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## Frank Ferko's The Hildegard motets: a conductor's preparatory guide

David Neil Childs

*Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College*

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**FRANK FERKO'S *THE HILDEGARD MOTETS*:  
A CONDUCTOR'S PREPARATORY GUIDE**

**A Monograph**

**Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Musical Arts**

**in**

**The School of Music**

**by**

**David N. Childs**

**B. Mus., Canterbury University, 1991**

**M.Mus., The Florida State University, 1995**

**May 2003**

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## Abstract

The music of Hildegard of Bingen has received much attention from Frank Ferko in the past decade, but his interest in the medieval mystic has not stopped there. At the heart of his intense affection for her music are the wonderful visions she expressed through this particular medium, but also through her vivid, and at times, abstruse, poetry. His *Hildegard Organ Cycle* (1996), a set of ten symphonic meditations on the visions from *De operatione Dei*, and his *Missa O Ecclesia: Communion* (1999), are both examples of instrumental works that bear direct reference to the twelfth-century abbess' writings.

*The Hildegard Motets* (1996), choral works of varying voicings, are set to the original Latin texts from Hildegard's opus of over seventy sacred poems entitled *Symphonia celestium revelationum*. They comprise a cycle of nine choral motets for various seasons in the Christian liturgical calendar.

The monograph is divided into three chapters, the first being a biographical presentation on the composer, Frank Ferko; the second, an examination of the life and works of Hildegard of Bingen, and; the third a study of *The Hildegard motets*. The latter chapter has been presented as a conductor's preparatory study, and will examine each motet in detail, including the following aspects: relevant background information, discussion of the original poems upon which the works are based, and an analysis and discussion of the most prominent stylistic elements found in the scores.

*The Hildegard Motets* have been recorded by the American Repertory Singers, directed by Leo Nester, and released on ARSIS CD 102.

## **Chapter One: Frank Ferko Biography**

Frank Ferko was born in Barberton, Ohio on June 18, 1950, and had what he describes as a “fairly normal upbringing.”<sup>1</sup> Ferko did not begin formal musical training until he was nine years old. When he began playing the trumpet in the grade school band, he was fortunate that the public school system in Barberton included a very strong music program, one that employed competent teachers “who taught musical notes and symbols from kindergarten up using flash cards and various musical games.”<sup>2</sup> In addition to the trumpet, Ferko also studied piano for six years. However, due to rigorous academic demands, the trumpet lessons were discontinued.

Ferko began studying the organ at age fourteen and it was not long before he was playing in a “little country church” where his duties included directing a choir.<sup>3</sup> While working in the capacity as organist/choirmaster, he had the opportunity to attend a weeklong church music workshop in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where he acquired some “conducting techniques as well as some history of church music.”<sup>4</sup> Those opportunities at the Barberton church to play and conduct, led the eighteen year-old Ferko to undertake a course of music study at Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana, where he double-majored in piano and organ.

As a student, Ferko discovered the music of Valparaiso’s resident composer, Richard Wienhorst, in one of the professor’s Renaissance counterpoint classes. Wienhorst, a

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<sup>1</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

former student of Nadia Boulanger, is described by Ferko as a “neo-modal” composer.<sup>5</sup> His teacher’s work in the area of Renaissance counterpoint made a lasting impression on Ferko. Wienhorst’s oeuvre included many motets, often set in the church modes. By 1967, he had over two hundred pieces in print, mostly choral settings (including service music), although a small part of his output also consisted of organ works.<sup>6</sup> Ferko describes Wienhorst’s compositional style as “conservative” and “very singable,”<sup>7</sup> and he readily acknowledges it changed over time.

As a final project in Wienhorst’s counterpoint class, Ferko composed two pieces, which adapted “Renaissance characteristics into a twentieth-century style.”<sup>8</sup> The two works followed the Renaissance tradition in that “they were; (1) modal, (2) written with a standard meter, (3) conceived with melodic lines constructed according to some of the patterns used by Palestrina, and (4) conceived with text set according to Palestrina’s procedures (the appropriate placement of accented syllables in the music, for example).”<sup>9</sup>

Ferko’s use of dissonance was “much freer than Palestrina’s,”<sup>10</sup> which allowed Ferko to maintain “a personal harmonic imprint on the pieces while employing a few Palestrina characteristics.”<sup>11</sup> In addition, and partly due to Wienhorst’s influence, “a lot of modal writing pervaded [Fenko’s] style.”<sup>12</sup> For these reasons Ferko considers the two student

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<sup>5</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Frank Ferko, Email Interview with David Childs, August 5, 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

works “landmark” events, which left a lasting impression.<sup>13</sup> The concept of constructing music using such techniques has always remained with the composer.<sup>14</sup>

In the spring of 1970 he began formal composition lessons with Wienhorst. It was during this period of study that Ferko was introduced to composers such as Nadia Boulanger (who had briefly been a teacher of Wienhorst’s) and Stravinsky. Using teaching methods similar to those Boulanger had employed, Wienhorst would “play some little segment of a work and talk about its construction,”<sup>15</sup> a format that appealed to Ferko, and one that “opened doors” in his mind in his pursuit of “modernisms.”<sup>16</sup>

I would run to a practice room and re-create what Wienhorst had played in class and then try to expand on the idea in some other direction. Wienhorst’s very laid-back approach to presenting such concepts as bitonality (*Petrushka*) or unprepared/unresolved dissonance (perhaps with a tone row), I felt, was something like the approach Boulanger had used in her studio...he did not force any personal ideas on his students, and that, too, was part of Boulanger’s approach.<sup>17</sup>

During his first year at Valparaiso, Ferko had also pursued an interest in Stravinsky, beginning with a biographical study of the composer, which soon led to intensive listening and study of his works. Stravinsky was the first composer Ferko encountered who “researched music of the past and started manipulating that into his own style.”<sup>18</sup> As a result of the Russian’s influence, Ferko’s own compositions soon integrated similar techniques.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>14</sup> Frank Ferko, Email Interview with David Childs, August 5, 2002.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

One was the use of bitonality/bimodality, another was the use of parallel dissonances (seconds or sevenths, generally) and certain kinds of angular melodic writing – particularly when writing two melodic lines in counterpoint that go in and out of dissonances with each other without preparation or resolution of the dissonance (as found in the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement of the *Symphony of Psalms*). There were ostinato bass lines that Stravinsky liked to use, which were copied by Poulenc, and eventually used in a modified form, and to a lesser degree by me.<sup>20</sup>

Ferko was particularly interested in the modal writing of the Russian composer:

Stravinsky was not afraid to use standard church modes, and he was the first 20<sup>th</sup> century composer I had encountered who used the Phrygian mode (third movement of the *Symphony of Psalms*), so I used that as my motivation and support for writing modal music myself at a time when 12-tone rows were all the rage among composers.<sup>21</sup>

Of Stravinsky's various style periods, the music composed between c.1920-30 left the greatest impression on Ferko, who gravitated to such works as *Symphony of Psalms* and *Les Noces*. *The Rake's Progress*, composed between 1948-51, was likewise a work Ferko studied with avid interest, although he is "not so fond of [Stravinsky's] twelve-tone works."<sup>22</sup>

At Valparaiso, Ferko studied organ with Philip Gehring, whose most important talent was the ability to improvise, especially in Baroque counterpoint, "which he could do flawlessly."<sup>23</sup> Gehring's influence led Ferko to a later exploration of Baroque (and more importantly, Renaissance) counterpoint.

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<sup>20</sup> Frank Ferko, Email Interview with David Childs, August 5, 2002.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

During his undergraduate years the regular weekly chapel services that occurred “left quite a mark” on Ferko’s musical thinking.<sup>24</sup> Ferko recounts Gehring’s influence on him:

I got to hear him create enormous amounts of music through improvisation during my four years at Valparaiso. For example, Professor Gehring never played “composed” pieces for his postludes; he always improvised something very impressive (usually in four-voice counterpoint) based on the melody of the last hymn that had been sung in the service. I adopted the same practice when I worked as a church organist.<sup>25</sup>

Ferko eventually began to develop a “secure improvisatory style,” despite “taking a while to evolve,” which included four-voice counterpoint.<sup>26</sup>

The choral music Ferko heard (and often sang) also had a “powerful impact” on the composer’s thinking.<sup>27</sup>

On various occasions...I remember trying to imitate certain aspects of the musical language of other composers just so that I could understand what it was they were doing and how they did it...I was trying to identify the musical tools they were using. Much of this understanding of styles and musical languages stuck with me so that I can now use some of those same tools in my own work.<sup>28</sup>

In 1972-3, Ferko chose to pursue the Master of Music degree, majoring in theory, with Howard Boatwright at Syracuse University. Boatwright was a noted published theorist who had studied with Paul Hindemith. As a result, Ferko was exposed to much of

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<sup>24</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Frank Ferko, Email Interview with David Childs, May 2, 2002.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.



Hindemith's theory, which he considered "very useful" although quite different from anything Ferko had previously experienced.<sup>29</sup> Despite such exposure, Ferko does not believe Hindemith influenced his own compositional style, and does not adhere to Hindemith's "methodical and scientific" approach to writing.<sup>30</sup>

At Syracuse, Ferko also shared a fruitful and positive affinity with his organ professor, Will O. Headlee. Partly through such contact with Headlee, Ferko quickly developed a penchant for Baroque counterpoint, although the "ornateness" of the style did not fit with his own composition ideals.<sup>31</sup> Ferko sought instead textures that were "a little more streamlined," such as the "High Renaissance" melismatic counterpoint style of writing, which he employed in his *Stabat Mater* (1997-98).<sup>32</sup> Ferko believes, as a general rule, the Baroque styles did not have a profound influence on his compositional style. "The only exception might be in...the few cases I have written a fugue," where Ferko might typically "use Bach as a starting point."<sup>33</sup> He instead chooses to "go back further," exploring textures, techniques and tonal language of the Renaissance and Medieval periods.<sup>34</sup>

While at Syracuse, Ferko further pursued his interest in Messiaen, who eventually became the focus of his Master's thesis. Ferko attributes the introduction of Olivier Messiaen's music to Wienhorst, at Valparaiso, where Ferko was encouraged by his theory professor to invent two scales or modes, and then to compose a work using only those

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<sup>29</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

pitches. This assignment then prompted Ferko to study Messiaen's text *Technique of My Musical Language*, in which the author describes in detail his own use of the seven modes. The material in Messiaen's treatise "fit with [Fenko's] thinking at the time."<sup>35</sup> Classes in analytical technique at Syracuse likewise stimulated his interest in the French composer, eventually leading to a tonal language in Ferko's own works "quite reminiscent of Messiaen."<sup>36</sup>

Fenko attributes his fascination for exploring overtones in his music to Howard Boatwright. During his year at Syracuse University, Ferko took a class in acoustics, while at the same time undertaking a comprehensive study of the harmonic series in his organ lessons. Here again, Messiaen proved to be an influencing factor, particularly "in his writing for instruments as well as for voices,"<sup>37</sup> and likewise in his theoretical writings in which the Frenchman addresses the science and mechanics of overtone writing. "He has chosen to emphasize the F sharp, one of the highest audible pitches in the harmonic series."<sup>38</sup> According to Messiaen, careful insertion of notes from the overtone series into his melodies and harmonies, in combination with the "resultant" overtones naturally generated by the voice, "will produce [an] amazing colorful sound."<sup>39</sup> Ferko insists that such effects will be maximized only if the tempo is slow and the room is resonant.

Fenko did not avidly pursue the study of composition until the fall of 1977 when he entered the doctoral program at Northwestern University to study with Alan Stout.<sup>40</sup> "I

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<sup>35</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Frank Ferko, autobiographical notes from website <http://pubweb.acns.nwu.edu/~dahling/>, October 2000.

wasn't a serious composer until about [age] thirty,"<sup>41</sup> he states. Ferko admits that his early composition attempts with Wienhorst were neither "important nor significant."<sup>42</sup> However, he believes Wienhorst influenced him to a greater extent than any of his subsequent composition teachers.

As he began to develop a compositional language of his own, Ferko increasingly looked to European models in addition to Boulanger and Stravinsky. Among his influences were the harmonies and key relationships of Richard Strauss. In addition, he was drawn to the French twentieth-century composer Poulenc, whose "melodies lend themselves very well to modal harmonies."<sup>43</sup> One of Ferko's preferred techniques is to juxtapose the sounds of various composers "such as Debussy and Poulenc," resulting in "some very interesting combinations of sound."<sup>44</sup> Ferko considers the melodies of Poulenc, and French melodies in general, "very inventive."<sup>45</sup> Of particular interest to Ferko are the "unusual turns" that are often found at final cadence points in old French Christmas carols.<sup>46</sup> From such carols Ferko has derived some of his own material.

Although the matter of tempo indications will be discussed at length later in this monograph, Ferko believes it is so critical an issue that it deserves mentioning in this chapter. "Resonance is written into the music" and if the indicated tempo markings are not closely adhered to, many of the desired effects are negated.<sup>47</sup> However, because acoustics of performance halls around the world vary so greatly, as do the abilities of choirs to

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<sup>41</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

comfortably and successfully maintain the long phrases, Ferko concedes that such strict adherence to the indicated tempo markings, though desirable, is not always possible.<sup>48</sup>

Ferko first discovered Hildegard von Bingen at Northwestern University in the early eighties. He found an LP recording of Emma Kirkby singing ‘A Feather on the Breath of God,’ which featured chants of Hildegard (i.e. her original plainsong settings of her texts). This LP was one of the first recordings of Hildegard’s music that “was taken seriously in this country.”<sup>49</sup> Later that decade, while working with a church choir in Hyde Park, Ferko programmed an entire concert of music by women composers that spanned nine hundred years, including chants by Hildegard. Ferko sought Barbara Newman’s commentary and translations of the texts of Hildegard’s *Symphonia*<sup>50</sup> (Newman was also on the faculty at Northwestern), and he eventually selected three chants that most appealed to him. Ferko believes their concert “was probably the first time that Hildegard had been performed live in Chicago.”<sup>51</sup>

At this particular juncture in his life, Ferko had been considering writing an organ cycle, which he eventually based on Hildegard’s final literary work *De operatione Dei* (*The Book of Divine Works*). This was the “third and final of Hildegard’s visionary works (1163-73/4)...[which] is divided into three parts and...seeks to address the Christian mystery in its full cosmological depth.”<sup>52</sup> Ferko elaborates in the ‘Preface’ to *The Hildegard Organ Cycle*:

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<sup>48</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> See: Saint Hildegard of Bingen, ‘Symphonia: A critical Edition of the *Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum*, with Introduction, Translations, and Commentary by Barbara Newman.’

<sup>51</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>52</sup> Fiona Bowie and Oliver Davies, *Hildegard of Bingen: An Anthology*, 16.

The last and probably most important of the three theological writings of St. Hildegard was a lengthy discourse on ten of her holy visions which was titled *De operatione Dei* and completed when she was 75 years old. In both the German and English translations of this writing, each of the visions is titled. Each of the ten movements of *The Hildegard Organ Cycle* is a musical depiction of one of these holy visions, and each is titled accordingly. The ordering of the visions is the same in the musical work as in Hildegard's writing.<sup>53</sup>

The ten phrases extracted from each of Hildegard's *De operatione Dei* visions (figure 1), which correspond to each movement of Ferko's *Organ Cycle*, are:<sup>54</sup>

### **I. The Origin of Life**

*"With wisdom I have rightly put the universe in order."*

### **II. The Construction of the World**

*"Then a wheel of marvelous appearance became visible."*

### **III. Human Nature**

*"God, who has created me, and who has power over me like a ruler, is also my own power because without God I am unable to do any good deed and because I have only through God the living spirit through which I live and am moved.*

*Through which I learn to know all my ways."*

Figure 1, The ten Hildegard extractions from *De operatione Dei*, which appear as sub-headings to each movement of Ferko's *Hildegard Organ Cycle*<sup>55</sup>  
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<sup>53</sup> Frank Ferko, 'Preface' to *The Hildegard Organ Cycle*, i.

<sup>54</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>55</sup> Further discussion of these extractions can be found in the Preface of Frank Ferko's *Hildegard Organ Cycle: Ten Meditations for Solo Organ*, pp. i-vi.

<sup>56</sup> E.C. Schirmer is a division of ECS Publishing, Boston, MA.

(figure cont.)

#### **IV. Articulation of the Body**

*“And thus the soul, too, is praised for its good deeds by God’s angels.”*

#### **V. Places of Purification**

*“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...”*

#### **VI. Meaning of History**

*“Nothing that has existed from the very beginning of the world  
until its end is hidden from God.”*

#### **VII. Preparation for Christ**

*“Under your protection and shield, O God, I shall rejoice if I am freed of the burden of sin.”*

#### **VIII. The Effect of Love**

*“I am Love, the Splendor of the living God.”*

#### **IX. Completion of the Cosmos**

*“I will let all my splendor pass in front of you, and I will  
pronounce before you the name of Yahweh.”*

#### **X. The End of Time**

*“After the fall of the Antichrist the glory of the Son of God  
will be seen to its full extent.”*

Ferko then selected five chants from Hildegard’s *Symphonia harmoniae caelestium revelationum* collection (mostly in fragments), he considered related to her *De operatione Dei* visions, and worked them into the *The Hildegard Organ Cycle* (figure 2).

In the early nineties Ferko began the first of *The Hildegard Motets* cycle, and he was later inspired to write the *Hildegard Triptych* (1997-98) for double choir, for the Dale Warland Singers.<sup>57</sup> *The Hildegard Motets* (1996), an unaccompanied collection of choral works of varying ‘voicings,’ are set to the original Latin texts from Hildegard’s opus of over seventy sacred poems entitled *Symphonia harmoniae caelestium revelationum*. They comprise a cycle of nine choral motets for various seasons in the Christian liturgical calendar.<sup>58</sup>

On occasion, as in *The Hildegard Organ Cycle* (1996), and the *Triptych*, Ferko used melodic material derived directly from Hildegard’s *Symphonia*. However, with one small exception, *The Hildegard Motets* contain no such material. “My point was...to use only the texts [rather than the chants].”<sup>59</sup> The only direct quote of Hildegard’s found in the *Motets* is “actually a quote from *The Hildegard Organ Cycle*” stemming out of Ferko’s desire to “integrate those two [works] a little bit.”<sup>60</sup> The quote is found at the end of the fifth motet, ‘O ignis Spiritus Paracliti’ (figure 3), where the music is “basically the same as the end of the fourth movement of *The Hildegard Organ Cycle*”<sup>61</sup> (figure 4). The quote occurs in the soprano 1 line from measure 43 to the end of the piece, and is taken from Hildegard’s chant ‘O vos angeli.’ The *Organ Cycle* and the *Motets* comprise the first two parts of a (still to be completed) larger trilogy. The third work of the trilogy is intended for orchestra, organ, and large chorus.

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<sup>57</sup> Frank Ferko, autobiographical notes from website <http://pubweb.acns.nwu.edu/~dahling/>

<sup>58</sup> Frank Ferko, Notes to ‘Motets,’ compact disc, ARSIS CD 102.

<sup>59</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

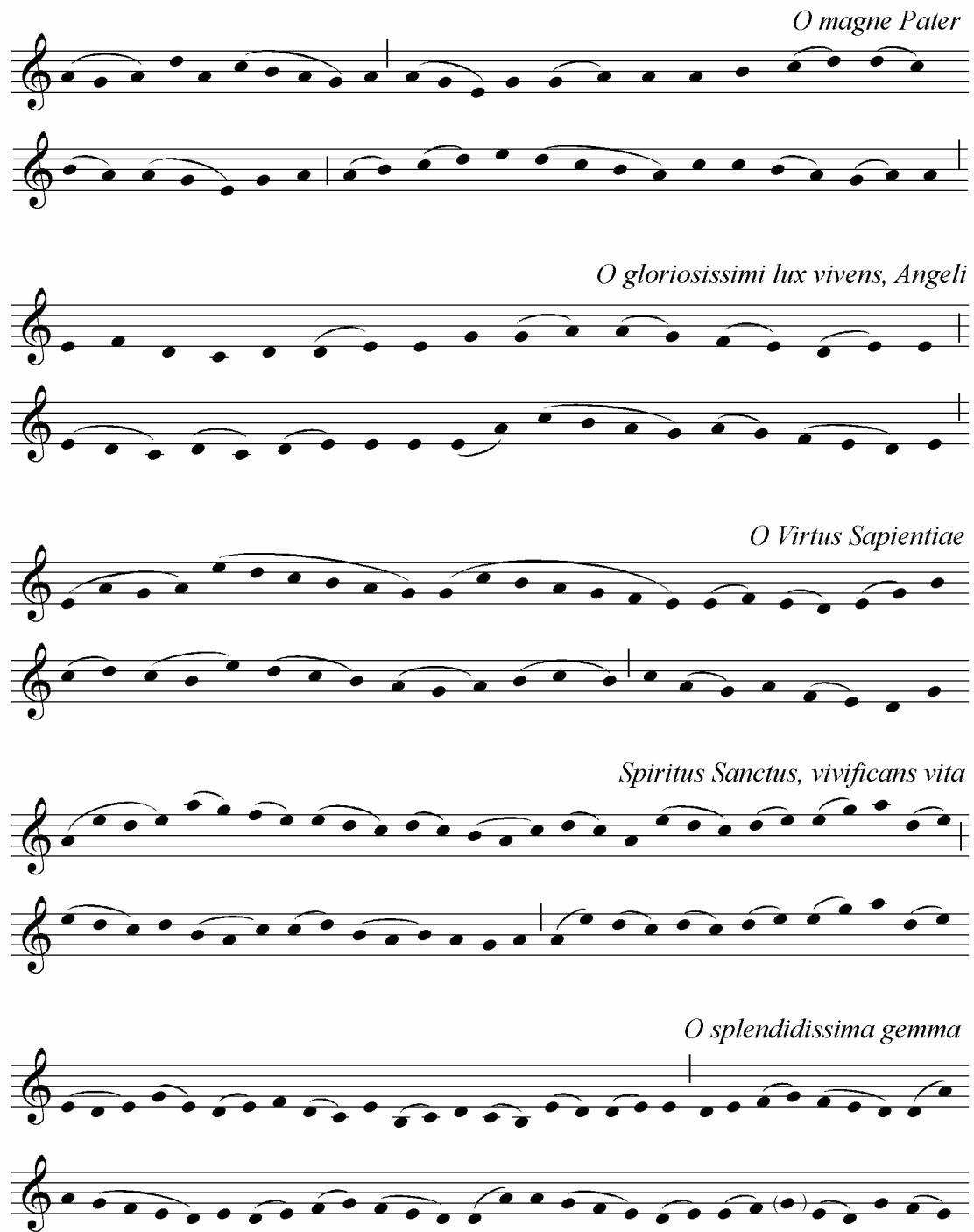


Figure 2, the first lines of each of the five Hildegard *Symphoniae harmoniae caelestium revelationum* chants Frank Ferko worked into his *Hildegard Organ Cycle*  
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43 Extremely Slow (♩=40)  
*pp*

qui es so - nus lau - dis et gau - di - um vi - te,

45 *p*

spes et ho - nor for - ti - si - mus, dans — pre - mi - a lu - cis.

