans Evae nomen.*

*Solve vincla reis,  
profer lumen cecis,  
mala nostra pelle,  
bona cuncta posce.*

*Monstra te esse matrem:  
sumat per te preces,  
qui pro nobis natus,  
tulit esse tuus.*

*Virgo singularis,  
inter omnes mitis,  
nos culpae solutos,  
mites fac et castos.*

*Vitam praesta puram,  
iter para tutum:  
ut videntes Iesum  
semper colletemur.*

Hail, star of the sea,  
nourishing Mother of God,  
and ever a Virgin,  
happy gate of heaven.

Receiving that 'Ave'  
from Gabriel's mouth,  
establish us in peace,  
changing Eve's name.

Loose the chains of the guilty,  
send forth light to the blind,  
Our evil expelling,  
Entreat all good things.

Show yourself a mother;  
through you may he receive prayer,  
who being born for us  
undertook to be yours.

O unique virgin,  
meek above all others,  
make us, freed from our sins,  
meek and chaste.

Bestow a pure life,  
prepare a safe way,  
that seeing Jesus  
we may ever rejoice.

## Main Choir

mf

(8) 1. A- ve ma- ris stel- la,  
3. Sol- ve vin- cla re- is,  
5. Vir- go sin- gu- la- ris,

mf dim.

(8) 1. De- i ma- ter al- ma,  
3. Pro- fer lu- men ce- cis,  
5. In- ter om- nes mi- tis,

mp dim.

(8) 1. At- que sem- per vir- go,  
3. Ma- la no- stra pet- te,  
5. Nos cul- pis so- lu- tos,

p

(8) 1. Fe- lix ce- li por- ta.  
3. Bo- na cunc- ta pas- ce.  
5. Mi- tes fac et cas- tos.

### V1

- The choir sings altogether.
- Each line begins together.
- At the  $\square$  sign in each line, singers continue independently at their own pace (but not too slowly) to the end of the line. Each singer should use *rubato* to push and pull themselves out of sync with the others, always maintaining the smoothness and fluidity of the line.
- Each line should be sung in a single breath.

### V3

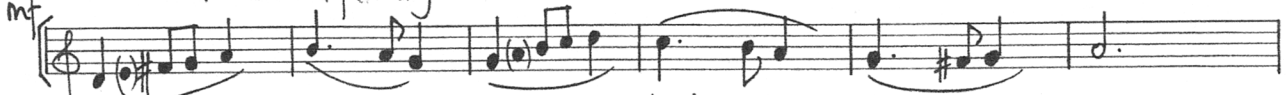
- The choir divides into two equal halves (men and women in each).
- The verse begins together up to the first  $\square$  sign.
- One half (Choir 1) sings the whole verse in the same manner as V1, except that only lines 1 ('Solve...') and 3 ('Mala...') are begun together: otherwise, each singer proceeds independently.
- The other half (Choir 2) begins line 1 together, then at the  $\square$  sign each singer proceeds independently but significantly slower (roughly half speed) than in V1, so that by the time Choir 1 has reached the end of the verse, Choir 2 (each singer independently) has only reached the end of line 2 ('...cecis'). Dynamics should follow those of Choir 1, so the verse ends *p*.

### V5

- The choir divides into three equal thirds (men and women in each).
- The verse begins together up to the first  $\square$  sign.
- One third (Choir 1) sings the whole verse in the same manner as V1, except that only line 1 ('Virgo...') is begun together: otherwise, each singer proceeds independently.
- The next third (Choir 2) sings the verse as per Choir 2 in V3 (finishing *p* at 'mitis').
- The final third (Choir 3) begins together with the rest, then at the  $\square$  sign each singer proceeds independently but extremely slowly (roughly half the speed of Choir 2) than in V1, so that by the time Choir 1 has reached the end of the verse, Choir 3 (each singer independently) has only reached the end of line 1 ('...singularis'). Dynamics should follow those of Choir 1, so the verse ends *p*. Breaths may be taken discreetly where necessary.