Figure 3, 'O ignis Spiritus Paracliti' mm. 43-46 (soprano line)  
 © 1996 by E. C. Schirmer Music Company. Reprinted By Permission.

*Sw: Gemshorn 8', Gemshorn celeste*  
*Swell sub-coupler; Swell super-coupler*

Very slowly

*ppp*

Figure 4, 'IV. Articulation of the Body,' from *Hildegard Organ Cycle*, mm. 51-54  
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Ferko currently resides and works in Chicago, and was recently appointed Composer-in-Residence for the *Dale Warland Singers*. Dr. Ferko's works have been performed and recorded by such distinguished artists as the *Dale Warland Singers*, His

*Majestie's Clerkes*, the *Lutheran Choir of Chicago*, *Chicago Choral Artists*, and the *American Repertory Singers*. In addition to countless performances of his works on American soil, his compositions have been presented in concert or in radio broadcast overseas, including on Vatican Radio. Among the many awards and honors he has received are the 1989-1990 AGO/Holtkamp Award from the American Guild of Organists, and numerous ASCAP awards. One of his most notable works - his critically acclaimed *Stabat Mater* (scored for unaccompanied mixed chorus and soprano solo) - has been recorded on compact disc on the Arsis, Cedille, Gasparo, ZigZag, Notegun, New Art and Liturgical Press labels.<sup>62</sup>

Mr. Ferko's fascination for the works and life of the mystic Hildegard von Bingen are reflected in his research and writings, which have received national widespread acclaim and have more recently gained international attention. During the summer of 1998 he was invited to perform his *Hildegard Organ Cycle* at the Holland Festival Oude Muziek in Utrecht. Mr. Ferko's *Hildegard Motets* have received performances across America and have been recorded and broadcast on numerous occasions. These compositions along with his writings about the music of Hildegard von Bingen have appeared in the *British Sacred Music Journal*.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Frank Ferko, Notes to 'Motets', compact disc, ARSIS CD102.

<sup>63</sup> Frank Ferko, autobiographical notes from website <http://pubweb.acns.nwu.edu/~dahling/>

## **Chapter Two: *Symphonia* Hildegard of Bingen**

Hildegard of Bingen was the last of ten children born to parents Hildebert and Mechtild, in the town of Bermersheim (in the diocese of Mainz) in the year 1098. The family was of some nobility and wealth, and despite claims that the parents would have been in a position to adequately support Hildegard financially, following a custom of the time, she was tithed to God and to the church in 1106.<sup>64</sup> She was given as a companion to the anchoress Jutta von Spanheim, herself a noblewoman, who lived a life of devotion as a recluse or *inclusa* in a cell attached to the monastery of St. Disibod near Bingen.<sup>65</sup> Although Jutta was not altogether a literate woman, she possessed enough skills to teach Hildegard the rudiments of reading using the Latin Psalter (the fundamental text used in monastic prayer) as the main source of instruction. Hildegard soon became familiar with other religious books including those from the Bible, although in later life she was keenly aware that she “lacked education.”<sup>66</sup>

From all accounts Hildegard took to her life of devotion without complaint despite being a sickly child who experienced from a very early age the gift of *visio*. This condition “involved unusual and sometimes painful perceptions – such as her vision at the age of three of ‘a brightness so great that [her] soul trembled’ – combined with a kind of clairvoyance.”<sup>67</sup> Her gift of clairvoyance occasionally enabled her to foretell events in the future, such as her accurate prediction of the color of a calf while still in its mother’s

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<sup>64</sup> Newman, 1.

<sup>65</sup> Schipperges, 9.

<sup>66</sup> Newman, 2.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 2.

womb.<sup>68</sup> Hildegard retained this phenomenal ability up to her death. Later in life she wrote copiously about “the reflection of the living Light” in which she experienced the aforementioned brightness and also complex symbols and symbolic forms.<sup>69</sup> Often accompanying the visions were voices “from heaven” which were sometimes in Latin, and sometimes in first or third person, but always representative of God.<sup>70</sup> Her visions were closely linked to her state of health, and serious illnesses often “preceded or accompanied all the most important and frightening decisions of her life: to begin writing, to found her own monastery, to obtain financial independence for it, to undertake her first preaching tour.”<sup>71</sup>

As remarkable as her life-long visions were, Hildegard did not receive public attention or acclaim until she was in her early forties. Up to that period she had been quite content to live a life devoted to God, surrounded by women of like-minded faith, in which most traits of individuality were suppressed. She was, in fact, content to play a passive role in community life until Jutta’s death, in 1136, at which point Hildegard was chosen as the succeeding abbess (or *magistra*).<sup>72</sup> Her selection may well have had something to do with her family’s social stature in the outside world, or it may have been due to her valuable contribution to the commune, both as a spiritual guide and as a visionary.

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<sup>68</sup> Newman, 2.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 3.

In 1141, Hildegard experienced a vision stronger than any she had previously endured. “The spirit of God touched her heart like a burning flame, transforming the silent visionary into a prophetess. The divine call became clearer and clearer. ‘Say and write what you see and hear!’ a voice from above commanded.”<sup>73</sup> At first she humbly resisted, but before long, having been once more driven to her bed, the fevers and accompanying pains convinced her to accept the call. At this stage in her life two figures close to her became important: the first was the nun Richardis von Stade, and the second was Volmar of St. Disibod, a monk. Together they offered moral support, as well as assisting in the recording of Hildegard’s visions. Volmar also served to correct her often-imperfect Latin, which he did without unduly altering the content of her writings. Hildegard was very grateful to Volmar who remained a close and loyal friend, working in the capacity of copy-editor, until his death in 1173.<sup>74</sup>

The first book of recorded revelations, entitled *Scivias Domini (Know the Ways of God)*, took ten years to complete and it is based on a series of twenty-six visions divided into three main sections. This seminal work “consists of a series of twenty-six interconnected visions of humankind, the universe, and God in which Hildegard revealed the mysteries of the Godhead: God bathed in the divine light, the choirs of angels, the creation of humanity, the destruction of the world, the ‘fiery work of redemption,’ and the stages of salvational history...”<sup>75</sup> *Scivias*, completed in 1151, gained much popularity and recognition – so much so that Pope Eugenius III “holding it in his own hands...read [it]

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<sup>73</sup> Schipperges, 11.

<sup>74</sup> Newman, 4.

<sup>75</sup> Schipperges, 15.

aloud to the archbishop and cardinals.”<sup>76</sup> But Hildegard’s fame lay not only in the success of the writings in *Scivias*. She also gained recognition for her novel poems (*modos novi carminis*), as indicated in a letter written in 1148 by Odo of Saisons, master of theology at Paris.<sup>77</sup>

The *modos novi carminis* poems were eventually set to music by Hildegard, then collated to form the *Symphonia*. There is even the suggestion that Hildegard began setting some of the poems to music while completing *Scivias*. Newman notes Hildegard was already “at work on the music that she later collected in her *Symphonia*.”<sup>78</sup>

Her second visionary work, the *Book of Life’s Merits*, possibly intended as a sequel to *Scivias*,<sup>79</sup> was begun in 1158. Completed in 1163, this was a “book about the vices and their countervailing virtues, as reflecting her direct recent experience of human nature.”<sup>80</sup> Following the *Liber vitae meritorium* was perhaps Hildegard’s greatest volume, *Liber Divinorum Operum* (*The Book of Divine Works*), written between 1163 and 1173. Completed when she was seventy-five, this collection displays the maturity and wisdom of a ‘seasoned’ Hildegard. In ten visions she “developed her cosmological history of salvation from Genesis to the Apocalypse. Her interpretation of the opening chapter of the Gospel of St. John was the focal point of the work and presented humanity as the true center of the universe.”<sup>81</sup>

Following a period of illness in the latter part of the 1140s, Hildegard announced that she had “received a command from God to move her nuns to Rupertsberg, a hill

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<sup>76</sup> Flanagan, 5.

<sup>77</sup> Newman, 5.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 7.

overlooking the junction of the River Nahe with the Rhine at Bingen, some 30 km from Disibodenberg.”<sup>82</sup> Despite having garnered the support of the Archbishop of Mainz and the Marchioness of Stade to leave, such a proposal was met with great resistance from Abbot Kuno, and also from the sisters, who saw no reason to leave a place they found comfortable.<sup>83</sup> “Reacting to criticism from local people that she was mad or possessed, Hildegard took to her bed and lay there immobile. When Kuno failed to lift her he became convinced that this was no ordinary illness, but a sign of disapproval.”<sup>84</sup> When Kuno finally relented, Hildegard rose from her bed, restored to full health. Construction soon began at the new site. Not long after (ca. 1120) Hildegard made the day’s journey to Rupertsberg with twenty of her sisters.<sup>85</sup> Such a bold move did not immediately grant her total control and independence – the community was very much at the mercy of the Disibodenberg monks until 1158.

Shortly after her relocation a prolonged illness struck her. Upon recovery, she embarked on a preaching tour. This tour, despite words of Scripture in 1 Timothy 2:12 forbidding women to preach in public, was the beginning of many such sojourns over the next twelve years. Such action illustrates the degree to which Hildegard felt compelled to listen to her inner voice. Such tours saw her speak to clergy and to lay people “sometimes in the chapter houses of religious communities, and sometimes in public.”<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Flanagan, 9.

<sup>81</sup> Schipperges, 16.

<sup>82</sup> Flanagan, 5.

<sup>83</sup> Newman, 5.

<sup>84</sup> Fiona Bowie and Oliver Davies, *Hildegard of Bingen: An Anthology*, 12.

<sup>85</sup> Flanagan, 6.

<sup>86</sup> Flanagan, 14.

In 1163, Hildegard began writing what was to become her most accomplished visionary work yet, the *De operatione Dei* (*Book of Divine Works*). In it she presents the theme of God and the creation. Two years after beginning this work, she formed her second community at Eibingen, across the Rhine, near Rüdesheim.

In the final years of her life, an event occurred which “throws a clear light on the uncompromising adherence to the truth of the gospel.”<sup>87</sup> Bowie and Davies describe the event in *Hildegard of Bingen: An Anthology*:

It appears that Hildegard permitted a nobleman, who had been excommunicated, to be buried in the convent cemetery after he had been reconciled with the Church and had received the sacraments. Unaware of the circumstances, or unwilling to explore them, the Church authorities at Mainz imposed an interdict upon the community at Rupertsberg, which meant that Hildegard and her nuns were denied the sacraments and were hindered in their rhythm of praise.<sup>88</sup>

After a long struggle and eventual intervention by the Archbishop Christian of Mainz, the situation was resolved and the interdict was lifted. However, the whole affair seems to have sapped the aging abbess’s “mental and physical strength.”<sup>89</sup>

Hildegard, who had stood by her Divine principles all her life, even at the risk of prolonged conflict or disapproval with her superiors, died peacefully some seven months later, on 17 September 1179. Due to administrative problems, Hildegard was not formally canonized until, in 1324, Pope John XXII “gave permission for her ‘solemn and public cult,’ and [her] status today is that of a canonical saint.”<sup>90</sup> Flanagan clearly states that there

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<sup>87</sup> Bowie and Davies, 14.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>89</sup> Schipperges, 28.

<sup>90</sup> Bowie and Davies, 15.



“is no evidence of further progress towards Hildegard’s canonization in the thirteenth century...”<sup>91</sup> however, her feast is celebrated in the German calendar on the anniversary of her death.<sup>92</sup>

As observed by the composer Frank Ferko in his notes to the compact disc recording ‘Motets’ (ARSIS CD 102), “Hildegard’s poetic vocabulary was unusual and unique; she frequently used language that is not found in standard Latin liturgical texts. As with the music she composed, her poetry is highly ecstatic, vivid and rich in imagery.”<sup>93</sup> Peter van Poucke makes the observation that “both words and music of Hildegard’s compositions are built on the recurrent use of simple principles.”<sup>94</sup> For the texts, van Poucke suggests this implies “an elaborate use of a limited set of style figures in a from time to time unpolished Latin.”<sup>95</sup>

Acclamations (especially ‘O,’ very often even in the middle of sentences after the introductory ‘et’ for other subjects than the first one, e.g. ‘*O vos angeli...et o vos archangeli*’), expressive interpolations and persistent use of superlatives are noticeable. Less pathetic is the frequent use of rhyme and assonance. Also alliteration, polypton (different forms of declension or conjugation of the same word, e.g. ‘*vivens vita*’ or ‘*veniens veni*’), and annominato (the use of root-related words, such as ‘*in mystico mysterio*’ or ‘*virginitas virgini*’) occur regularly. The by all means extraordinary imagination and strong impact of the visionary on the poetics create, however, a very expressive combination of extreme individual meaning and almost hieratic language structure.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Flanagan, 13.

<sup>92</sup> Bowie and Davies, 15.

<sup>93</sup> Frank Ferko, Notes to ‘Motets,’ compact disc Arsis Audio CD 102.

<sup>94</sup> Peter van Poucke, ‘Introduction’ to *Symphonia harmoniae caelestium revelationum*, 8.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>96</sup> Peter van Poucke, ‘Introduction’ to *Symphonia harmoniae caelestium revelationum*, 8.

Hildegard's literary style could have been even more awkward than has been passed down, had it not been for her two assistants, Volmar, provost of the convent at Disibodenberg, and the widowed marchioness Richardis von Stade (who was highly educated and of noble birth). Well aware of her shortcomings, Hildegard once commented to her last secretary, Guibert, a monk from the abbey of Gembloux near Namur, "Take no offense at the Latin of my early works, for speaking in classical phrases is not part of me, like Moses who was slow of speech and used Aaron as his spokesman and the prophet Jeremiah who was wanting in eloquence but lacked not for wisdom."<sup>97</sup> It is not surprising to find recorded quotations of Hildegard comparing herself to eminent prophets of the Old Testament. Hildegard understood her task on earth was to convey messages sent by someone else, and regarded herself as a "trumpet blast of the Living Light."<sup>98</sup>

Despite her exigency to spread the word of her numerous visions through writing and speaking tours, Heinrich Schipperges notes "Hildegard's unusually wide-ranging literary output had surprisingly little influence on the world of the later Middle Ages and the nascent modern era. Even scholastics during the age of Thomas Aquinas, their intellects schooled in Aristotelian logic, found it impossible to accept the spiritual assumptions that underlay her symbolist cosmology."<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Schipperges, 15.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 16.

### *Symphonia harmoniae caelestium revelationum*

Although evidence appears to “point to the early forties as the starting point for Hildegard’s [musical] composing activities,”<sup>100</sup> it was only in the 1150s that Hildegard “turned her creative gifts to two widely diverse fields: natural science and music.”<sup>101</sup> Begun in 1150 or 1151, the *Symphonia harmoniae caelestium revelationum* (*Symphony of the Harmony of Celestial Revelations*)<sup>102</sup> was probably completed in 1158.<sup>103</sup> The *Symphonia* is a collection of seventy-seven poems, originally taken from the end of her earlier work *Scivias*, which the abbess set to her own music. The work includes four poems, or lyrics, without music, the reasons for which are addressed later in this document. The *Symphonia* collection is based on two extant original manuscripts: Rupertsberg, and Dendermonde.

Van Poucke notes that, in 1158, Hildegard mentioned in the preface of her *Liber Vitae Meritorum* (*Book of Life’s Merits*) she had already been working on the *Symphonia* for some eight years. This, however, is certainly no proof that the work was actually completed in its entirety by this time. He suggests that the period between 1141-58 is a reasonable estimation of the date of completion.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Van Poucke, 6.

<sup>101</sup> Newman, 7.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>103</sup> Barbara Newman addresses the issue of the title, on pages 11-12 of her ‘Introduction’: “*Symphonia* and [*h*]armonia are overlapping terms, and there is no modern English equivalent that has the same range. The word *symphonia* was used very freely in the Middle Ages and could mean either melody or harmony or simply music in general, whether vocal or instrumental...In Hildegard’s title, however, the most general meaning is probably the one intended. *Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum* might be rendered as ‘The Harmonious Music of Heavenly Mysteries.’”

<sup>104</sup> Van Poucke, 6.

The two surviving original *Symphonia* manuscripts differ both chronologically and in content.<sup>105</sup> The earlier Dendermonde edition, prepared around 1175 by Hildegard herself, contains fifty-seven songs. Subsequently, a revised and longer version was prepared at the Rupertsberg scriptorium in the 1180s, shortly after Hildegard's death, and includes seventy-five songs. This has come to be known as the Risenkodex.<sup>106</sup> Not only is there a discrepancy in the number of songs in each collection, but also "the original arrangement of the *Symphonia* is problematic, and the order of the pieces in the two manuscripts...is not the same."<sup>107</sup> To further complicate matters, twenty-six of the *Symphonia* pieces also appear without music in a book of miscellaneous prose only recently acknowledged.<sup>108</sup> In addition, the second version of the *Symphonia* omits the two short antiphons 'O frodens virga' (no. 15) and 'Laus Trinitati' (no. 26), despite including twenty more songs than the 1175 version. Barbara Newman explains these anomalies in her 'Introduction' of the *Critical Edition of the Symphonia*:

...I believe the miscellany indicates at least four new conclusions about the *Symphonia*. In the first place, it suggests that Hildegard did not initially plan to compose a song cycle...her music had its origins in the concrete liturgical life of Rupertsberg, and only when she had composed a substantial body of lyric – probably in the late 1150s – did she decide to collect all her songs and arrange them in a systematic order. After making this decision, she continued to compose new pieces that were incorporated in the cycle only after her death.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Van Poucke, 6.

<sup>106</sup> Flanagan, 107.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 107.

<sup>108</sup> Newman, 12.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 9.

And further:

Secondly, the miscellany may enable us – very tentatively – to distinguish early, middle, and late periods in Hildegard’s oeuvre.<sup>110</sup>

One of the most unusual and confusing aspects surrounding the *Symphonia* is the contrasting and contradictory nature of the two surviving manuscripts. The shorter, yet highly authoritative Dendermonde version is almost certainly the copy Hildegard sent to the monks of Villers: “it was produced in the Rupertsberg scriptorium around 1175, probably under her direct supervision.”<sup>111</sup> The second extant version, the so-called Risenkodex or ‘giant codex’ contains Hildegard’s collected works, and it was likewise prepared at Rupertsberg, but “in the decade after the abbess’s death (c. 1180-1190).”<sup>112</sup> This latter, impressive document contains all her ‘inspired’ works, excluding only the more scientific writings, which were not products of Hildegard’s visions. The last sixteen pages of the 481 parchment-leafed Risenkodex contain the *Symphonia* and the *Ordo virtutum* (Play of the Virtues).<sup>113</sup>

The smaller Dendermonde manuscript (approximately eight by eleven inches in dimension) is not well preserved and has lost a number of leaves.<sup>114</sup> The extant songs are written in single columns, neatly presented, “with twelve lines of text and music to a

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<sup>110</sup> Newman, 9-10.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 54.

page.”<sup>115</sup> Newman notes that the gaps in the manuscript may well have contained a few Marian songs, a responsory, and various antiphons addressing God the Father, and Christ.

Despite the fragmentary state of the Dendermonde manuscript, “the loss of pages from [the document] and the addition of late compositions to [the Risenkodex document] do not fully account for the differences between the two manuscripts.”<sup>116</sup> Newman notes that the cycle has been completely rearranged in the Risenkodex:

...the order of songs within each section is different, the sections themselves have been reshuffled, and the longer pieces have been separated from the shorter ones and placed together at the end of the work, thus creating two cycles instead of one.<sup>117</sup>

It is quite evident that in both documents, there was a deliberate attempt by the copyists to order the songs of the *Symphonia*. “The overall structure...is that of an overarching celestial, semi-celestial and earthly hierarchy.”<sup>118</sup> In other words, those songs dealing in nature with God the Father and Son appear at the top of the order and, not surprisingly, first in the manuscripts. Those songs of the ‘most lowly’ orders in the hierarchy, such as the Virgins, Widows and Innocents appear toward the end.<sup>119</sup> In both documents, the songs to Ecclesia appear as the last in the collection.<sup>120</sup>

A number of scholars, including van Poucke and Newman, have hypothesized as to the reason such a dichotomy exists between the two documents. The latter author notes that

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<sup>115</sup> Newman, 55.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>118</sup> Van Poucke, 6.

<sup>119</sup> Newman, 55-57.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 55.

the Dendermonde version (that which had been sent by Hildegard to Rupertsberg) placed those songs to the Virgin *before* those of the Holy Spirit. Van Poucke makes several other, less startling, observations as well:

Analysis of the contents of the songs devoted to the Virgin (nos. 4-15) shows that, to St. Hildegard, she is more than just a figure with a somewhat ambiguous position within the celestial hierarchy. Each of the twelve preserved songs seems to be conceived from within a highly original point of view: a firm and unbreakable tie between mother and son, a tie of the same mystical strength as the one governing Trinity. It is this tie that might explain the somewhat awkward position of the twelve songs: in between the Father and the Spirit, where one would expect Christ. The authoress, however, seems to consider the duality Mother-Son as equaling the Son and as such the songs to the Virgin are in the right position.<sup>121</sup>

The re-ordering by Hildegard of an accepted hierarchical standard must have challenged many traditional beliefs and dared many to consider new theological insights. Van Poucke is somewhat troubled that the copier of the Risenkodex disturbed the “logical organisation of a truly visionary *summa*,”<sup>122</sup> changing the order of the songs to a more orthodox result: the Virgin after the Spirit, Saint Disibod (together with Saint Rupert) amongst the Confessors, and Saint Ursula and her companions with the Virgins.

Sabrina Flanagan defines the text and music of the *Symphonia* collection not simply as ‘songs,’ but as ‘liturgical songs,’ “since they were almost all composed in forms – antiphons, responsories, sequences, hymns – which were used in performance of the *Opus Dei* or the celebration of the mass.”<sup>123</sup> It is evident that the compositional writings of Hildegard were *functional*, arising “directly from the needs of the monastic life and, unlike

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<sup>121</sup> Van Poucke, 7.

the writing of a theological treatise, required little apology or justification.”<sup>124</sup> Although the ordering of a series of individual compositions into a collection was not a novel concept (Notker of St. Gall composed the *Liber Hymnorum* between 860 and 870), her *Symphonia* is not ordered according to the liturgical year.<sup>125</sup> Flanagan summarizes the collection as follows:

When the collection is viewed as a whole, it is found that the greater part of it consists of relatively short pieces in the form of responsories (18) and antiphons (43). The longer pieces – sequences, hymns and the three unclassified songs – together number fourteen. The total is brought to seventy-seven by the addition of a kyrie and an alleluia.<sup>126</sup>

Seven daily ‘hours’ or services of common prayer, in addition to the night services of matins, formed the basis of worship – the Divine Office – in monasteries of twelfth-century Europe.<sup>127</sup> Each service of the Divine Office comprised “varying proportions of psalmody, lessons from Scripture, and assorted texts of prayer and praise set to music – canticles, antiphons, responsories, and hymns.”<sup>128</sup> Typically, the most fully represented genre in the *Symphonia*, and also the chant repertoire in general, is the antiphon.<sup>129</sup> Forty-three of Hildegard’s liturgical songs in the *Symphonia* belong to this category, which shares similarities to the practice of psalmody. Newman explains the importance and frequency of the antiphon in her ‘Introduction’:

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>123</sup> Flanagan, 107.

<sup>124</sup> Flanagan, 107.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 108-109.

<sup>127</sup> Tess Knighton and David Fallows, ed., *Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music*, 403.

<sup>128</sup> Newman, 13.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 13.



In standard medieval usage an antiphon, or freely composed text with melody, would be sung before and after each psalm in the Office. Because the Office was designed by Saint Benedict so as to cover the full cycle of 150 psalms every week, this style of psalmody required an enormous number of antiphons.<sup>130</sup>

And further:

As the antiphon is liturgically subordinate to the psalm, it is usually a brief, unpretentious composition suited to the scriptural theme or the feast of the day. It takes its name from the practice of antiphonal singing: psalm verses would be chanted alternately by two half-choirs, while the antiphon was sung by the full choir to a simple tune related to the reciting tone.<sup>131</sup>

Eighteen responsories, the second most common liturgical song, are found in Hildegard's collection.<sup>132</sup> These songs were essentially intended for the Office hour of matins.<sup>133</sup> The responsories similarly modify or comment on another aspect of the liturgy in much the same manner as the antiphons. Flanagan explains the types and functions further:

They can be divided into two categories, the great responsories which follow the readings of the lessons at matins and the short responsories which follow the chapters, read within the day hours, from prime to compline. Two performance schemes are indicated for the majority of Hildegard's responsories: (i) respond, verse, partial respond, Gloria Patri, partial respond; and (ii) respond, verse, partial respond. These schemes also correspond to many responsories in the Gregorian repertory. In contrast to the office antiphons, many responsory texts are neither psalmodic nor even biblical. Hildegard's responsories, judged by their length, seem to be more like the great

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<sup>130</sup> Newman, 13.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 13-14.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>133</sup> Knighton and Fallows, 408.

responsories, and would thus be intended for use at matins.<sup>134</sup>

Included in the remaining fourteen songs of the *Symphonia* are hymns and sequences. Four such works, according to the manuscripts,<sup>135</sup> are hymns. “*Hymns*, which grew out of early Christian congregational singing, were sung at various points in the Office but never at Mass. A typical twelfth-century hymn was a song in which each stanza followed the same metrical pattern and rhyme scheme and was sung to the same relatively simple tune.”<sup>136</sup>

The *sequence*, a “medieval Latin chant, wide-ranging and syllabic in style, that reached the height of its importance c. 850-1150.”<sup>137</sup> Newman comments it “underwent a complex musical and poetic evolution.”<sup>138</sup> Sequences were composed in numerous quantities, and were sung between the alleluia and the gradual at Mass.<sup>139</sup> The Classical sequences, such as those composed by the monk Notker, were written as paired versicles rather than stanzas.<sup>140</sup> Hildegard followed this classical format in her ‘O ignis Spiritus Paracliti,’ which contains some ten strophic pairs, most of which begin with the vocative ‘O.’ According to Newman, “the *Symphonia* rubrics identify seven pieces as sequences: nos. 20, 28 (‘O ignis Spiritus Paracliti’), 45, 49, 53, 54, and 64.”<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Flanagan, 113.

<sup>135</sup> Newman, 15.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 15-16.

<sup>137</sup> Knighton and Fallows, 410.

<sup>138</sup> Newman, 16.

<sup>139</sup> Flanagan, 115.

<sup>140</sup> Newman, 16.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 16.

Among the smaller categories found in the *Symphonia* are four short pieces that do not fit the classification of antiphon, responsory, or sequence and which are derived from the ambiguous category of lyrics without music. Newman presents a very credible argument, believing these lyrics may have originally been set to music, which were subsequently lost or separated from the text, or alternatively, that such texts may have been intended to be set to music at a later time - and never were. Newman believes these “song-like compositions” (‘O Verbum Patris,’ ‘O Fili dilectissime,’ ‘O factura Dei,’ and ‘O magna res’) “represent either ‘lost’ songs or lyrics that Hildegard had originally meant to set to music, but never did.”<sup>142</sup>

Finally, the *Symphonia* collection includes two short pieces – a kyrie and an alleluia – for Mass. The complete cycle of ‘liturgical songs’<sup>143</sup> thus totals seventy-seven, with the addition of the brief mass movements.<sup>144</sup>

Although Jutta schooled Hildegard in the fundamentals of Latin, the novice “lacked formal training [in Latin and in music] and made no attempt to imitate the mainstream poetic and musical achievements of her day.”<sup>145</sup> She firmly believed that her musical abilities came from no human, but “through God alone.”<sup>146</sup> Clearly, she had daily exposure to the sung Offices performed by the monks in the attached monastery, which, at least in part, explains her affinity for composing melodies. However, her unique style of composing, not restricted by any rules or formulae, reflects this lack of formal training.

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<sup>142</sup> Newman, 11.

<sup>143</sup> Flanagan, 107.

<sup>144</sup> Newman, 17.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 18.

Newman suggests that Hildegard's songs, "compared with a contemporary hymn by Abelard or a sequence by Adam of St. Victor, will sound either primitive or unnervingly avant-garde."<sup>147</sup> Newman describes Hildegard's style of the wide vocal range she employed as "eccentric,"<sup>148</sup> and quotes Ludwig Bronarski as characterizing her melodic lines as "angular and 'gothic' – full of the sharply pointed arches that, in the architectural realm, still lay several decades into the future"<sup>149</sup> (figure 5).

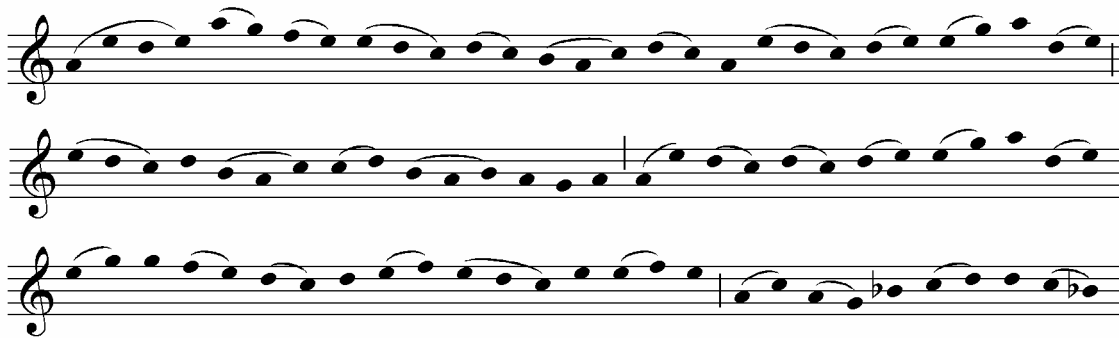


Figure 5, 'Spiritus Sanctus, vivificans vita.'  
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However unpredictable and unique Hildegard's musical style appeared to some, the beauty and strangeness of her writing appealed to many others. Van Poucke notes, "though very individual, and not bound by plainchant structures in the majority of her compositions, the music is of a very formulaic nature."<sup>150</sup> Hildegard composed using sets of melodic patterns, whether or not she was overtly aware of that fact. Van Poucke notes, "the melodic patterns seem to be nothing else but a framework, denoting a general line of

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<sup>147</sup> Newman, 27.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>150</sup> van Poucke, 8.

melodic movement, defined by the content of intervals and direction.”<sup>151</sup> Newman adds that Hildegard “drew on a relatively small number of motifs which she repeated, with ingenious variation, in every piece composed...” (figure 6).<sup>152</sup> In all of Hildegard’s music, the melodic line was inseparable from the texts, which likewise followed the use of simple, formulaic principles. Van Poucke described the process as “an elaborate use of a limited set of style figures in a from time to time unpolished Latin.”<sup>153</sup>

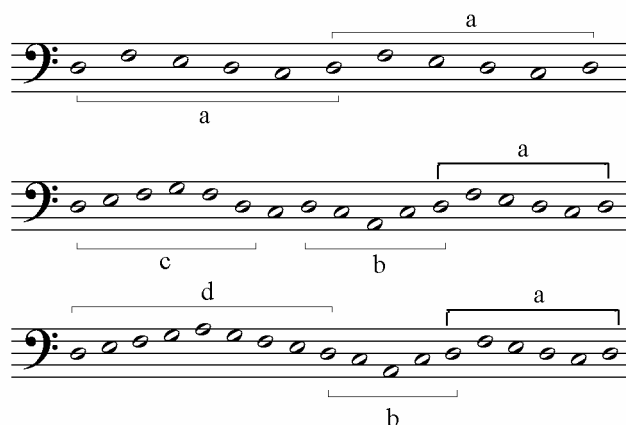


Figure 6, Poucke’s formulaic structures ‘O successores’  
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Bowie and Davies describe the language of the *Symphonia* texts as “particularly beautiful,”<sup>154</sup> however Newman compares her style to Sibyl’s cave: “difficult of access, reverberating with cryptic echoes.”<sup>155</sup> She further comments, “no formal poetry written in the twelfth century, and none that Hildegard might have known, is very much like hers.”<sup>156</sup> The texts abound in imagery and symbolism, and there are “many allusions to the Song of

<sup>151</sup> van Poucke, 8.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>154</sup> Bowie and Davies, 16.

<sup>155</sup> Newman, 32.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 32.

Songs [that] evoke not only the biblical text but also its liturgical adaptations for feasts of the Mother of God and the virgin martyrs.”<sup>157</sup> Barbara Newman comments on Hildegard’s use of symbolic language:

Hildegard’s poems, at their best, are not simply vehicles for the immense common stock of symbols. One can take these symbols as a kind of bass continuo to ground the more fluid, unexpected meanings that constitute the “melody” of the poem.<sup>158</sup>

Other features of Hildegard’s writing are its “unusual imagery, which can seem outlandish insofar as it reflects her compressed, synesthetic mode of perception,”<sup>159</sup> her “fondness for the grand gesture,”<sup>160</sup> and on occasion a tendency to be “prolix, obscure to the point of opacity, or, more rarely, banal to the point of dullness.”<sup>161</sup> No matter how her style has been described, the collection of compositions in Hildegard’s *Symphonia* is one of the most unique and profound works humanity has known. It is no surprise then, that in an era of re-discovery and academic scholarship, a twentieth-century composer would set to music the texts of nine of these recently uncovered ‘liturgical songs.’

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<sup>157</sup> Newman, 37.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 42.

## Chapter Three: *The Hildegard Motets* Analysis

### I. ‘O verbum Patris’

	<b>O Verbum Patris, tu lumen prime aurore in circulo rota es, omnia in divina vi operans.</b>	O Word of the Father, you are the light of first dawn in a circular wheel, working your divine power in all things.
5	<b>O tu prescientia Dei, omnia opera tua previdisti, sicut voluisti, ita quod in medio potencie tue latuit</b>	O, foreknowledge of God, you foresaw all your works as you willed them in such a way that it lay hidden in the midst of your potency
	<b>quod omnia prescivisti,</b>	for you knew all things from the beginning
10	<b>et operatus es quasi in similitudine rote cuncta circueuntis, que initium non accepit nec in fine prostrata est.</b>	and you acted in likeness to a wheel which encompasses all, having no beginning nor destroyed by any end. <sup>162</sup>

Although Barbara Newman states Hildegard, “as a verbal artist did not have the craftsmanship of a Notker or a Peter Abelard,” she also defends the abbess as nonetheless being adequate, at the very least.<sup>163</sup> Hildegard’s subjects might have been very conventional but her treatment and style were “wholly original.”<sup>164</sup> Newman notes:

Her poems, even apart from their musical settings, leave an indelible impression of freshness and power. What she lacked in fluency, Hildegard made up in sheer immediacy. Not words but images formed her native idiom, and in her lyrics these images can leap out of their verbal wrappings to

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<sup>162</sup> Barbara Newman has composed her own poetic translations as well as providing literal translations of the Hildegard texts (see Appendix A). In addition to her freer interpretation of ‘O verbum Patris,’ Newman has provided an alternative title: “Song to the Creator,” 259.

<sup>163</sup> Newman, 45.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 45.

assault the mind with all the force and inevitability of a Jungian dream.<sup>165</sup>

The image of light is one of two primary symbols found in ‘O verbum Patris.’ In the second line of text God’s Word is portrayed as the “light of first dawn.” The association of God with the light (birth) of a new day, is clearly intentional. Schipperges notes the importance of light and birth (awakening): “...the Spirit is Life, radiant praiseworthy Life, Life that arouses all things and reawakens the cosmos.”<sup>166</sup>

Hildegard frequently used the image of a wheel in her writings, and such imagery is found in the *Symphonia*. Newman states: “this lyric celebrating divine prescience in creation belongs to the same thought-world as the first three *Symphonia* pieces and employs closely related language. The wheel is a classic symbol of eternity which Hildegard used frequently.”<sup>167</sup> Once, writing on the Trinity in a letter to the Bishop of Bamberg, she compared the Father’s eternity to the eternal spinning of a wheel – that which has no beginning nor an end.<sup>168</sup> To learn more about the wheel symbolism one must turn to *De operatione Dei*, Hildegard’s collection of ten visions. Here, her vision of the interconnection of microcosm and macrocosm is represented by ‘The Wheel of Life.’<sup>169</sup> “At the center of the wheel stands a human being, preeminent among created things.”<sup>170</sup> Schipperges describes it in the following way:

It was no accident that the cosmic disc or wheel was located not just in the Godhead’s chest, but in its very heart (*in*

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<sup>165</sup> Newman, 45.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, 67.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 317-318.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 318.

<sup>169</sup> Bobko, 27.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 27.



*pectore*). The living wheel (*rota*) was, as it were, an organ of the Godhead, it was the heart of God (*operatio Dei*). As the cosmic wheel turned, it stood not only for the idea of order in the universe, but for an evolving world as well. The wheel symbolized the working of nature (*opus cum creatura*) and the forces of history, the interplay of the seasons and the periods of life, and the tragedy inherent in the vicissitudes of change (*vicissitudo temporum*).<sup>171</sup>

Textually, in ‘O verbum Patris,’ the image of a circling wheel “serves to link creation and Incarnation.”<sup>172</sup> Newman adds that the static nature of the spinning wheel “denotes the vitality as well as the timelessness of God, charging all creation with a powerful energy.”<sup>173</sup>

Ferko has set Hildegard’s ‘O verbum Patris’ text for counter-tenor solo and unaccompanied *divisi* SATB chorus.<sup>174</sup> The motet comprises three main sections resembling ternary form in structure (figure 7).<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Schipperges, 37.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>173</sup> Newman, 318.

<sup>174</sup> Ferko intended that the counter-tenor represent the Deity, who sings “the Word of Creation.” The soloist is ‘surrounded’ by the “earthly creatures” (represented by the women), who reiterate the vocative ‘O’ in both the opening and closing A sections. Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>175</sup> The composer intended the motet return to the A section to capture the imagery of a never-ending form, or of a wheel turning an endless number of rotations. Initially he planned to compose the motet so that one could conceivably continue to seamlessly perform the motet again and again *ad infinitum* (i.e. ABABABA...). Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

Formal Units	A mm. 1 - 19	B mm. 20 - 41	A' mm. 42 - 55
Measures	1 - 19	20 - 22    23 - 32    33 - 41	42 - 45
Meter	None		
Tempo Markings	Very slowly (♩ = ca. 40)		
Dynamic Markings	<i>pp</i>	<i>p</i> <i>p mf</i> <i>p</i> <i>p f mp</i>	<i>(pp?)</i>
Forces	Counter-tenor solo Sopranos (div. a 3) Altos (div. a 2)	T (div.) B (div.) SATB SATB + C-t	Counter-tenor solo Sopranos (div. a 3) Altos (div. a 2)
Tonal Aspects	Chords taken from the transposed Phrygian scale beginning on “b” forming tone clusters. The seventh degree is omitted. No key center. Ambiguous harmonies. ‘Organized’ dissonance. O Verbum Patris, tu lumen prime aurore in circulo rota rote? Jes, omnia in divina vi operans.	Chords are predominantly built using the tones of B, C, D, E, F sharp, and G. The only C sharp in the motet occurs in measure 27, in the first soprano voice.	As in the opening A section tone clusters occur, drawn from the Phrygian scale on “b.”  ...quasi in similitudine rote cuncta circumiens, que initium non accipit nec in fine prostrata est.
Text: (Latin)  (English Translation)	O Word of the Father, you are the light of the first dawn in a circular wheel, working your divine power in all things.	O foreknowledge of God, you foresaw all your works as you willed them in such a way that it lay hidden in the midst of your potency for you knew all things from the beginning and you acted...	...in likeness to a wheel which encompasses all, having no beginning nor destroyed by any end.

Figure 7, Flowchart to ‘O verbum Patris.’

The opening A section (measures 1-18) is based upon measures 1-2 which occur in exact repetition, but with different texts, in measures 3-4, 7-8, and 14-15 (figure 8). The same material occurs again in measures 16-17 with three minor rhythmic changes in measure 17.

Very slowly (♩ = ca. 40)

*mp*

Counter-Tenor solo

*pp*

Sopranos 1 2

*pp*

Altos 1 2

5

Ver bum — Pa tris —

*simile*

*simile*

9

tu lu - men pri - me au - ro - re —

✱

✱ Sopranos may divide into 3 groups here, or 1st Tenors may sing the D or the E.

Figure 8, mm. 1-19  
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(figure cont.)

12

in cir - cu - lo ro - ta es

16

om - ni - a in di - vi - na vi - o - pe-rans

The ethereal harmonic undercurrent, or ‘atmospheric’ sound is created using tone clusters taken from the Phrygian mode,<sup>176</sup> with a Final on B (figure 9). The melodies and harmonies in measures 5-6, 9-11, 12-13, and 18-19, are relatives of measures 1-2, using only six pitches instead of the initial four. The four pitches used in measures 1-2 (B, C, D, and E) form the first tetrachord of the mode. Only A is omitted from the Phrygian mode in the opening nineteen measures.

<sup>176</sup> See Albert Seay’s *Music in the Medieval World*, page 33, for a discussion of modes. “The names of the modes, implying Greek origins, in actuality have no relation to the modes established by Greek theorists. Christian writers adopted these terms under a series of misapprehensions; the Church itself refers to each mode by number, not by name.”