# Coro favorito

mf  $\text{♩} = 48$  with movement, flowing



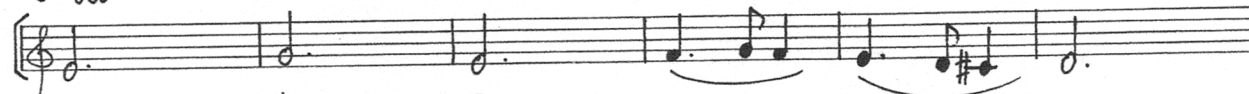
2. Su- mens il- lud A- ve  
4. Mon- stra t'es- se ma- trem:  
6. Vi- tam prae- sta pu- ram,



2. Ga- bri- e- lis o- re,  
4. su- mat per te pre- ces,  
6. I- ter pa- ra tu- tum:



2. fun- da nos in pa- ce,  
4. qui pro no- bis na- tus,  
6. ut vi- den- tes le- sum



2. mu- tans E- vae no- men.  
4. tu- lit es- se re tu- us.  
6. sem- per col- le- te- mur.

Coro favorito: three female singers plus drone instrument (violin)

## V2

- Singer 1 sings melody
- Violin plays open D drone, fading in on last note of V1 and fading out when organ has taken over the first Interlude.

## V4

- Singer 2 sings melody
- Singer 1 sings the organum as directed on the following page.
- Violin plays open D drone, fading in on last note of V3 and fading out when organ has taken over the second Interlude.

## V6

- Singer 3 sings melody
- Singers 1 and 2 sing the organum as directed on the following page.
- Violin plays open-fifth drone on D and A (open strings), fading in on last note of V5 and fading out by the time the organ reaches the note G in its concluding scale.

# Organum

V4

- Singer 1 begins at the ↓ sign on the white (open-notehead) diamond and follows clockwise round to the twelfth note, G. Thereafter the singer can change from one diamond to the other, moving in either direction, at junction points, or continue on with the diamond she is currently singing.
- Each note lasts a dotted minim (= one bar of the melody on the previous page); space to fill in chosen notes is given below.

V6

- Singer 1 begins at the ↓ sign on the black (filled-notehead) diamond; Singer 2 begins at the ↓ sign on the white (open-notehead) diamond. Both singers can choose their own direction of reading round the diamond, and can change diamond at any junction point, ad lib.

V4

Mon-stra t'es-se ma-trem: su- mat per te pre-ces, qui pro no-bis na-tus,  
tu lit es- se tu- us.

V6

Vi- tam prae- sta pu- ram, I- ter pa- ra tu- tum, ut vi- den- tes Ie- sum,  
sem- per col- le- te- mur.

Organ

Interlude 1  
c. 1'30  
pp

(Duration: 1'30)

Interlude 2  
c. 40"  
[ '-us: ' ]  
pp

(Duration: 1'40-2'00)

Amen  
♩ = 60 unhurried  
p

#### Interludes

- Very soft stop(s) on enclosed division, e.g. choir strings: the effect should be of a very distant, faint object in the sky, gently pulsing (a star).
- Each hairpin should be quite short (4-8s) and subtle; length of time between hairpins can vary, as can their duration (within limits above) and intensity (never beyond *p*).
- **Interlude 1** should begin as the singer completes the last note of V2 ('nomen') and come in as imperceptibly as possible. It should end just as the start of V3 overlaps with it (again imperceptibly).
- **Interlude 2** should begin at the start of the last note of V4 ('tu-us') with the middle D as marked, with the fifth above it entering as the singers come off the last note. The upper fifth which enters after c.40s may be played on a different stop, as long as it remains *pp* and on an enclosed division (e.g. very soft Swell 8'fl) – this is not necessary, however.
- **Amen** should begin at the start of the last note of V6 ('collete-mur'), starting a little louder than the interludes, possibly on a different stop (a flute perhaps), and fading to almost nothing. It should be audible above the sound of the *coro favorito* and accompanying violin drone as it begins. It may be necessary to play slightly slower than the written tempo depending on the space.