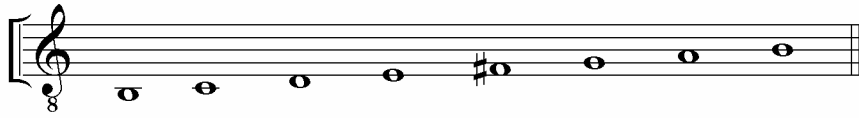


Figure 9, Phrygian mode on B.

In the opening nineteen measures the counter-tenor and the women are closely integrated, both melodically and harmonically – the soloist and chorus simultaneously singing the same pitches. The counter-tenor sings the melody, leaving the divided women’s section to sustain selected notes on the word “O,” thereby serving a harmonic function to the soloist (figure 8).

The ‘*rota*,’ or central B section (measures 20-41) is divided into three smaller phrases, measures 20-22; measures 23-32, and, measures 33-41 (figure 10). In each section, the use of three musical statements may be numerically symbolic or representative of the Trinity.

In measures 20-22 the tenors and basses sing a homophonic texture using all seven pitches of the Phrygian mode (figure 10). The women join the men in measure 23, continuing in a homophonic texture, comprised of all tones of the Phrygian mode. The only exception to the Phrygian mode, or to a b minor harmony, is in measure 27 where a C sharp briefly appears. In measures 33-41, the counter-tenor soloist is reintroduced, singing with all voices. By adding forces throughout this *rota* section Ferko continues building toward the true climax of the piece in measure 35, where a *forte* dynamic briefly occurs. In measure 36, the dynamic level decreases and the counter-tenor soloist drops out of the texture until measure 42. The central B section is almost entirely homorhythmic in character, and excludes the soloist until measure 35 (figure 10).

20

*p*

Tenor 1

O — tu pre - sci - en - ti - a De - i,

Tenor 2

O — tu pre - sci - en - ti - a De - i,

Bass 1

O — tu pre - sci - en - ti - a De - i,

Bass 2

O tu pre - sci - en - ti - a De - i,

23

*mf*

*div.*

S

om - ni - a o - pe - ra tu - a pre - vi - di - sti

A

om - ni - a o - pe - ra tu - a pre - vi - di - sti

T

8 om - ni - a o - pe - ra tu - a pre - vi - di - sti

B

om - ni - a tu - a pre - vi - di - sti

28

*p unis.*

*p*

S

si - cut vo - lu - is - ti i - ta quod in me - di - o

A

si - cut vo - lu - is - ti i - ta quod in me - di - o

T

8 si - cut vo - lu - is - ti i - ta quod in me - di - o

B

si - cut vo - lu - is - ti i - ta quod in me - di - o

Figure 10, mm. 20-41.  
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(figure cont.)

33

C.-T. Solo

*f*

tu - e la - tu - it

S

*div. f* *mp*

po - ten - ci - e tu - e la - tu - it quod om - ni - a

A

*div. f* *mp*

po - ten - ci - e tu - e la - tu - it quod om - ni - a

T

*f*

8 po - ten - ci - e tu - e la - tu - it

B

*f*

po - ten - ci - e tu - e la - tu - it

38

S

pre - sci - vi - sti

A

pre - sci - vi - sti

T

*div. mp*

8 et o - pe - ra - tus es

B

*div. mp*

et o - pe - ra - tus es

While there are none of the earlier tone clusters of the A section in this middle passage, Ferko employs a tonal language consisting of ‘added note’ chords, creating controlled dissonances.<sup>177</sup> With only five exceptions, each chord of the central *rota* section includes a dissonant interval of either a minor or major second (and their compound

<sup>177</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

intervals), or their inversions (and subsequent compound intervals). The five exceptions can be found in measures 22 (an ‘open’ chord), 36 (a D major tonality), 36-37 (e minor tonalities), 38 (C major chord), and 39 (e minor triad) (figure 10).

Section A’ (measures 42-55) bears a distinct similarity to the opening section except that the melodic lines tend to be downward in melodic direction instead of upward, as found in Section A (figure 11). In addition, measures 44-45 and 52-53 are exact inversions (but with different texts) of measures 1-2. Measures 50-51 are similar inversions of measures 1-2 with three small rhythmic exceptions: an extra eighth-note B is added in measure 50, an alteration of the initial note from an eighth note to a quarter note, and a reduction to three eighth-note counts in measure 51, instead of four as in measures 2, 4, 8 and 15. The motet concludes in similar fashion to the opening.

This motet was conceived with a palindromic structure in mind.<sup>178</sup> Evidence of palindrome includes the use of the earlier noted inversion in the returning A’ section (measures 42-55) (figure 11). Thus, the ‘wheel’ imagery in ‘O verbum Patris’ seems to be represented by the return of the A material in measure 42. The similarity of this material to that of the opening A section possibly fulfills the idea of a never-ending, eternal musical circle (or wheel).<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> The composer concurs. Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>179</sup> Originally it was the composer’s intention to write measures 54-55 as an exact inversion of the opening two measures, thereby arriving ‘home’ almost perfectly, so that one could keep repeating the motet *ad infinitum*. Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.



42

C.-T. Solo

qua - si in si - mi - li - tu - di - ne

S 1 2

O\_ O\_

A 1 2

O\_ O\_

44

*simile*

ro - te cunc - ta

*simile*

O\_ O\_ O\_ O\_

48

cir - cu - e - un - tis, que i - ni - ci - um

O\_ O\_ O\_ O\_

52

non - ac - ce - pit nec in fi - ne pro - stra - ta est.

O\_ O\_ O\_ O\_

Figure 11, mm. 42-55  
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Ferko's use of dynamics likewise suggests a palindromic design. There are only three dynamics used in the central unit (measures 23-32) of the *rota* B Section – *p mf p* (figure 8). This use of dynamics reinforces the idea of symmetry, particularly when one considers the *mf* dynamic is surrounded on either side by a *crescendo* and *diminuendo* respectively. There are a total of 55 measures in 'O verbum Patris' and the *mf* occurs in measures 27 and 28 – the exact mid-point of the work (figure 8). These two measures form the loudest point of this central section, although it is not the musical climax of the motet.

### **Ranges and Tessituras**

The ranges and tessituras of the individual voices in 'O verbum Patris' are very conservative, falling comfortably within the mid-range of each voice, although the tenors may consider the use of falsetto during the softer sections. For balance reasons the basses may need to brighten the tone and raise the dynamic level on occasion when singing within the E2-G2 range (figure 12).

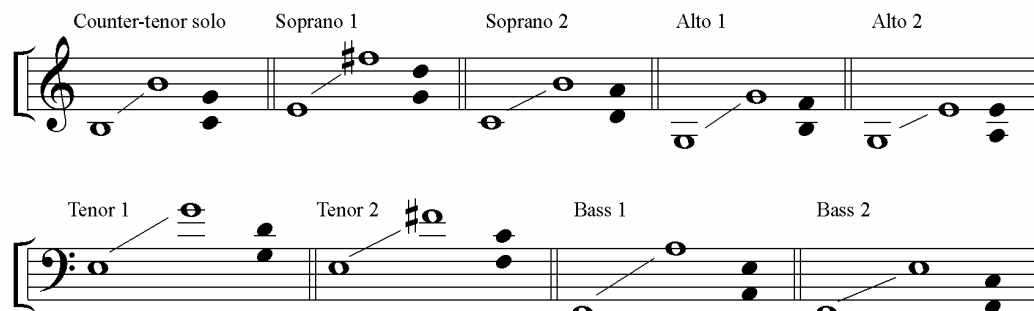


Figure 12, Ranges and Tessituras of 'O verbum Patris.'

Attention should be given to the composer's note at the bottom of page three of the score: "Sopranos may divide into 3 groups here, or 1<sup>st</sup> tenors may sing the D or E" (figure

8). There is no doubt this directive is due to issues of balance – should the sopranos find they are out-weighted by the altos, the conductor may consider having the first tenors sing the third soprano part in measures 9-11, and have the first and second sopranos continue dividing as previously.

### **Interpretation**

Due in part to the fact the motets in the *Hildegard* cycle are derived from plainsong, and/or chant texts from the medieval era, it seems reasonable to expect choirs to perform them in the same style.

A ‘straight’ tone without vibrato could be used in *all* of the motets in the *Hildegard* cycle. However, it appears particularly relevant to ‘O verbum Patris,’ a motet perhaps more reflective than others of plainsong.<sup>180</sup>

One of the conductor’s initial decisions in ‘O verbum Patris’ concerns the solo counter-tenor. While it goes without saying a female alto could quite readily handle such a role, the composer prefers the unique timbre of the male alto voice.<sup>181</sup>

Care must be given to the division of the chorus parts from measures 1 through 19. The director may experiment with a reduced female section using a few voices on each line if necessary. Because the division of notes fluctuates from each two- or three-measure phrase, the director should feel at liberty to adjust the balance of voices from phrase to phrase, until a desirable balance has occurred (figure 8).

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<sup>180</sup> One of the images Ferko wished to capture in this motet was Hildegard’s belief that music was a gift of God. The counter-tenor represents God who is “singing out over the universe and creating something out of nothing.” In addition to the pure sound, the composer believes the singing should be slightly darker and more ‘covered’ than naturally so, adding to the mysterious atmosphere of the opening. Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>181</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

A certain degree of tempo modification seems to be required in ‘O verbum Patris,’ despite the fact Ferko provides a tempo marking. Measures 2, 6, 8, and 11 each have four, three, four, and six eighth-note values respectively, implying a certain metrical freedom (figure 8). The inclusion of breath marks at the ends of each of each phrase similarly implies a degree of flexibility. Although there is no time signature, the rhythmic pulse should remain consistent throughout, particularly at measure 19, and again at measure 41 where there is a proportion change (figures 8 and 10). The transitions between sections A and B (*rota*) should be seamless – the previous eighth-note pulse equals the new quarter-note pulse, as marked in the music.

In the opening and closing A sections, the conductor may reserve the downbeat conducting gestures for the chorus, while leaving the soloist to perform in a quasi-recitative manner to ensure rhythmical precision from the singers.<sup>182</sup> Aside from this issue, the opening section should not pose any real concerns for the conductor, as there is only one measure (measure 18) in which the women do not enter on successive notes of the counter-tenor melody (figure 8).

The desired rhythmic flow in measures 42 through the end of the piece may prove more difficult (figure 11). The rhythmic patterns are less predictable than in the opening, and may need additional rehearsing. Throughout this A’ section the conductor may consider giving downbeats *only* to indicate choir entrances (as indicated by asterisks in figure 13). This will require a constant pulse so that soloist, choir and conductor perform as an ensemble.

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<sup>182</sup> In other words, the conductor should not direct the soloist, but rather allow him interpretative freedom.

42

C.-T. Solo

qua - si in si - mi - li - tu - di - ne

S 1 2

O\_ O\_

A 1 2

O\_ O\_

\* \* \* \* \*

Figure 13, mm. 42-43  
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The conducting pattern should be one of sustained motion, flowing and legato in nature, and reflective of the plainsong quality of the A material. In order to avoid confusing the choristers, the soloist should release of his own accord in measure 43, without a gesture from the conductor. At the end of measure 43 the conductor should release the choir, stopping the conducting gesture briefly once the choir has ceased to sing. This is preferable to using the release gesture as a preparation for the next measure. By employing the former technique the composer's breath indication will therefore be observed.

It should be noted there is an absence of a 'new' dynamic in measure 42. This omission appears to be a typographical error – it makes little sense to continue with a *mp* dynamic from measures 36 (women) and 39 (men). This is so clearly related to the opening A section that one would expect a correspondingly similar dynamic level here (i.e. *pp*).

Much of Frank Ferko's music comprises the 'controlled' or 'organized' dissonance of seconds and sevenths. For example, at measures 20-21, the tenors must demonstrate a keen sense of pitch in singing consecutive harmonic minor second intervals (figure 14). Similarly in measure 20, the second tenor and first bass sing an harmonic minor second on beat one moving to a major second on beat two, followed by a major seventh on beat three. Such passages may require additional attention in rehearsal.

20 *p*

Tenor 1  
8 O — tu pre - sci - en - ti - a

Tenor 2  
8 O — tu pre - sci - en - ti - a

Bass 1  
*p* O — tu pre - sci - en - ti - a

Bass 2  
*p* O tu pre - sci - en - ti - a

Figure 14, mm. 20-21  
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In addition to text painting already discussed, the *pianissimo* tone clusters of the opening and closing A sections create vague, ethereal backdrops of sound, against which the soloist (God?) sings. This may be a symbolic correlation between the hazy 'impressionistic' sound that results, and the imprecise moment at dawn as dark turns to light. Like a wheel, dawn also has no clearly punctuated beginning or end ('*que initium non accepit nec in fine prostrata est*').

Intonation problems may occur in the A sections due to the slow tempo and long, sustained notes. Thus, it is essential the singers maintain good breath support during these phrases. Inevitably some organized effort will be needed to coordinate the ‘staggering’ of breathing (i.e. arrange for separate individuals to breath at irregular moments in the line so as not to disturb the overall phrase). The metronome indication should be followed closely.<sup>183</sup>

## II. O splendidissima gemma

	<b>O splendidissima gemma et serenum decus solis qui tibi infusus est, fons saliens</b>	O resplendent jewel and unclouded beauty of the sun which poured into you, a fountain springing
5	<b>de corde Patris, quod est unicum Verbum suum, per quod creavit mundi primam materiam, quam Eva turbavit.</b>	from the Father’s heart, which is his only Word, through which he created the world’s first matter, which Eve disturbed.
10	<b>Hoc Verbum effabricavit tibi Pater hominem, et ob hoc es tu illa lucida materia per quam hoc ipsum Verbum exspiravit omnes virtutes,</b>	For you the Father forged this Word as human, wherefore you are that bright matter through which this very Word exhaled all virtues,
15	<b>ut eduxit in prima materia  omnes creaturas.</b>	as he brought forth from this first matter all creatures.

Symbolism plays an important role in the second motet of the cycle, as it does in most of the *Hildegard* motets. In this instance the central symbol found in ‘O splendidissima gemma,’ the fifth song of the *Symphoniae*, is that of a jewel. The jewel,

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<sup>183</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001

gem, or crystal had many associations with religious figures, especially Mary, and also possessed healing powers.<sup>184</sup> Newman's idea that the gem or crystal "was one of the many such devices, beloved of medieval poets, used as analogies for the Virgin Birth" is briefly alluded to in lines 15 and 16, where "all creatures" are "brought forth from this first matter."<sup>185</sup> This particular poem of Hildegard's has been catalogued as the tenth in her *Symphonia*, falling under the sub-heading 'Mother and Son.'<sup>186</sup> In addition to the 'jewel' motif, Hildegard uses another important image – that of reflecting or mirroring – which is addressed later in this chapter.

'O splendidissima gemma' is scored for counter-tenor and alto soloists, and unaccompanied *divisi* SATB chorus. The motet essentially consists of two main ideas, although several subsidiary motifs do occur in addition to the primary material. 'O splendidissima gemma' comprises six separate large structural units (figure 15). It should be noted that the translation provided on the inside cover of the E. C. Schirmer copy has mistranslated *Verbum* as "world" instead of "word."

In 'O splendidissima gemma' Ferko uses both Phrygian mode in measures 1-7, and again in measures 35-37 (figure 16), and an Aeolian mode on E in measures 8-34, and 38-41 (figure 17).<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Schipperges, 74.

<sup>185</sup> Newman, 115.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>187</sup> Tess Knighton and David Fallows, ed., *Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music*, 255.



Formal Units	A mm. 1 - 7	B mm. 8 - 13	[C] from A mm. 14 - 21
Measures	1 - 7	8 - 9    10 - 12    13	14 - 17    18 - 21
Meter	12/8	6/8	6/8
Tempo Markings	Brightly (♩ = ca. 63)		
Dynamic Markings	<i>mf</i>	<i>mp</i>	<i>f</i>
Forces	SA +TB	SATB SATB (div.)	<i>mf p</i> (p) SATB (div.) S (quasi plainsong) S tacet mm. 16-17 ATB
Tonal Aspects	Phrygian mode	Added F sharps = Aeolian on E	Aeolian (on E)
Text ( <i>Latin</i> )	O splendidissima gemma et serenum decus solis qui tibi infusus est, fons saltens...	...de corde Patris, quod est unicum Verbum suum per quod creavit...	...mundi primam materiam, quam Eva turbavit. [Magnificat anima mea...]
( <i>English Translation</i> )	O resplendent jewel and unclouded beauty of the sun which poured into you, a fountain...	...springing from the Father's heart, which is his only Word, through which (he created)...	...the world's first matter, which Eve disturbed. [Magnifies soul my...]

Figure 15, Flowchart to ‘O splendidissima gemma.’

(figure cont.)

Formal Units	[D] from A+B (inverted) mm. 22 - 27		[E] from A+B+A mm. 28 - 37		Closing Section mm. 38 - 41
Measures	22 - 23	24 - 27	28 - 32	33 - 34	35 - 37
Meter	12/8 6/8 12/8		12/8		6/8
Tempo Markings	(Brightly)				Slowly
Dynamic Markings	<i>p</i>	<i>(mp) (soloists)</i>	<i>mf</i>		<i>pp</i>
Forces	Counter-tenor solo Alto solo SATB (div.)	Counter-tenor solo Alto solo SATB (div.)	SATB (div. at mm. 33-34)	SAB (tacet T)	Counter-tenor solo Alto solo SAB (div.) T
Tonal Aspects	B minor/E minor (bi-chordal) Hoc Verbum effabracavit tibi Pater hominem,	Aeolian (on E)	Aeolian (on E)	Phrygian	B minor/E minor chords (bi-chordal) ...omnes creaturas.
Text ( <i>Latin</i> )	For you the Father forged this Word as human,		et ob hoc es tu illa lucida materia per quam hoc ipsum Verbum exspiravit omnes virtutes, ut eduxit in prima materia...		
( <i>English Translation</i> )			wherefore you are that bright matter through which this very Word exhaled all virtues, as he brought forth from this first matter...		... all creatures.

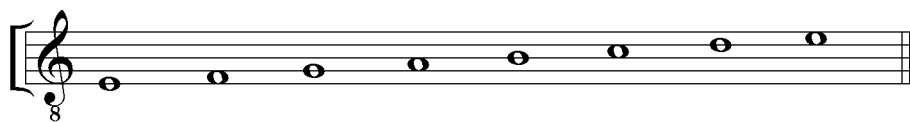


Figure 16, Phrygian mode.

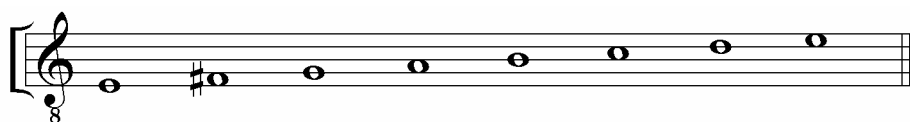


Figure 17, Aeolian mode on E.

Ferko's decision to set the bulk of this motet in an Aeolian mode on E, resulting in frequent F sharp accidentals, was a conscious choice and one that links the image of a jewel (green emerald) with harmonic color.<sup>188</sup>

Characteristically, similar harmonies that appear in 'O verbum Patris,' the first *Hildegard* motet, are also found in 'O splendidissima gemma.' Ferko's penchant for harmonies built around intervals of seconds and sevenths is evident from the opening measures of Section A (measures 1-7) (figure 18).<sup>189</sup>

<sup>188</sup> In an interview dated July 24, 2002, Ferko explained how he associates colors with pitch (synesthesia). This phenomenon "is not always vivid, and sometimes it doesn't happen at all." The ability developed while the composer was at college, and rather than get colors from individual pitches, Ferko "gets colors usually from harmonies." One of the main reasons he writes many low notes in the bass voice part is due to the overtone series, and the resultant tones. "...if the music is performed in tune with enough resonant bass sound, then those harmonic constructions will produce colors for me. It has become something of a challenge for me to see how I can alter the colors by adding and varying the pitches within a particular basic harmony. Thus, if I use a plain B minor chord with a very low resonant B as the bass note, I will get a certain shade of blue (kind of 'sky blue'), but if I start adding some other pitches, such as a 7<sup>th</sup>, a 9<sup>th</sup> or something else, then the color will change, or I will get more than one color at once." In the mind of the composer the occurrence of F sharps 'elicit' or suggest the color bright green, which, in this particular motet, represents the principal symbol found in 'O splendidissima gemma' – that of the jewel (*gemma*). Other colors are likewise generated by notes or keys: An E flat results in orange; a C sharp generates the color yellow; C major is a "basically white" color; A major is a primary yellow color, a primary blue color, or both; and A minor is a pale yellow key.

<sup>189</sup> This particular measure is sung a total of three times, possibly symbolizing the Trinity.

*I* **Brightly** (♩. = ca. 63)

*mf*

Soprano  
O Splen - di-dis-si-ma gem - ma et se-re-num de-cus so - lis

Alto  
*mf*  
O Splen - di - dis-si - ma et se-re-num de-cus so -

Tenor

Bass

4

S  
fons sa - li - ens

A  
lis fons sa - li - ens

T  
*mf*  
qui ti - bi in - fu-sus est, fons sa - li - ens

B  
*mf*  
qui ti - bi in - fu-sus est, fons sa - li - ens

Figure 18, mm. 1-7.

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The ‘splendid jewel’ motif appears in the sopranos and altos, where the meter is compound quadruple (figure 18). ‘O splendidissima gemma’ oscillates between the compound quadruple meter of the opening A section, and compound duple meters in successive sections, with a predominance of the former. The rhythms Ferko uses in this motet often bear a resemblance to the medieval rhythmic modes (figure 19), particularly mode two (figure 20), which is reflected in the soprano line of the opening measure.

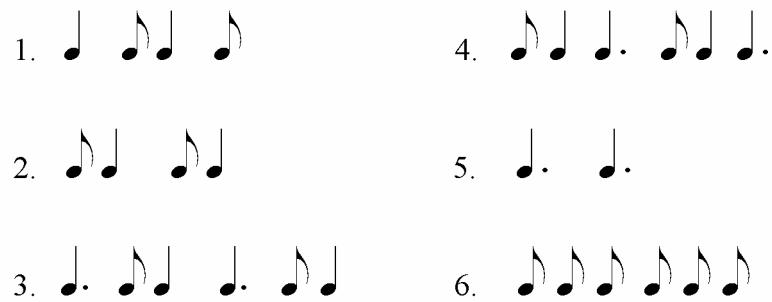


Figure 19, Medieval rhythmic modes.

Figure 20, m. 1 shows the first measure of a musical score for four voices: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The tempo is marked 'Brightly' with a note value of 'ca. 63'. The dynamics are marked 'mf' (mezzo-forte). The Soprano line features a melodic motif circled in red, consisting of a quarter note followed by two eighth notes. The Alto line also features a circled motif, consisting of a quarter note followed by two eighth notes. The Tenor and Bass lines are marked with a whole rest, indicating they are silent in this measure. The time signature is 12/8.

Figure 20, m. 1.

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The main melodic and rhythmic interest occurs in the soprano line, which exactly repeats the first measure in measure 2 (but with different text), before varying the opening measure motif in measure 3. The measure 1 motif is again repeated by both altos and sopranos (again with new text) in measure 5. This soprano motif reappears throughout the motet, but in melodically varied forms. In measures 4-7 the tenors and basses join the women, retaining essentially the same rhythms but with some melodic variation. A held *tutti* dotted

half note brings this brief introductory section to a close. This opening A section also uses ‘open’<sup>190</sup> intervals of fourths, fifths, and octaves, which create an ‘archaic’ or medieval ‘effect’ (figure 18). Ferko similarly uses controlled dissonances in all other sections of the motet.

Section B (measures 8-13) is in compound quadruple meter, and presents contrasting, chant-like material in all four voices (figure 21). The dynamic is initially *mp* with a *crescendo* occurring in measure 13.

Figure 21 shows musical notation for measures 8-13. The top system (measures 8-10) features four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in compound quadruple meter (12/8). The lyrics are: "de cor - de Pa - tris quod est u - ni -". The dynamic is marked *mp*. The bottom system (measures 11-13) continues the text: "cum per quod cre - a - vit" and "Ver - bum su - um". The dynamic remains *mp*. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Figure 21, mm. 8-13  
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<sup>190</sup> i.e. chords, or harmonies omitting the third.

The harmonic rhythm is considerably slower compared to the opening seven measures of the motet. Measure 8 resembles the fifth medieval rhythmic mode, found in all four voice parts (figure 22).

Figure 22 shows the musical notation for measure 8 of a motet, featuring four voice parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The time signature is 12/8. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The lyrics are "de cor - de Pa -". The dynamics are marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). The Soprano part starts with a half note F#4, followed by quarter notes G4, A4, and B4. The Alto part starts with a half note F#4, followed by quarter notes G4, A4, and B4. The Tenor part starts with a half note F#3, followed by quarter notes G3, A3, and B3. The Bass part starts with a half note F#2, followed by quarter notes G2, A2, and B2.

Figure 22, m. 8

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Rhythms reminiscent of both modes 2 and 5 (figure 19) recur throughout the work. Glimpses of the section A material appear, such as in the soprano line of measure 10. Here the initial interval of an ascending minor second from measure 1 (figure 18), has been slightly expanded to a minor third. The soprano rhythm is almost exactly that of the first measure, while the alto, tenor, and bass lines retain the static rhythms of measure 8, those resembling the fifth medieval mode (figure 22). With the addition of an F sharp, the mode changes from Phrygian to Aeolian on E in this B section (figure 21). A rhythmically prominent feature of this motet is the unexpected use of duplet rhythms found in the soprano and alto voices in measure 13. Such radical and irregular rhythms draw attention to the text ('through whom he created...'), possibly foreshadowing the ensuing *forte* climax in measure 14.

Section C (measures 14-21) contains the dynamic climax of the motet, appropriately set to the text '*mundi primam materiam*' (first substance of the world) in measures 14-15 (figure 23). It comprises two smaller sub-sections; measures 14-17, and measures 18-21. The melodic material of this third section is related to the opening seven measures of the piece in the continued use of a mode – Aeolian in this instance. In addition, melodic relationships are evident between the soprano parts of measure 14 and measure 1 (figure 18). In measure 14 the opening melodic figure is partially inverted, and is subsequently re-stated by the sopranos in measures 15, 16, 17, and by the first altos in measures 18, 19 and 20 (figures 18 and 19). The first two measures of the first sub-section (measures 14-17) are homophonically sung *tutti*, and with a *forte* dynamic. As the texture thins (the sopranos drop out in measure 16), the dynamics decrease in a *subito* manner (i.e. without *crescendi* or *diminuendi*), eventually softening to *piano* in measure 17 (figure 23).

C continues in the second sub-section in measures 18-21, with the introduction of new material in the soprano part, accompanied by the lower voices (figure 24). This is a setting of the first line of the *Magnificat* text (Song of Mary) in *cantus firmus* fashion.<sup>191</sup> The inclusion of this *Magnificat* text seems appropriate considering Newman's examination of this particular antiphon of Hildegard's, "...Hildegard leaps from this image of the Virgin Birth to the creation of the world, the Fall, and the restoration of life

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<sup>191</sup> Medieval Roman Catholics considered Mary the "antithesis of Eve" – one who essentially "saved humanity by bearing the Messiah." Ferko is very conscious of the medieval play-on-words where 'Ave' was accepted as Eve ('*Eva*') spelled backwards. In 'O splendidissima gemma' the composer symbolizes both Mary and Eve through the juxtaposition of the *Magnificat* plainsong in the sopranos (measures 18-21), and the '*Eva turbavit*' ('Eve disturbed') text of the chorus (figure 24). Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.



14 *f*

Soprano  
mun - di pri - mam ma - te - ri - am mun - di pri - mam ma - te - ri - am

Alto  
mun - di pri - mam ma - te - ri - am mun - di pri - mam ma - te - ri - am

Tenor  
*f unis.*  
8 mun - di pri - mam ma - te - ri - am mun - di pri - mam ma - te - ri - am

Bass  
*f unis.*  
mun - di - pri - mam ma - te - ri - am mun - di pri - mam ma - te - ri - am

16

S  
— . — .

A  
*mf div.* *p*  
quam — E - va tur - ba - vit, quam — E - va tur - ba - vit,

T  
*mf* *p*  
8 quam — E - va tur - ba - vit, quam — E - va tur - ba - vit,

B  
*mf* *p*  
quam — E - va tur - ba - vit, quam — E - va tur - ba - vit,

Figure 23, mm. 14-17.  
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18 *floating*  
*p unis.*

Soprano  
Mag - ni - fi - cat a - ni - ma

Alto  
quam E - va tur - ba - vit, quam E - va tur - ba - vit,

Tenor  
8 quam E - va tur - ba - vit, quam E - va tur - ba - vit,

Bass  
quam E - va tur - ba - vit, quam E - va tur - ba - vit,

20

S  
me - a

A  
quam E - va tur - ba - vit.

T  
8 quam E - va tur - ba - vit.

B  
quam E - va tur - ba - vit. *div.*

Figure 24, mm. 18-21.

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through Mary.”<sup>192</sup> Mary was a central figure in Hildegard’s world. It was she who “poured balsam on the wounds of mortals” and it was to the Virgin Mary whom the abyss turned and extolled her virtues.<sup>193</sup> Hildegard even went as far as to suggest in her first book

<sup>192</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>193</sup> Schipperges, 74.

of cosmology (*Liber Divinorum Operum*, written between 1163 and 1173) that God “chose the ‘dormant earth’ (*terra dormiens*), in other words, the Virgin Mary, the new Eve, the grand symbol – woman as the symbol of divine reality!”<sup>194</sup>

The melody used here is a fragment borrowed from Johann Sebastian Bach’s ‘Schübler’ chorale, *Meine Seele erherbet der Herren* (BWV648) (figure 24).<sup>195</sup> It is set against the rhythmical ‘*Eva turbavit*’ ([which] Eve disturbed) in the lower voices. The simple “floating” soprano melody starkly contrasts the driving rhythms of the altos, tenors, and basses. Arguably in Phrygian mode, the *Magnificat* likewise contrasts the Aeolian harmonies of the lower three voices, who frequently sing chords containing added notes, such as the second harmony in measure 18, a B minor 11<sup>th</sup> chord, and the final harmony of the same measure, a C major augmented 11<sup>th</sup> chord in second inversion.

Measures 22-27 (section D) comprise the central part of the motet (figure 25). The harmonic rhythm slows down considerably in measures 22-23, and in measures 24-27 the most important text of this section, ‘*Hoc Verbum*’ (‘Made this Word’), is emphasized through repetition. There are essentially two elements in this passage; the counter-tenor soloist, and the accompanying lower voices. The counter-tenor solo material at measure 24 suggests an inversion of the opening measure (figure 18). The ‘Word of the Father’ (‘*Hoc Verbum*’) is a somber, but no less important event. The drawn-out, sustained homo-rhythmic treatment subtly reflects the text. Again, material in this section is derived from previous material, and all the main motives symbolically fuse together, as represented in the text ‘*expiravit omnes virtutes, ut eduxit in prima materia...*’ (‘as he brought forth from

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<sup>194</sup> Schipperges, 92.

<sup>195</sup> The Bach Schübler Chorales, BWV 645-650.

22

Counter-Tenor Solo

Alto Solo

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

*p*

*mp*

Hoc Ver - bum

Hoc Ver - bum

Hoc Ver - bum

Hoc Ver - bum

Hoc Ver - bum

Hoc Ver - bum

25

CTen.

A 1

S

A 2

T

B

ef - fa - bri - ca - vit ti - bi Pa - ter ho - mi - nem,

ef - fa - bri - ca - vit ti - bi Pa - ter ho - mi - nem,

Hoc Ver - bum, Ver - bum,

Hoc Ver - bum, Ver - bum,

Hoc Ver - bum, Ver - bum,

Hoc Ver - bum, Ver - bum,

Figure 25, mm. 22-27  
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this first substance all the creatures’).

The return of the A and B material occurs in measures 28-37 – the longest formal unit of ‘O splendidissima gemma’ (figure 26).

In this section E, the dynamics (*mf*), and the harmonic, melodic and rhythmic lines bear similarity to previously stated material in measures 1-13 (figures 16 and 17). It begins in homorhythmic fashion in measure 28 with the sopranos singing a brief melodic inversion of the B material found earlier on beats 1 and 2 of measure 1 (figure 16). The soprano and alto rhythms in measures 28-29 are likewise derived from measure 1. The rhythms of the soprano and bass lines in measure 30 however, reflect those of the B material, initially found in measure 8 (figure 22). The duplets of measure 13 occur in the alto and tenor lines

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system covers measures 28-29 and includes four staves: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. Each staff begins with a measure rest of 8 measures. The lyrics for these measures are: "et ob hoc es tu il - la lu - ci - da". The dynamics are marked *mf* and *unis.*. The second system covers measures 30-37 and includes four staves: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The lyrics for these measures are: "ma - te - ri - a per quam hoc ip - sum". Measures 30-32 feature duplets in the Alto and Tenor lines, indicated by a '2' over the notes. The Soprano and Bass lines in measure 30 have a measure rest of 8 measures.

Figure 26, mm. 28-37.

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(figure cont.)

32

S Ver - bum ex - spi - ra - vit om - nes vir - tu - tes,

A Ver - bum ex - spi - ra - vit om - nes vir - tu - tes,

T Ver - bum ex - spi - ra - vit om - nes vir - tu - tes,

B Ver - bum ex - spi - ra - vit om - nes vir - tu - tes,

35 *lightly unis.*

S ut e - du - xit in - pri - ma ma - te - ri - a

A ut e - du - xit in - pri - ma ma - te - ri - a

T

B om - nes, om - nes, om - nes,

in measure 30, and again in all voices in measure 32. Similarly, measures 33-34 are closely linked to rhythms in measures 11-12 of the B section (figure 17) Measures 35-37 juxtapose the A + B themes (figures 16 and 17), in the soprano, alto, and bass voices. The soprano and alto melody and rhythms of measures 1-3 are exactly repeated, but with a different text (figure 18). Below them the basses repeat the word “*omnes*” (‘all’) to open fifth intervals. The static bass rhythms are simply augmentations of the fifth rhythmic mode, now in

dotted half notes, initially found in measure 8 (figure 21). The bass harmonies are likewise very static, simply continuing the measures 33-34 open fifths on E and B. Measures 33-34, in Aeolian mode on E, briefly re-visit the opening Phrygian mode in measures 35-37. The basses repeat an open fifth E-B, which functions as a unifying pedal, remaining constant through the mode change.

To conclude the motet, Ferko has set the long dotted half notes of the choir of the B section (figure 22) against *quasi* plainsong lines in the counter-tenor and alto parts (figure 27). This closing section, to be sung slowly and “like chant,” is in compound duple meter, and is scored with *pianissimo* dynamics. With the addition of F sharps, the mode changes back to Aeolian on E. The basses, who have been constantly singing an open fifth E-B

38 **Slowly**

Counter-Tenor Solo  
(like chant) om - nes cre - a - tu - ras.

Alto Solo  
(like chant) om - nes cre - a - tu - ras.

Soprano  
**Slowly** *pp* *div.* om - nes, om - nes.

Alto  
*pp* *div.* om - nes, om - nes.

Tenor  
*pp* om - nes, om - nes.

Bass  
*pp* om - nes, om - nes.

Figure 27, mm. 38-41.  
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interval, continue in such fashion, remaining constant through the mode change as they did in the preceding section. This closing section begins and concludes in a bi-chordal fashion, combining B minor and E minor tonalities in measure 38, which are sustained by the choir, without change, through measure 41.<sup>196</sup> Thus, ‘O splendidissima gemma’ concludes with an unresolved dissonance.<sup>197</sup>

### **Ranges and Tessituras**

Although the ranges for each voice part do not appear extreme, a closer study of the tessituras will ultimately determine whether this motet is within the capabilities of the choristers (figure 28). As is typical of Ferko’s other motets, ‘true’ second basses are required to sing sustained notes on E1 and occasionally on D1. The tenors typically sing within a comfortable range, except in measure 11, where they are required to sing at the top of their range and with a soft dynamic (figure 22).

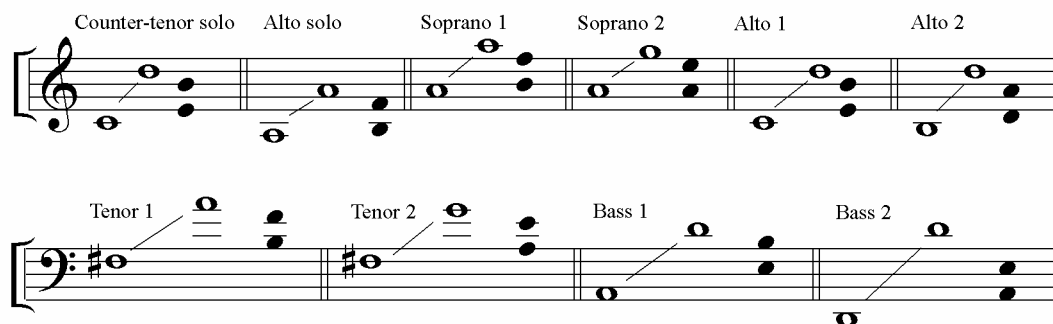


Figure 28, Ranges and Tessituras.

<sup>196</sup> It should be noted the performance directive “*like chant*” in the soprano line of measure 38, appears to be an error (figure 27).

<sup>197</sup> Ferko has linked this Advent motet to the succeeding Christmas motet ‘Hodie aperuit,’ creating a feeling of tension and incompleteness in the former, which is only resolved at the downbeat of the latter work. The second and third *Hildegard Motets* “were written together as a set and should be performed that way.” Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.



## **Interpretation**

Ferko has set this particular Hildegard text, a psalm antiphon for the Virgin, to a bright tempo (dotted quarter note = ca. 63). The crisp, syncopated rhythms of the opening might benefit from slight accentuation or *tenuto* on the downbeats within each measure, although this should be judiciously executed (figure 18). The conductor must make a decision where the chorus should breathe in the first three measures of the piece. The similarity of measures 1, 2, and 3 might convince the conductor to suggest some type of articulation after each one-measure phrase, such as a lift or a breath. However, care should be taken not to compromise the grammar. Should the conductor choose to sing measures 1-4 in one breath, ‘staggered’ breathing will probably be necessary.

Typical of Ferko’s penchant for ‘color’ in his music, the harmonies in measure 8, those essentially comprising both ‘compound’ tone clusters (i.e. chords comprising half- and whole-tones extended greater than an octave) and the typical ‘added-note’ chords<sup>198</sup> may present a challenge for singers to tune accurately (figure 22).

In the opening section A, angular rhythms reflect the nature of the text with the exception of ‘*serenum*’ (serene, or calm) a possible example of text painting (figure 18). Another possible example occurs in the treatment of ‘*fons saliens*’ (flows into you). Text painting may also be evident in the treatment of ‘*decorde patris*’ (Father’s heart), where the rhythm is slowed in measures 8-9, perhaps as a heart slows its pulse rate (figure 22). In

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<sup>198</sup> ‘Added-note’ chords essentially comprise a root, third, and fifth, with the frequent addition of the seventh, ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth degrees. ‘Added-note’ chords do not necessarily have to include all of the above intervals, and may only include a single added-note.

measure 10 the section A motif of measure 1 is juxtaposed with the B motive. The duplets in the soprano and alto parts in measure 13 may require careful, independent rehearsing.

The importance of the text '*quam Eva turbavit*' (which Eve disturbed) in measure 16 is reflected through repetition, which is exact except for variant notes (G) in measure 17, as well as an increase in dynamics (figure 23). In these measures the blame for the 'wrongs' that occurred in the Garden of Eden is squarely placed on Eve's shoulders. Above the accusatory text '*quam Eva...*' in measure 18, Ferko includes the significant *Magnificat* (Song of Mary) text from Luke 1:38, where Mary praises God after the promise of bearing the Messiah is revealed to her (figure 24). Mary is a symbol of Christianity – a figurehead of great importance. This is the only instance in the motets where text other than that of Hildegard's is used. The text addresses the Virgin Birth (for which the gem has been used as an analogy). Thus, the use of the *Magnificat* verse seems quite appropriate. The poignant depiction of this event requires sensitive and reflective treatment in performance.

The long-sustained accompanying choir chords in measures 22-27 (figure 25), originally derived from B (figure 22), should not outweigh the counter-tenor and alto solos, whose material has evolved from A (figure 18).

The indication that a dotted quarter note = a quarter note at the end of measure 37 may appear both confusing and redundant (figure 26). Although the closing section (measures 38-41) is in compound duple time, Ferko indicates that the former dotted quarter note should equal the new quarter note (figure 27). The 6/8 time signature appears to contradict the proportion indication Ferko has inserted. Adding to the confusion may be that, although measure 39 is beamed according to simple triple time, measure 40 is beamed

according to compound duple time. Perhaps even more perplexing is that the closing section leaves several matters of tempo and performance to the conductor (i.e. directives that are not controlled by the composer, such as *Slowly* and *(like chant)*).<sup>199</sup> It is suggested that an obviously slower tempo occur (as written), but that measures 38-39 should be conducted in a three pattern, and measure 40 be conducted in a slow two pattern (i.e. corresponding to 6/8 meter). The eighth note must always remain steady.

### III. Hodie aperuit

	<b>Hodie aperuit nobis</b>	Today there opens for us a gate
	<b>clausa porta</b>	which had been closed,
	<b>quod serpens in muliere suffocavit,</b>	that which the serpent choked in a
		woman,
	<b>unde lucet in aurora</b>	whence there gleams in the dawn
5	<b>flos de Virgine Maria.</b>	the flower of the Virgin Mary.

Although not characterized as such by Hildegard, Ferko stipulates this as a Christmas motet, as the text “clearly represents the birth of the Messiah.”<sup>200</sup> He states further that she “did not designate the texts for the seasons” but rather gave them “more general classifications.”<sup>201</sup> It was Ferko’s intention that the *Hildegard* cycle exist as a collection of motets for various seasons in the church calendar year, and he took it upon himself to designate the texts for certain specific occasions. In addition to serving as a Christmas motet, Barbara Newman suggests the Hildegard setting of ‘Hodie aperuit’

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<sup>199</sup> Ferko’s rationale for including the metrical marking is to ensure an “equivalency” between the two sections Measures 38-41 should be conducted in three, not two, while adhering to a slower tempo. Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>200</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

“would be proper to a specific feast, such as Annunciation.”<sup>202</sup>

Texts addressing the Virgin Mary were common among Hildegard’s writings, and various symbols were applied to the Mother of Christ. Not unsurprisingly, there is an abundance of symbolism in ‘Hodie aperuit.’ “In terms of imagery these [hymns devoted to the Virgin] are perhaps the most stereotyped [of the *Symphonia*], simply because the liturgy itself was a storehouse of Marian imagery.”<sup>203</sup>

‘Hodie aperuit,’ a psalm antiphon for the Virgin, portrays the ‘closed gate’ as a central symbol of Mary’s chastity. Newman comments:

For medieval students of the Bible, the closed gate of the temple in Ezekiel’s vision was a sign of Mary’s perpetual virginity, “for the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered by it; therefore it shall remain shut. Only the prince may sit in it” (Ezek. 44:2-3). In this antiphon the closed gate, which is Mary’s womb, opens paradise; and through its portals the faithful can glimpse the sunrise of a new creation lighting its vernal blossom.<sup>204</sup>

‘Hodie aperuit’ is scored for unaccompanied *divisi* SATB chorus. Unlike the preceding motets in the *Hildegard* cycle, it does not utilize any of the church modes.<sup>205</sup>

The music is organized into five large phrases and the musical materials written within the first two phrases are recapitulated and combined to produce musical unity. The final phrase

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<sup>202</sup> Newman, 273.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 273.

<sup>205</sup> Ferko regards it as somewhat “bi-chordal.” Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

set to the words “*unde lucet in aurora flos de Virgine Maria*” (whence there gleams/shines in the dawn the flower of the Virgin Mary), serves as a closing to the piece (figure 29).

Ferko uses all 12 tones of the mode in the opening measures sung by the women, “but it is organized as a series of major chords, either in root position or in second inversion (but not first inversion) over a pedal tone,”<sup>206</sup> which essentially denies any tonality.

The opening A section (measures 1-12) is a repetition of two 6 bar phrases which begin identically, but end differently (figure 30). The women, set in four parts, open by planing primarily major chords over an “A” pedal in the 2<sup>nd</sup> alto part. Only the chords at the beginning of measures 2 and 8, and the final chord in measures 4 and 10 are minor. The b minor chord that ends this section is significant because the piece likewise closes on a b minor chord. In measures 5-6, the men answer in a short setting of the text ‘*clausa porta*’ (closed gates), which returns in measure 11, but with a different ending.

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<sup>206</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, July 24, 2002.

Formal Units	A mm. 1 - 12				B mm. 13 - 20	[C] from A+B mm. 21 - 24
Measures	1 - 4 <sub>a</sub>	5 - 6 <sub>b</sub>	7 - 10 <sub>c</sub>	11 - 12 <sub>d</sub>	13 - 18	19 - 20 21 - 24
Meter	None					
Tempo Markings	Con moto (♩ ca. 108 )				Slower (♩ ca. 92 )	
Dynamic Markings	<i>p</i> (p)				<i>f</i>	<i>mp</i> (SA) <i>p</i> (TB)
Forces	SA	TB	SA	TB	SAB (div.) T	SATB (div.)
Tonal Aspects	Poly-chordal aspects. Utilizes chords D major, E flat major, B minor, F minor, F sharp minor, F major (and their inversions) Planing chords				Dissonant aspect – close harmonies such as second and seventh intervals. Essentially only four harmonies used. Bi-chordal aspects.	Poly-chordal harmonies of the opening (mm. 1-12) against dissonance of the tenors and basses. Planing chords
Text (Latin)	Hodie aperuit nobis clausa porta...				... quod serpens in muliere suffocavit,	Hodie aperuit nobis... quod serpens in muliere suffocavit,
(English Translation)	Today there opens for us a gate which had been closed,				that which the serpent choked in a woman,	Today there opens for us... That which the serpent choked in a woman,

Figure 29, Flowchart of ‘Hodie aperuit’

(figure cont.)

<b>Formal Units</b>	<b>B</b> mm. 25 - 30	<b>Coda</b> mm. 31 - 37
<b>Measures</b>	25 - 30	31 - 37
<b>Meter</b>	None	
<b>Tempo Markings</b>	(Slower)	Slowly ( $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 60$ )
<b>Dynamic Markings</b>	<i>(p)</i> <i>pp</i> <i>p</i> <i>mp</i> <i>mf</i> <i>f</i> <i>ff</i>	<i>pp</i>
<b>Forces</b>	TB (div.) SATB (div.)	SATB (div. except T)
<b>Tonal Aspects</b>	Chord 'clusters' again utilizing close harmonies (intervals of minor second and/or major sevenths)	Measures 31-33 poly-tonal (D major harmonies over E minor in measure 31; A major chord over B minor in measure 32; E minor chord over G major in measure 33; D major/B minor harmonies in 34, beats 1-2).  B minor (Marian blue color) emerges in m. 35 after a V-i cadence.
<b>Text</b> <i>(Latin)</i>	...suffocavit...	unde lucef in aurora flos de Virgine Maria.
<i>(English Translation)</i>	...choked...	whence there gleams in the dawn the flower of the Virgin Mary.

*1* **Con moto** (♩ = ca. 108 )

*p*

Sopranos 1 2

Ho - di - e a - pe - ru - it, a - pe - ru - it no - bis

*p*

Altos 1 2

Ho - di - e a pe - ru - it, a - pe - ru - it no - bis

O

5

S 1 2

Ho - di - e a - pe - ru - it, a -

A 1 2

Ho - di - e a - pe - ru - it, a -

*p*

T 1 2

clau - sa por - ta

*p*

B 1 2

clau - sa por - ta

9

S

pe - ru - it no - bis

pe - ru - it no - bis

A

pe - ru - it no - bis

T

clau - sa por - ta

*molto*

B

clau - sa por - ta

*molto*

Figure 30, mm. 1-12.  
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It seems more appropriate to recognize that the melodic interests in ‘Hodie aperuit’ are closely intertwined with the harmonic material. The *legato*, reflective and somewhat subdued A section, is nonetheless positive as it heralds the ‘opening of the gate which had been closed,’ signifying that Paradise has become accessible to humanity.

The texture at the beginning of the B section (figure 31) dramatically contrasts that of the A material (figure 29). Section B (measures 13-20) is built upon a two-measure motif (measures 13-14), which is repeated twice after the initial statement. Here, the choir, divided into SSAATBB, sings the text “which the serpent stifled in the Woman” to a *forte* dynamic.

Section B is in stark contrast to A as it speaks of the serpent (devil) being responsible for the gate’s initial closure. The punctuated rhythms, dissonant harmonies, and relatively vague and static melody reflect the ‘darker side’ of Creation (figure 31). This section contains four separate harmonies, two of which are found in measure 13 (figure 31). The first comprises the notes F sharp, A, C sharp, E, G sharp and D sharp, resembling a bi-chordal E major/major 7<sup>th</sup> over F sharp minor. The second harmony contains the notes B, D, F sharp, and C sharp, essentially a B minor chord with an added 9<sup>th</sup>. The third harmony occurs in measure 19 and comprises notes F sharp, A, C sharp, and G sharp (an F sharp minor chord with an added 9<sup>th</sup>). The fourth harmony, also found in measure 19, is built using notes B, C sharp, F sharp, and G sharp, is considerably more dissonant than the other three, and is not triadic in appearance.

**Slower** (♩ ca. 92)

13 *f*

Soprano  
quod ser - pens in mu - li - e - re suf - fo - ca - vit

Alto  
quod ser - pens in mu - li - e - re suf - fo - ca - vit

Tenor  
*f unis.*  
quod ser - pens in mu - li - e - re suf - fo - ca - vit

Bass  
*f*  
quod ser - pens in mu - li - e - re suf - fo - ca - vit

15

S  
quod ser - pens in mu - li - e - re suf - fo - ca - vit

A  
quod ser - pens in mu - li - e - re suf - fo - ca - vit

T  
quod ser - pens in mu - li - e - re suf - fo - ca - vit

B  
quod ser - pens in mu - li - e - re suf - fo - ca - vit

17

S  
quod ser - pens in mu - li - e - re suf - fo - ca - vit

A  
quod ser - pens in mu - li - e - re suf - fo - ca - vit

T  
quod ser - pens in mu - li - e - re suf - fo - ca - vit

B  
quod ser - pens in mu - li - e - re suf - fo - ca - vit

Figure 31, mm. 13-20.  
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At measure 19, melodic and harmonic material taken from the tenor, bass and first alto parts of measures 13-14 is set for men's voices to the same text of the opening measures of section B, although the rhythm is altered, and rests are eliminated. Measure 20 re-states measure 19 with a *mf* dynamic and with an added diminuendo (figure 31).

Sections A (measures 1-12), and B (measures 13-20), eventually fuse with each other in measure 21 (figure 32). Section C (measures 21-30) combines the opening of the women's voices of A with the B section in the men's voices. In four measure phrases the women re-state their opening 'planing' chords from Section A above the tenors and basses, who present three complete statements of measure 19 in section B (figure 32). This C section represents the climax of the motet, where the two ideas A and B are juxtaposed, possibly depicting a battle between good and evil.<sup>207</sup> The women may represent the victorious Christ over the serpent, which is perhaps symbolized by the men.

Fragmentation of the melodic and harmonic material then occurs in measures 25 and 26 in the men, on the text '*suffocavit*' (figure 32). In measure 27 the women join the men on this four-note motif, which is taken directly from measure 14, gradually increasing in dynamics until the *ff* climax in measure 30 is reached.

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<sup>207</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

21 *mp* (9)

S *mp* Ho - di - e a - pe - ru - it, a -  
*mp* Ho - di - e a - pe - ru - it, (9) a -

A O

T *p* quod - ser - pens in mu - li - e - re suf - fo - ca - vit, quod ser - pens in

B *p* quod ser - pens in mu - li - e - re suf - fo - ca - vit, quod ser - pens in

23

S pe - ru - it no - bis  
 pe - ru - it no - bis

A

T *p* mu - li - e - re suf - fo - ca - vit quod ser - pens in mu - li - e - re

B mu - li - e - re suf - fo - ca - vit quod ser - pens in mu - li - e - re

25 *mp*

S suf - fo - ca - vit,

A *mp* suf - fo - ca - vit,

T *pp* suf - fo - ca - vit, *p* suf - fo - ca - vit, *mp* suf - fo - ca - vit,

B *pp* suf - fo - ca - vit, *p* suf - fo - ca - vit, *mp* suf - fo - ca - vit,

Figure 32, mm. 21-30.  
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(figure cont.)

The image shows a musical score for four voices: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The score covers measures 28, 29, and 30. The lyrics for all voices are "suf - fo - ca - vit,". The dynamics are marked as *mf* (mezzo-forte) for measure 28, *f* (forte) for measure 29, and *ff* (fortissimo) for measure 30. The Soprano and Alto parts are in treble clef, while the Tenor and Bass parts are in bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

The Closing Section (measures 31-37) is in stark contrast to the B material (figure 33). Here the melodic leaps are the largest found in the motet as the harmonic rhythm slows to longer note values. The tempo is the slowest of the motet (quarter note = ca. 60), and the *pp* dynamics may reflect the somewhat subdued tone of the text ‘*unde lucet in aurora flos de Virgine Maria*’ (whence gleams/shines in the dawn the flower of the Virgin Mary). These final seven *pianissimo* measures are dynamically the softest yet.

The pace changes at measure 31, as do mood and choral ‘color,’ bringing the motet to a reflective, poignant close using thick *divisi* harmonies (figure 33).<sup>208</sup> The

<sup>208</sup> In an interview with Frank Ferko on July 24, 2002, the composer stated: “The harmonies in ‘Hodie aperuit’ that are in the style of Russian Orthodox choral music are the harmonies at the very end of the motet, specifically, measures 34-37. Those big, root-position triads in the key of B minor are the ones that I have heard over and over in various Orthodox music settings by 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian composers. Of course they occur in other music, too, so probably the association between those harmonies and Russian Orthodox music is purely in my mind. However, at that point in the piece – which is the resolution /conclusion following the ‘battle’ heard earlier – I wanted a very peaceful sound that would invoke the solidity of the Christian faith expressed through a simple musical reference, and that reference is the centuries-old solidity of the Russian Orthodox Church presented quite simply through big, block triads firmly rooted in a minor key.”

first soprano line in measures 31-37 is less angular and chromatic<sup>209</sup> than earlier found in the motet, and hints at text-painting on the words “*unde lucet in aurora*” (hence gleams/shines in the dawn) (figure 33). The melody in measures 32 and 33 leaps, or rises an octave, possibly symbolizing the rising of the sun at dawn.

Slowly (♩ = ca. 60)

31 *pp*

Soprano  
un - de lu - cet in au - ro - ra

Alto  
un - de lu - cet in au - ro - ra

Tenor  
8 un - de lu - cet in au - ro - ra

Bass  
un - de lu - cet in au - ro - ra

34

S  
flos de Vir - gi - ne Ma - ri - a.

A  
flos de Vir - gi - ne Ma - ri - a.

T  
8 flos de Vir - gi - ne Ma - ri - a.

B  
flos de Vir - gi - ne Ma - ri - a.

Figure 33, mm. 31-37.

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<sup>209</sup> Chromatic, or chromaticism is defined as “of harmony, making frequent use of notes not part of the prevailing key.” *Bloomsbury Dictionary of Music*, Philip D. Morehead, p.85.

This motet appears to be dominated by harmonic processes, which result in some angular and chromatic melodic lines. Ferko's use of harmony, harmonic color, and dissonance create unexpected leaps, enharmonic intervals, and lack of firm tonality. The harmony constantly shifts between the planing chordal opening in measures 1-4, and 7-10 (figure 29), and measures 13-20, which are built upon four chords, several of which may be classified as bi-chordal (figure 31). The planing chords appear to have no tonal center, despite the altos holding a pedal note A. There is less evidence of tonality in the B section, where the voices simultaneously oscillate between dissonant harmonies. Elsewhere in the motet, where goodness, or earthly subjects of a good nature are promulgated, the harmonies are less dissonant. For example, as the text speaks of the "flower of the Virgin Mary" in measures 34-37, the harshness and dissonance of the "serpent" is contrasted through the use of *divisi* triads, although bi-chordal technique appears to remain in place (figure 33). The contrast between these techniques is stark and may contribute to a feeling of rest and resolution as the motet concludes. In measures 36-37, a full close on a b minor chord, with a very soft dynamic indication, does indeed present a 'repose' from the chromaticism and dissonance of the preceding section (figure 33).

Despite the lack of time signatures, 'Hodie aperuit' seems to be organized in simple quadruple meter. Exceptions are found in measures 14, 16, 18, 19-20, and 28-30, where either asymmetric note groupings exist within the implied meter. In those places, the divisions of the pulse are controlled by the syntax of the language and fall as groups of 1, 2, or 3 eighth-notes according to the text (figure 34). The opening A section (measures 1-12) implies 4/4 meter with the addition of bar lines, which should be viewed as an

appropriate rehearsal device only (figure 29). The performance should emphasize the language.<sup>210</sup>

Figure 34 shows a musical score for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) across measures 14, 16, and 18. The lyrics are "e - re" and "suf - fo - ca - vit". The score is written in a key with one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The Soprano part is in the treble clef, and the Bass part is in the bass clef. The Alto and Tenor parts are in the treble clef. The lyrics are written below the notes.

(measures 14, 16, and 18)

Figure 34 continues with measures 19-20 and 28-30 for the Tenor (T) and Bass (B) parts. The lyrics are "quod ser-pens in mu-li-e-re suf-fo-ca-vit, quod ser-pens in mu-li-e-re suf-fo-ca-vit,". The score is written in a key with one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The Tenor part is in the treble clef, and the Bass part is in the bass clef. The lyrics are written below the notes. The score includes dynamic markings: *f* (forte) and *mf* (mezzo-forte).

Figure 34, mm. 14, 16, 18, 19-20, and 28-30.  
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<sup>210</sup> The author believes the omission of time signatures points to the influence of 'meter-less' Renaissance chant, on which this motet cycle is based.



(figure cont.)

28 *mf* *f* *ff*

Suf - fo - ca - vit, Suf - fo - ca - vit, Suf - fo - ca - vit,

Auf - fo - ca - vit, Auf - fo - ca - vit, Auf - fo - ca - vit,

Tuf - fo - ca - vit, Tuf - fo - ca - vit, Tuf - fo - ca - vit,

Buf - fo - ca - vit, Buf - fo - ca - vit, Buf - fo - ca - vit,

### Ranges and Tessituras

The ranges and tessituras in ‘Hodie aperuit’ are typically in the lower voices for all parts (figure 35). As in the previous motet, the basses may need to brighten the tone and raise the dynamic level on occasion, especially when singing within the E2-B2 range, which they are frequently required to do in ‘Hodie aperuit.’ This motet, like others in the cycle, will require ‘true’ second basses. The easier the lower notes can be sung, the more effectively the upper partials of the overtone series will be activated.<sup>211</sup>

Soprano 1 Soprano 2 Alto 1 Alto 2

Tenor 1 Tenor 2 Bass 1 Bass 2

Figure 35, Ranges and Tessituras

<sup>211</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

## Interpretation

A restrained and sustained opening sets a quiet mood that precedes the loud and dissonant contrasting material of the B section (figures 29 and 30). The opening is deceptively difficult – the chromaticism, often written enharmonically, will be challenging to tune accurately, and will require considerable attention in rehearsal. An accurate and unwavering A pedal note in the alto line of section A should help to maintain good intonation throughout all voices.

This opening section should be performed in a smooth, *legato* manner, only pausing for breath where the composer has indicated. The ‘staggering’ of breaths may be required to maintain the integrity of some of the lengthier legato lines. This can be methodically prearranged between singers within each section to reduce the possibility of breath ‘breaks’ in the phrases.

In contrast the B section, beginning at measure 13, should be performed in a very separated, punctuated manner (figure 31). Ferko concedes that while “there is a little room for interpretation”<sup>212</sup> many places, some without written articulations, are obvious, such as this forceful, rhythmical section. Bar lines suggest 4/4 (or 8/8) and 9/8 rhythmic organization. However, a four conducting pattern may be maintained throughout, although it will require modification to 2 + 2 + 2 + 3 in the 9/8 measures (figure 36). Eighth notes should remain even throughout.

$$(9/8) \quad 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + +$$

Figure 36, Conducting scheme, 9/8 meter

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<sup>212</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

The transition between the tutti measures 13-18 into the divided chorus (measures 19 and 20) should be seamless, and without temporal or rhythmic changes (figure 31). The last eighth-note rest of measure 18 should serve as the first half of a quarter-note beat, of which the first note in measure 19 (*'quod'*) forms the second half. In essence measures 18 and 19 should read as one single elongated measure (difficult to read due to an awkward page turn), which gives an anacrusic quality to *'quod.'* The conducting gesture should carefully reflect the syllabic stresses in the text.

The opening melodic material from A reappears in measure 21, sung by the women (figure 32). Here the conductor should revert to the four-pattern of section A, although the men should be encouraged to sing with the appropriate syllabic stress, and not according to simple quadruple meter. The word *'quod'* should always remain anacrusic to *'ser-'* through measure 24.

Beginning in measure 21 the sopranos and altos should give the repeating *'Hodie aperuit...'* greater prominence over the B material sung by the men, as this appears to be the more important text (figure 32). The composer seems to have dynamically personified the victory of Christ over the serpent by having the women sing one dynamic level louder than the tenors and basses. However, the men should constantly maintain the accented, driving nature of their contrasting thematic material.

Later, in measure 27 the women rejoin the men on *'suffocavit,'* gradually increasing in dynamic intensity until the climax (*ff*) at measure 30 (figure 32). The conductor is faced with several beating possibilities here: 1) conduct a legato pattern in 4/4 (essentially conducting the women), having earlier instructed the men to continue the accented B material unaided by the conductor; 2) the reverse of the above, where the

conductor beats a four pattern, which is more reflective of the material the men sing, or; 3) conduct a ‘neutral’ four pattern that does not reflect the material from either section, but which maintains a clear, steady and regular beat throughout. Due to the fact that the men and women breathe at different times, the pulse must remain regular and relentless, whatever conducting decision is made.

The composer elected to write measures 25-27 in a *quasi* 4/4 pattern, which effectively displaces the beat across the measure (figure 32). It is not entirely clear why these measures were grouped in the same manner as measures 28-30 were grouped (i.e. in 3/4 time).

The Closing Section beginning at measure 31 is more closely related to A, particularly with regard to note values, dynamics and tone (figure 33). Eventually (by measure 35) a tonality of b minor is established, the first time Ferko turns to ‘functional’ harmony in the motet. This closing section should be conducted in a slower legato four beat pattern. The choir should carefully observe the conductor’s breath markings, thus continuing the final phrase (measures 34-37) without interruption to the double bar line.

While it may be an interesting, albeit difficult, exercise to experiment with ‘just’ intonation, the composer considers it impractical and unrealistic to have the motets sung in any system other than the equal temperament.<sup>213</sup> As a closing remark, due to the extensive use of dissonance and enharmonic intervals, this motet could prove very difficult to all but the most experienced choirs.

#### **IV. O factura Dei**

**O factura Dei**

O handiwork of God,

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<sup>213</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

	<b>qui es homo, in magna sanctitate edificata es,</b>	you who is man, in great holiness were you constructed,
5	<b>quia sancta divinitas in humilitate celos penetravit. O quam magna pietas est quod in limo terre deitas claruit, et quod angeli Deo ministrantes Deum in humanitate vident.</b>	for holy divinity penetrated the heaven in humility. O how great a piety that deity shone forth in earth's dust and that the angels ministering to God see God in humanity.

Newman provides little detail about this text other than describing it as “a short lyric...[which deals with] the promise of the Incarnation, ‘God in humanity,’ which renders the original creation holy.”<sup>214</sup> Ferko, having set the brief text to music, has designated it as a motet for Epiphany, largely due to the general liturgical nature of its content.

A discrepancy in Ferko's setting of the ‘O factura Dei’ text compared to that of Newman's, is the result of his preference for the Otto Muller text.<sup>215</sup> Where Newman writes ‘*que*’ (‘who’), Ferko uses ‘*qui*’ in the second line.

Hildegard's use of symbolism in this lyric is not extensive.<sup>216</sup> The image of brightness or glowing (‘*claruit*’) is associated with good health, purity and strength; in other words traits that are from God. Flanagan includes an excerpt from Hildegard's *Scivias* (2, vision 4, chapter 2), which clearly portrays the importance of such imagery:

...since glowing, it points the way and sends forth all rivers  
of sanctity in the clarity of its strength, in which no spot of  
any foulness is found. Wherefore the Holy Spirit is ablaze  
and his burning serenity which strongly kindles the fiery  
virtues will never be destroyed and thus all darkness is put to

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<sup>214</sup> Newman, 318.

<sup>215</sup> *Hildegard von Bingen: Lieder*, ed. P. Barth and others. 1969, Otto Muller Verlag, Salzburg.

<sup>216</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2001.

flight ...<sup>217</sup>

In keeping with the nature of this short, uncomplicated lyric, Ferko has set ‘O factura Dei’ – an Epiphany motet – for unaccompanied SATB chorus.<sup>218</sup>

‘O factura Dei’ is one of the most ‘free’ or through-composed of *The Hildegard Motets*, comprising two loosely structured halves. The repetition of melodic phrases serves to unify the music in lieu of a larger organizational design (figure 37).<sup>219</sup>

The opening A section (measures 1-15) sets the first stanza of Hildegard’s text for all voices at a *pp* dynamic (figure 38). The music appears to be horizontally conceived with little regard for vertical implications. This frequently results in melodic lines that are predominantly chromatic. Measure lengths are irregular throughout. These combined elements give the music a timeless quality, which bears rhythmical similarities to medieval plainsong.

Section B (measures 16-27) begins with an almost exact melodic and harmonic repetition of the first measure, but is set to Hildegard’s second stanza of text (figure 39). This nearly exact repetition of measure 1 may be attributed to the second stanza beginning in the same manner as the first, with the vocative “O” Unlike the initial section A, the first half of the piece contains only an occasional lone F sharp. There is no tonal center to the motet, although certain pitches feature more prominently than others, such as those found

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<sup>217</sup> Flanagan, 62.

<sup>218</sup> On only two brief occasions do voices divide: the altos briefly split in measure 2, and; the basses divide from measures 12 to 15 (figure 38).

<sup>219</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

Formal Units	A mm. 1 - 15					B mm. 16 - 27				
Measures	1 - 2	3 - 6	7 - 8	9 - 15	16 - 17	18 - 19	20 - 21	22 - 23	24 - 27	
Meter	None									
Tempo Markings	Ponderous (J- ca. 52 )									
Dynamic Markings	pp	p	pp	mp	mf	sub.	p	mf	pp	
Forces	SATB (A and B briefly div.)					pp				
Tonal Aspects	No tonal center as such; chords are primarily built around intervals of minor/major seconds and/or major/minor sevenths. The chords serve no larger or traditional tonal function as such, and appear to be horizontally conceived with little or no regard to vertical structure. This creates angular intervals.					SATB				
Text ( <i>Latin</i> )	O factura Dei qui [que?] es homo, in magna sanctitate edificata es, quia sancta divinitas in humilitate celos penetravit.					Combinations of 'sharp' and 'flat' accidental chords produce a wide range of tonal colors. (measure 16 is an almost exact repeat of measure 1)				
( <i>English Translation</i> )	O handiwork of God, you who is man, in great holiness were you constructed, for holy divinity penetrated the heaven in humility.					... quod in limo terre deitas claruit, et quod angeli Deo ministrantes Deum in humanitate vident.				
	O how great a piety...					...that deity shone forth in earth's dust and that the angels ministering to God see God in humanity.				

Figure 37, Flowchart to 'O factura Dei.'

**1 Ponderous** (♩ = ca. 52)

**Soprano**  
*pp* O fac - tu - ra De - i qui es ho - mo, in ma - gna  
*p* *pp* *mp*

**Alto**  
*pp* O fac - tu - ra De - i qui es ho - mo, in ma - gna  
*p* *div. unis* *pp* *mp*

**Tenor**  
*pp* O fac - tu - ra De - i qui es ho - mo, in ma - gna  
*p* *pp* *mp*

**Bass**  
*pp* O fac - tu - ra De - i qui es ho - mo, in ma - gna  
*p* *pp* *mp*

**4**

**S**  
*mf* sanc - ti - ta - te e - di - fi - ca - ta, e - di - fi - ca -  
*sub. p*

**A**  
*mf* sanc - ti - ta - te e - di - fi - ca - ta, e - di - fi - ca -  
*sub. p*

**T**  
*mf* sanc - ti - ta - te e - di - fi - ca - ta, e - di - fi - ca -  
*sub. p*

**B**  
*mf* sanc - ti - ta - te e - di - fi - ca - ta, e - di - fi - ca -  
*sub. p*

**8**

**S**  
 ta es qui - a sanc - ta di - vi - ni - tas in hu - mi - li -

**A**  
 ta es qui - a sanc - ta di - vi - ni - tas in - hu - mi - li -

**T**  
 ta es qui - a sanc - ta di - vi - ni - tas in - hu - mi - li -

**B**  
 ta es qui - a ni - tas di - vi - ni - tas di hu - mi - li -

Figure 38, mm. 1-15  
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(figure cont.)

12

*mf*

S ta - te ce - los pe - ne - tra - vit.

A ta - te ce - los pe - ne - tra - vit.

T ta - te ce - los pe - ne - tra - vit.

B ta - te ce - los pe - ne - tra - vit.

8

in the last four measures of the motet (figure 39). Other instances of repeated notes occur in measure 1, where a pedal note F appears in the tenor line; in measure 3, where a pedal note F sharp appears, also in the tenor; and similarly in measures 4, 6, 8-15, 21-23.

Rather than use a central tonal system, Ferko creates various harmonic colors through his use of accidentals and/or chromaticism.<sup>220</sup> This occasionally results in awkward melodic intervals of an augmented or diminished nature.

As an example of melodic text painting, Ferko employs a crescendo in measure 18 to match the rising line ‘*quod in limo terre deitas claruit et quod angeli*’ (‘that deity shone forth in earth’s dust and that the angels...’). Here the melodic materials in all parts ‘soar’

<sup>220</sup> Ferko again associates colors with certain chords and accidentals (a condition known as ‘synesthesia’) as he does in ‘O splendidissima gemma.’ Here, in measure 1 he creates a “basically white” colored chord, one without any accidentals (figure 38). From there he various colored chords with the addition of E flats (orange), C sharps (yellow) and F sharps (bright green). There is less chromaticism in measures 18-20, where the colors Ferko creates are essentially yellow/white, reflecting the text ‘*quod in limo terre deitas claruit et quod angeli*’ (that deity shone forth in earth’s dust and that the angels...) (figure 39). He adds an F sharp in measure 21, which again generates a color – in this instance the greenness, or life-giving force (*viriditas*) of humanity. The F sharps found in the final seven measures of the motet symbolize the life-giving force and the Deity (figure 39). The clash of the soprano F sharp against the bass C2 in the penultimate measure “will generate some wonderful harmonies.” (See footnote 186).

16 *pp*

Soprano *pp*  
O quam ma - gna pi - e - tas est

Alto *pp*  
O quam ma - gna pi - e - tas est

Tenor *pp*  
O quam ma - gna pi - e - tas est

Bass *pp unis.*  
quam ma - gna pi - e - tas est

18

S quod in li - mo ter - re de - i - tas cla - ru - it,

A quod in li - mo ter - re de - i - tas cla - ru - it,

T quod in li - mo ter - re de - i - tas cla - ru - it,

B quod in li - mo ter - re de - i - tas cla - ru - it,

20 *f* *p*

S et quod an - ge - li De - o mi - ni - stran - tes De - um in hu - ma - ni - ta - te

A *f* *p*  
et quod an - ge - li De - o mi - ni - stran - tes De - um in hu - ma - ni - ta - te

T *f* *p*  
et quod an - ge - li De - o mi - ni - stran - tes De - um in hu - ma - ni - ta - te

B *f* *p*  
et quod an - ge - li De - o mi - ni - stran - tes De - um in hu - ma - ni - ta - te

Figure 39, mm. 16-27.  
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(figure cont.)

24 *pp*

S in hu - ma - ni - ta - te vi - dent.

A *pp*

A in hu - ma - ni - ta - te vi - dent.

T *pp*

T in hu - ma - ni - ta - te vi - dent.

B *pp*

B in hu - ma - ni - ta - te vi - dent.

(rise in pitch) to the heavens, as if reaching up to the angels attending to the Godhead (figure 39). The corresponding dynamic increase may possibly correlate to the brightening “light of the Deity” until the climax is reached in the middle of measure 20. The ensuing harmonic and rhythmic activity slows before the piece concludes with the words ‘*humanitate vident*’ (‘see in humanity’).

Ferko believes that the melodic phrases support this motet on a structural level.<sup>221</sup> Although there is no evidence of the repetition of melodic motives, certain melodic intervals do recur with some frequency. It is the statement of melodic phrases and the occasional repetition of these brief melodic motifs or intervals that bind the work into a cohesive whole. The interval of a diminished fifth/augmented fourth possibly serves as a melodic unifying device. It first appears as a diminished fifth in measures 6 and 7 (figure 37), and in a transposed version (E to A sharp) in measure 9 (figure 39).

The initial melody of the opening measures, which occurs in the soprano line, displays characteristics of Hildegard’s own compositional style, particularly with regard to

Ferko's angular melodies and range.<sup>222</sup> Schipperges notes that "[Hildegard's] melodies go beyond the range of Gregorian chant; the longer intervals create those poignant effects in her compositions that cause us to listen with such rapt attention."<sup>223</sup> Ferko, perhaps in a conscious attempt to emulate Hildegard's 'angular' style while using twentieth-century chromaticism, writes melodic fifths, sixths, and sevenths in measures 18-19, as well as utilizing extreme ranges of the voices (figure 39).

### **Ranges and Tessituras**

The ranges and tessituras of the individual voices in 'O factura Dei' may pose problems for the choir and director, mostly in the bass and soprano parts (figure 40).



Figure 40, Ranges and Tessituras.

Ferko believes the motet should not be performed unless the ranges are comfortably attainable, particularly the second basses, who play a critical role in initiating upper partials from the overtone series.<sup>224</sup> The basses are required to sing at the extremities of their lower range, and they are frequently required to sustain pitches C2-B2 at soft

<sup>221</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>222</sup> Ferko writes from a C2 in the basses up to an A5 in the soprano line.

<sup>223</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>224</sup> Ferko states: "There is little point in having them sing up an octave as the low C generates notes [upper partials] that are critical to the work." Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

dynamic levels. In measure 12 the sopranos are required to sing A5, also at a soft dynamic, a challenge for many singers.

### Interpretation

‘O factura Dei’ is one of the most difficult and least performed motets of the cycle.<sup>225</sup> Among the challenges facing the choir are the chromatic melodic contours, and the irregular, or free rhythm. Enharmonic writing also adds to the difficulty, an example of which occurs in the second alto 2 part of measure 2. The singers must alternate between flat accidentals and sharp accidentals, leaping from B flat 3 to G sharp 4 (figure 41). Such enharmonic spelling makes accurate intonation difficult. The B flat might have been notated as an A sharp, as it is in the soprano line of the preceding measure, making it easier to perform (figure 41). Ferko was no doubt aware of the difficulties tuning enharmonically written pitches entail, but he was also very specific about the use of certain pitches to

Figure 41 is a musical score for measure 2 of the motet 'O factura Dei'. It features four vocal parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The lyrics are 'qui es ho - mo,'. The Soprano part begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a half note G4, followed by a half note A4, and then a half note B4. The Alto part begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a half note F4, followed by a half note G4, and then a half note A4. The Tenor part begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a half note E4, followed by a half note F4, and then a half note G4. The Bass part begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a half note D4, followed by a half note E4, and then a half note F4. The Alto part shows a chromatic leap from B flat 3 to G sharp 4. The score includes dynamic markings (*p*, *pp*) and articulation (*div.*, *unis*). The Alto part shows a chromatic leap from B flat 3 to G sharp 4.

Figure 41, m. 2

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<sup>225</sup> According to the composer. Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

generate various tonal ‘colors’ in the work.<sup>226</sup> The composer has otherwise taken great care to limit the fluctuations of sharps and flats within the same voice part wherever possible.

Another challenging aspect of the work is the frequency of augmented and diminished intervals that make ‘O factura Dei’ a difficult work to perform. Intervals such as diminished and augmented fourths and fifths, as found in measures 7-9, occur predominantly in the first seventeen measures of the motet (figure 42).

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The image shows a musical score for four voices: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The score is for measures 7-9 of a motet. The lyrics are: "qui - a sanc - ta di - vi - ni - -tas in hu - mi - li -". The Soprano part starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The Alto part starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The Tenor part starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The Bass part starts with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are written below the notes. The Soprano part has a slur over measures 7-9. The Alto part has a slur over measures 7-9. The Tenor part has a slur over measures 7-9. The Bass part has a slur over measures 7-9. The lyrics are: "qui - a sanc - ta di - vi - ni - -tas in hu - mi - li -".

Figure 42, mm. 7-9.

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Although not the original intent of the composer, out of practical consideration it is recommended that equal temperament tuning be used in this motet, and indeed for the

<sup>226</sup> Ferko comments: "...I did intend for certain pitches to produce slightly different colors in harmonies from their enharmonic equivalents. So I wrote that B-flat for coloristic purposes: it would produce a slightly "darker" quality to that chord than an A-sharp. What I discovered in the reality of musical practice is that choruses don't really have the time to rehearse those kinds of details, so they automatically equate enharmonic variants, and therefore a B-flat and an A-sharp will sound exactly the same. I left the pitches in the published score the way I had originally written them with the idea in mind that someday someone might take the challenge to work meticulously with those pitch differences – making a B-flat sound slightly lower than an A-sharp – and thus produce the nuances in coloring that I originally intended." Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

others in the cycle.<sup>227</sup> Doing so will almost certainly result in shorter rehearsal or preparation times for most choirs.<sup>228</sup>

There is little doubt that the composer was thinking along the lines of chant when he composed this motet.<sup>229</sup> Therefore, to effectively conduct ‘O factura Dei’ will first and foremost necessitate the director to consider the textual elements of the motet. When a ‘hierarchy’ of strong and weak syllabic stresses has been established, a conducting or beat ‘plan’ may then be formulated.

## V. O ignis Spiritus Paracliti

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1a. <b>O ignis Spiritus Paracliti,<br/>vita vite omnis creature,<br/>sanctus es vivificando formas.</b>  | O fire of the Spirit Paraclete<br>living life of every creature,<br>You are holy, giving life to all forms.                             |
| 1b. <b>Sanctus es unguendo<br/>periculose fractos,<br/>sanctus es tergendo<br/>fetida vulnera.</b>   | You are holy,<br>anointing the dangerously broken,<br>you are holy,<br>cleansing fetid wounds.  |
| 2a. <b>O spiraculum sanctitatis,<br/>o ignis caritatis,<br/>o dulcis gustus in pectoribus<br/>et infusio cordium<br/>in bono odore virtutum.</b> | O breath of sanctity, in our breasts<br>O fire of love,<br>O sweet taste<br>and infusion of our hearts<br>in the good aroma of virtues. |
| 2b. <b>O fons purissime,<br/>in quo consideratur<br/>quod Deus alienos colligit<br/>et perditos requirit.</b>                                    | O fountain purest,<br>in which it is seen,<br>That God gathers the strangers<br>and seeks the helpless.                                 |

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<sup>227</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>228</sup> See footnote 223.

<sup>229</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

3a.	<b>O lorica vite et spes compaginis membrorum omnium  et o cingulum honestatis: salva beatos.</b>	O breastplate of life and hope of the binding together of all the members, O belt of honor: save the blessed.
3b.	<b>Custodi eos qui carcerati sunt ab inimico, et solve ligatos quos divina vis salvare vult.</b>	Guard those who are imprisoned by the enemy, and loosen the bonds of those whom divine might wishes to save.
4a.	<b>O iter fortissimum, quod penetravit omnia in altissimis et in terrenis et in omnibus abyssis, tu omnes componis et colligis.</b>	O most mighty course, which penetrated all things in the heights and on earth and in all abysses, you gather and compose all the peoples.
4b.	<b>De te nubes fluunt, ether volat,  lapides humorem habent, aque rivulos educunt, et terra viriditatem sudat.</b>	From you the clouds flow, the air flies, and the stones possess moisture, waters train streams and earth exudes greenery.
5a.	<b>Tu etiam semper educis doctos  per inspirationem Sapientie letificatos.</b>	Furthermore, you always lead the learned made glad through inspiration of wisdom.
5b.	<b>Unde laus tibi sit, qui es sonus laudis et gaudium vite, spes et honor fortissimus, dans premia lucis.</b>	Therefore, praise be to you, who are the sound of praise and the joy of life, a hope and a most powerful honor, giving the gifts of light.

Ferko considers ‘O ignis Spiritus Paracliti’ one of Hildegard’s most ecstatic texts.<sup>230</sup> This sequence for the Holy Spirit, set as a motet for Pentecost by the composer, has a “rhapsodic tone” and is “signaled by no fewer than eight appearances of the vocative,

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<sup>230</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.



a mode that Hildegard could wear thin.”<sup>231</sup> It comprises ten descriptive verses, or strophic pairs, which Ferko has delineated in the music by double bar lines. Newman considers that...

...the sequence is compelling in its exuberance and breadth of vision. The author shows her colors as a Christian Platonist in her reference to the forms (1a) and more richly in her depiction of the Spirit as world soul (4a-b).<sup>232</sup>

The first four lines of text (the first strophic pair) resemble a “trope or elaboration”<sup>233</sup> on the triple Sanctus of the Mass (“Holy, holy, holy art Thou, Lord God of Hosts”). Newman states:

There is a delicate balance of attributes: the Spirit is life-giver in the initial bounty of creation, while in the “stricken” world he (or she) is the source of healing. Strophes two and three continue this pattern of antithesis; in 2a and 3a the Spirit is seen as companion of the virtuous, in 2b and 3b as savior of the lost. The third strophic pair has a distinctly chivalric flavor. The play of images is mercurial, as if no single metaphor could capture the multiform Spirit: it is fire and mountain, perfume and armor and song – the binding force that unites both the members of the Church (3a) and the elements (4b) in one harmonious world.<sup>234</sup>

Many important images and symbols abound in ‘O ignis Spiritus Paracliti,’ more so than any other *Hildegard* motet in Ferko’s cycle. Some of the more descriptive images and symbols include: *ignis* (fire); *spiraculum* (breath); *fons* (fountain); *nubes*, (clouds); *ether*

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<sup>231</sup> Newman, 281.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 281.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 281.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 281.

*volat*, (flying air); *lapides humorem* (stone's moisture); *terra viriditatem* (earth's greenery), and; *lucis* (light).

Hildegard believed that humankind contained “the elements of heaven and earth” representing “a central mediating point located between the divine and the earthly.”<sup>235</sup> Order and harmony were vital to Hildegard's ideology, and were closely connected and fundamental to her understanding of health. In many of her reflections on the subject, the central unifying image she used to epitomize health was that of ‘greenness’ (*viriditas*), which Flanagan considers “one of the first principles in her scientific works, and its connection with the vivifying sun and other images of light.”<sup>236</sup> Bowie and Davies support this notion, and associate it with another symbol used by Hildegard, that of the ‘mirror’ (*speculum*):

Behind Hildegard's image of ‘greenness’ (and indeed the rest of her color imagery) is the central concept of light. After all, the source of her visions is precisely the ‘living light’, and her writings abound in imagery, which conveys this sense of radiance. Above all, the universe itself becomes a mirror, which captures and throws back the divine light in a symphony of brilliance and grandeur.<sup>237</sup>

And further:

Men and women possess the power of reason, which is the noblest element in the soul and which Hildegard describes in terms of light so that ‘we are flooded with light itself in the same way as the light of day illumines the world.’<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Bowie and Davies, 31.

<sup>236</sup> Flanagan, 114.

<sup>237</sup> Bowie and Davies, 33.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid., 33.

Melancholy was always countered by this greenness, “a natural life-determining force that restored people to health.”<sup>239</sup> Schipperges explains the reference further:

A nun skilled in the art of healing, Hildegard coined a term to encompass the lush green of life in all of nature’s creations as well as the healing powers of the organism, health, and the vitality of the spirit. The term she chose was “greening power” (*viriditas*) which in a mysterious way was inherent “in animals and fishes and birds, in all plants and flowers and trees,” in all the beautiful things of this world (LDO IV, 11).<sup>240</sup>

Hildegard also used the image of the ‘green’ life-force of the world “in order to represent the spiritual life of grace and virtue.”<sup>241</sup>

...Hildegard’s greenness ‘is the earthly expression of the celestial sunlight; greenness is the condition in which earthly beings experience a fulfillment which is both physical and divine; greenness is the blithe overcoming of the dualism between earthly and heavenly.’<sup>242</sup>

The use of the ‘greenness’ imagery also merges with other symbols as Bowie and Davies describe:

There are other occasions too, in which Hildegard uses the image of green-life to refer to different aspects of the divine order. Thus she says of the Church that it spreads ‘like bursting buds and blessed greenness’ (SC II 5, 26); the ‘moist greenness’ of a stone ‘signifies God, who never becomes dry nor is limited in virtue’ (SC II 2, 5); the ‘greenness of life-giving breath’ is ‘brought forth from the

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<sup>239</sup> Schipperges, 66.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>241</sup> Bowie and Davies, 32.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid., 32.

mouth' of a priest who officiates at the Eucharist (SC II 6, 11)...<sup>243</sup>

One finds another reference to moisture (*humorem*) in Bowie and Davies:

And Hildegard compares the soul directly with the moisture, which gives life to the earth: 'The soul is the green life-force of the flesh. For, indeed, the body grows and progresses on account of the soul, just as the earth becomes fruitful through moisture.'<sup>244</sup>

Cosmology played an important role in many of the writings of Hildegard, where, among other symbols, "the origin of stones" is mentioned.<sup>245</sup> Flanagan explains that "Hildegard's idea of physiology is predicated upon her cosmology."<sup>246</sup> This premise is a crucial one, as it hints at the origins of many other symbols contained in 'O ignis Spiritus Paracliti.' Flanagan states:

The belief that man is constituted of the same (or similar) elements as those that constitute the world goes back to early Greek scientific speculation. Schemes linking the four qualities, hot, cold, moist, and dry, to the four elements and to the four ages of man, the four seasons and the four humours in man, varied somewhat over the millennia, but by the twelfth century had settled down to the following schema:

hot	fire	choler [yellow bile]
dry	air	blood
moist	water	phlegm
cold	earth	melancholy [black bile] <sup>247</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Bowie and Davies, 32.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>245</sup> Flanagan, 96.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid, 96.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., 96.

‘O ignis Spiritus Paracliti’ is scored for unaccompanied SATB chorus, except for a brief *divisi* in the soprano and tenor parts in the final two measures. The texture is frequently reduced to only two parts.

The text, grouped into ten strophic pairs, essentially controls the overall musical form of the motet. Thus, there are ten musical sections or subdivisions, excluding the measure 42 *incipit*, which immediately precedes the final strophe. A double bar line separates each section. Ferko creates musical variety within the motet by varying the combinations of voice parts for each stanza or strophe. There are five contrasting sections, several of which recur throughout the work, and a concluding section. A brief incipit (F), immediately precedes the Closing Section. Overall they comprise a form of A/B/C/D/A’/B’/A’/D’/A’/F/Closing Section (figure 43).

Despite the fact there is no overriding or consistent tonal structure in ‘O ignis Spiritus Paracliti,’ Ferko employs a form of ‘tonal text painting,’ utilizing different tonal or modal ‘centers.’ Such harmonic depictions appear to be related to the text.

Formal Units	A mm. 1 - 3	B mm. 4 - 11	C mm. 12 - 17
Measures	1 - 3	4 - 5 : 6 - 7 : 8 - 9 : 10 - 11	12 - 15 : 16 - 17
Meter	None		
Tempo Markings	With motion (♩ = ca. 108)	Slower (♩ = ca. 60)	
Dynamic Markings	<i>p</i>	<i>p mp p mp p mp p</i>	<i>pp</i> (SB) <i>p</i> (AT) ( <i>p</i> )
Forces	SA	SATB	SATB AT
Tonal Aspects	Aeolian on E	Richer tonalities (more flat and sharp accidental chords with distant relationships used).	Closer to G major tonality; G2 and D5 pedal notes
Text ( <i>Latin</i> )	O ignis Spiritus Paracliti, vita vite omnis creature, sanctus es vivificando formas.	Sanctus es ungendo periculose fractos, sanctus es tergendo fetida vulnera.	O spiraculum sanctitatis, o ignis caritatis, o dulcis gustus in pectoribus et infusio cordium in bono odore virtutum.
( <i>English Translation</i> )	O fire of the Spirit Paraclete, living life of every creature, You are holy, giving life to all forms.	You are holy, anointing the dangerously broken, you are holy, cleansing fetid wounds.	O breath of sanctity, O fire of love, O sweet taste in our breasts and infusion of our hearts in the good aroma of virtues.

Formal Units	D mm. 18 - 21	A' mm. 22 - 24	B' mm. 25 - 30
Measures	18 - 21	22 - 24	25 - 30
Meter	None		
Tempo Markings	Tempo II (♩ = ca. 60)	Tempo I	Tempo II
Dynamic Markings	<i>pp mp pp p</i>	<i>p</i>	( <i>p?</i> ) [ <i>No marking</i> ]
Forces	SATB	SA	SATB
Tonal Aspects	Similar to B section – much chromaticism employed to reflect text.	Aeolian on E	Previous B material transposed up a minor third. Much chromaticism; text painting.
Text ( <i>Latin</i> )	O fons purissime, in quo consideratur, quod Deus alienos colligit et perditos requirit.	O lorica vite et spes compaginis membrorum omnium et o cingulum honestatis: salva beatos.	Custodi eos qui carcerati sunt ab inimico, et solve ligatos quos divina vis salvare vult.
( <i>English Translation</i> )	O fountain purest, in which it is seen, that God gathers the strangers and seeks the helpless.	O breastplate of life and hope of the binding together of all the members, O belt of honor: save the blessed.	Guard those who are imprisoned by the enemy, and loosen the bonds of those whom divine might wishes to save.

Figure 43, Flowchart of ‘O ignis Spiritus Paracliti’

(figure cont.)

<b>Formal Units</b>	A'	D'	A'
<b>Measures</b>	mm. 31 - 35	mm. 36 - 39	mm. 40 - 41
<b>Meter</b>	31 - 35	36 - 39	40 - 41
<b>Tempo Markings</b>	Tempo I	Tempo II	Tempo I
<b>Dynamic Markings</b>	(p?) [No marking]	(p?) <i>mf</i>	<i>p</i>
<b>Forces</b>	TB	SATB	SA
<b>Tonal Aspects</b>	Restatement of opening uses same harmonic structure – return to Aeolian on E	Tonally ambiguous – use of F sharps and C sharps	Aeolian on E
<b>Text</b> ( <i>Latin</i> )	O iter fortissimum, quod penetravit omnia in altissimis et in terrenis et in omnibus abyssis, tu omnes componis et colligis.	De te nubes fluunt, ether volat, lapides humorem habent, aque rivulos educunt, et terra viriditatem sudat.	Tu etiam semper educis doctos per inspirationem Sapientie letificatos.
( <i>English Translation</i> )	O most mighty course, which penetrated all things in the heights and on earth and in all abysses, you gather and compose all the peoples.	From you the clouds flow, the air flies, and the stones possess moisture, waters train streams and earth exudes greenery.	Furthermore, you always lead the learned made glad through inspiration of wisdom.

<b>Formal Units</b>	Incipit [F] m. 42	<b>Closing Section</b> mm. 43 - 46	
<b>Measures</b>	42	43 - 44	45 - 46
<b>Meter</b>	None		
<b>Tempo Markings</b>	Slightly Slower	<b>Extremely Slow</b> (♩ = 40)	
<b>Dynamic Markings</b>	(p?) [No marking]	<i>pp</i>	<i>p</i> <i>pp</i>
<b>Forces</b>	B	SATB	SA (div) TB
<b>Tonal Aspects</b>	Aeolian on E	Tonally unstable, uses D major major 7 <sup>th</sup> harmonies. Quote from Perko's fourth movement of the <i>Hildegard Organ Cycle</i> .	
<b>Text</b> ( <i>Latin</i> )	Unde laus tibi sit,	qui es sonus laudis et gaudium vite, spes et honor fortissimus, dans premia lucis.	
( <i>English Translation</i> )	Therefore, praise be to you,	who are the sound of praise and the joy of life, a hope and a most powerful honor, giving the gifts of light.	

The A section is built around an Aeolian mode on E, a choice of Ferko's that is possibly deliberate<sup>248</sup> (figure 44).

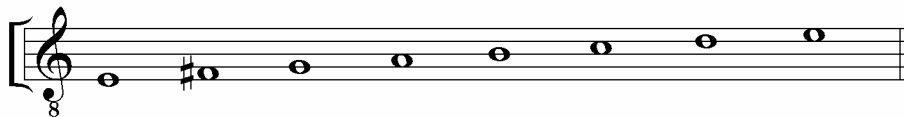


Figure 44, Aeolian mode on E

This opening section (measures 1-3) is scored for soprano and alto voices only, setting the first verse, or strophic pair, in neumatic fashion (figure 45). Harmonically, Ferko appears to be working horizontally with little regard for vertical outcomes.

*1 With motion* (♩ = ca. 108)

*p*

Soprano  
O ig - nis Spi - ri - tus Pa - ra - cli - ti,

Alto  
O ig - nis Spi - ri - tus Pa - ra - cli - ti,

Tenor

Bass

*2*

S  
vi - ta vi - te om - nis cre - a - tu - re, sanc - tus es vi - vi - fi - can - do for - mas.

A  
vi - ta vi - te om - nis cre - a - tu - re, sanc - tus es vi - vi - fi - can - do for - mas.

Figure 45, mm. 1-3

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Measures 1-3 of 'O ignis Spiritus Paracliti' appear to emulate characteristics of medieval plainsong or chant. With the exception of the final notes in each bar, all notes in these

<sup>248</sup> See footnote 187 for an explanation of Ferko's use of tonal colors.



opening measures are of an eighth-note value. This gives the line a rhythmically free chant-like quality, allowing the natural textual stresses of the poem to be emphasized. The conjunct neumatic opening soprano and alto melodic lines, here in counterpoint, bear similarities to Hildegard's own plainsong compositions, which Ludwig Bronarski characterizes as "angular and 'gothic' – full of the sharply pointed arches that, in the architectural realm, still lay several decades into the future" (figure 45).<sup>249</sup> The two voices are predominantly homorhythmic, and use all the pitches of an Aeolian mode on E.

Section B (measures 4-11) sets the second strophic pair of Hildegard's text for all four SATB voices (figure 46). This section initially lacks accidentals (measures 4-5), and while the tonalities outline an A minor triad in third inversion, there is no evidence of a tonal center on or around A. It is more than likely Ferko is using harmonic color here, rather than employing tonal function.<sup>250</sup> The tone of the text '*tergendo fetida vulnera*' ('anointing those dangerously broken') immediately changes in measure 6, corresponding to the unstable tonality, again reflecting the textual imagery.

The tempo is noticeably slower (eighth note = ca. 60) than the opening (eighth note = ca. 108), as is the harmonic rhythm of measures 4-5, and 7-9. Here, the melismatic character of the beginning is replaced by homophony. Measures 4-5 present new material, which recurs in a slightly varied form in measures 8-9. The soprano line in measures 6 and 10 bears close resemblance to the soprano measure 1 melody, but in an inverted form (figure 47). Although the intervals do not *exactly* correspond to an inverted form of A, the

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<sup>249</sup> Newman, 29.

<sup>250</sup> The lack of accidentals elicits the color white, which in consideration to the text '*Sanctus es*' ('You are Holy'), is another example of tonal imagery. Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

first seven soprano notes of measure 6 resemble the melodic *contour* of an inverted form of the soprano in the first measure.

4 **Slower** (♩ = ca. 60)

Soprano *p* *mp*  
Sanc-tus es un-gen-do pe-ri-cu-lo-se frac-

Alto *p* *mp*  
Sanc-tus es un-gen-do pe-ri-cu-lo-se frac-

Tenor *p* *mp*  
Sanc-tus es un-gen-do pe-ri-cu-lo-se frac-

Bass *p* *mp*  
Sanc-tus es un-gen-do pe-ri-cu-lo-se frac-

7 *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*  
S tos, sanc-tus es ter-gen-do fe-ti-da-vul-ne-ra.

A *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*  
A tos, sanc-tus es ter-gen-do fe-ti-da-vul-ne-ra.

T *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*  
T tos, sanc-tus es ter-gen-do fe-ti-da-vul-ne-ra.

B *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*  
B tos, sanc-tus es ter-gen-do fe-ti-da-vul-ne-ra.

Figure 46, mm. 4-11  
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1 **With motion** (♩ = ca. 108)

Soprano *p*  
O ig-nis Spi-ri-tus Pa-ra-cli-ti,

Figure 47, mm. 1, 6, and 10 (soprano).  
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(figure cont.)



Unlike the modal opening, section B uses extensive chromaticism (figures 44 and 45).

The third section, C (measures 12-17) reverts to Tempo I, is scored for all four SATB voices, and is similar to measure 6 (figure 48). It resembles a more stable G major tonality, which is supported throughout by G2 and D5 pedal notes in the bass and soprano voices respectively. ‘O ignis Spiritus Paracliti’ essentially oscillates between this opening plainsong A motif (tonal stability), and the slower B material (tonal instability). When A is repeated in measure 12 (re-voiced), the outside voices of soprano and bass sing the notes D5 and G2 respectively, possibly an example of text-painting on ‘breath of holiness’ (*‘spiraculum sanctitatis’*), while the inner voices reiterate A in an inexact inversion of the opening A material (figures 44 and 47). The melodic motif, appearing in the alto part, is in counterpoint with the tenors. The intervals of the alto line in measure 12 appear related to the opening, possibly beginning as an inversion of the measure 1 soprano melody. If so, it is very brief, however, lasting only three eighth notes in length. Both alto and tenor parts are written with a *p* dynamic, while the outside soprano and bass voices sing *pp* D and G pedal notes respectively. This texture continues until measure 16, at which point the outer voices drop out. Both the melody and harmony are essentially based upon the Aeolian mode, although a C sharp briefly appears in measure 15.

12 **Tempo I** (♩ = ca. 108)  
*pp*

Soprano  
 O

Alto  
*p*  
 O spi - ra - cu - lum sanc - ti - ta - tis, o ig - nis ca - ri - ta -

Tenor  
*p*  
 O spi - ra - cu - lum sanc - ti - ta - tis, o ig - nis ca - ri - ta -

Bass  
*pp*  
 O

14

S  
 (O)

A  
 tis, o dul - cis gus - tus in pec - to - ri - bus

T  
 tis, o dul - cis gus - tus in pec - to - ri - bus

B  
 (O)

16

A  
 et in - fu - si - o cor - di - um in bo - no o - do - re vir - tu - tum.

T  
 et in - fu - si - o cor - di - um in bo - no o - do - re vir - tu - tum.

Figure 48, mm. 12-17  
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The setting of the fourth strophic pair of text returns to the slower Tempo II (eighth note = ca. 60). Section D (measures 18-21) is similar to the B section due to the extensive use of chromaticism to reflect the textual themes, particularly in measures 20-21 (figure 49). Measure 18, however, is unlike previously stated material although it displays

18 **Tempo II** (♩ = ca. 60)

*pp* *mp* *3*

S O fons pu - ris - si - me, in quo con - si - de - ra - tur,

A O fons pu - ris - si - me, in quo con - si - de - ra - tur,

T O fons pu - ris - si - me, in quo con - si - de - ra - tur,

B O fons pu - ris - si - me, in quo con - si - de - ra - tur,

20 *pp* *p*

S quod De - us a - li - e - nos col - li - git et per - di - tos re - qui - rit.

A quod De - us a - li - e - nos col - li - git et per - di - tos re - qui - rit.

T quod De - us a - li - e - nos col - li - git et per - di - tos re - qui - rit.

B quod De - us a - li - e - nos col - li - git et per - di - tos re - qui - rit.

Figure 49, mm. 18-21  
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qualities drawn from B. It is slow and stately, and it has a subdued disposition. At the end of the phrase in measure 19 the soprano melodic line simply outlines a falling G major triad before moving to an E, the fifth of an A major triad. The supporting voices create an ethereal quality through the use of major and minor seconds (or their inversions) in ‘close’ harmony. Despite brief instances of angularity, the melodic lines flow in mostly conjunct fashion, and only rarely do they appear relatively static, as in measures 20-21. This D

section is homorhythmic in style, and features a slow harmonic rhythm, two characteristics shared by the earlier section B.

Section A' (measures 22-24) comprises the fifth verse of text set to the exact same notes of the corresponding soprano and alto voice parts of measures 1-3, but with different rhythms (figure 50).

22 **Tempo I**  
**p**  
 Soprano  
 O lo - ri - ca vi - te et spes com - pa - gi - nis  
 Alto  
 O lo - ri - ca vi - te et spes com - pa - gi - nis

23  
 S  
 mem - bro - rum om - ni - um et o cin - gu - lum ho - nes - ta - tis, sal - va be - a - tos.  
 A  
 mem - bro - rum om - ni - um et o cin - gu - lum ho - nes - ta - tis, sal - va be - a - tos.

Figure 50, mm. 22-24

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Section B' (measures 25-30) uses musical material from the original B section (measures 4-11) but in a more complex manner (figure 51). Measures 25-27 rhythmically correspond to measures 4-6 (except for slight diminution in measure 25), setting to new text the same pitches as the preceding section, but now transposed up an interval of a minor third. Measures 28-29 are almost exact rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic repetitions of measures 26-27. They display great instability and chromaticism, possibly reflecting the dark text '*Custodi eos qui carcerati sunt ab inimico, et solve legatos...*' ('Guard those who

25 **Tempo II**

Soprano  
Cus - to - di e - os, qui car - ce - ra - ti sunt

Alto  
Cus - to - di e - os, qui car - ce - ra - ti sunt

Tenor  
Cus - to - di e - os, qui car - ce - ra - ti sunt

Bass  
Cus - to - di e - os, qui car - ce - ra - ti sunt

28

S  
ab in - i - mi - co, et sol - ve li - ga - tos,

A  
ab in - i - mi - co, et sol - ve li - ga - tos,

T  
ab in - i - mi - co, et sol - ve li - ga - tos,

B  
ab in - i - mi - co, et sol - ve li - ga - tos,

30

S  
quos di - vi - na vis sal - va - re vult.

A  
quos di - vi - na vis sal - va - re vult.

T  
quos di - vi - na vis sal - va - re vult.

B  
quos di - vi - na vis sal - va - re vult.

Figure 51, mm. 25-30  
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are imprisoned by the enemy and break the bonds of those...'). The soprano line rhythmically resembles section A, and the bass line in measures 4-6 resembles those of the lower three voice parts in the opening section of the motet. Abruptly, at the mention of the 'divine power' ('*divina vis*') in measure 30, the chromaticism lessens, and the single F sharp accidentals return in this new material.

The succeeding section, A' (measures 31-35), returns to the quicker Tempo I, and like the opening section, is scored for reduced voices (figure 52). Here the basses and tenors embark in a contrapuntal dialogue in this setting of the seventh strophic verse. It returns to the Aeolian mode, and it bears distinct rhythmic resemblance to measures 1-3.

The musical score for measures 31-35 is presented in three systems. Each system features a Tenor (T) and Bass (B) part. The lyrics are in Latin and are written below the notes. The time signature is 8/8.

**Measure 31:**

Tenor: O i - ter for - tis - si - mum, — quod pe - ne - tra - vit om - ni - a

Bass: O i - ter for - tis - si - mum, — quod pe - ne - tra - vit om - ni - a

**Measure 33:**

T: in al - tis - si - mis — et in ter - re - nis et in om - ni - bus a - bys - sis,

B: in al - tis - si - mis et in ter - re - nis et in om - ni - bus a - bys - sis,

**Measure 35:**

T: tu om - nes com - po - nis et col - li - gis.

B: tu om - nes com - po - nis et col - li - gis.

Figure 52, mm. 31-35  
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There is less evidence of melodic relationship to the opening section, although the first four notes of the bass part in measure 31 do relate intervallically to the first four notes of



the soprano part in measure 1 (figure 45). This section reverts to the slower Tempo I of the opening.

Measures 36-39 appear likely related to the earlier section D (measures 18-21) and have thus been categorized as D' (figure 53). This section is tonally ambiguous, although the use of F sharp and C sharp accidentals possibly reflect the text, especially '*et terra viriditatem sudat*' ('to make streams and earth to exude its greenery').<sup>251</sup> As in the earlier

36 Tempo II

S De - te nu - bes flu - unt, e - ther vo - lat, la - pi - des hu - mo - rem ha - bent, *mf*

A De - te nu - bes flu - unt, e - ther vo - lat, la - pi - des hu - mo - rem ha - bent, *mf*

T De - te nu - bes flu - unt, e - ther vo - lat, la - pi - des hu - mo - rem ha - bent, *mf*

B De - te nu - bes flu - unt, e - ther vo - lat, la - pi - des hu - mo - rem ha - bent, *mf*

38

S a - que ri - vu - los e - du - cunt et - ter - ra vi - ri - di - ta - tem su - dat.

A a - que, a - que et ter - ra vi - ri - di - ta - tem su - dat.

T a - que, a - que et ter - ra vi - ri - di - ta - tem su - dat.

B a - que, a - que et ter - ra vi - ri - di - ta - tem su - dat.

Figure 53, mm. 36-39  
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<sup>251</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

D section, the slower tempo returns, and there is extensive use of chromaticism. In addition to the F sharps found in the Aeolian material of section A, there are additional C and G sharps in both this section D', and in the original section D. Rhythmically, however, these two related sections differ somewhat. In measures 37-39, triplet eighth notes occur – the only instance in the motet. There is greater dynamic contrast in D', with the inclusion of a *crescendo* up to a *mf* dynamic in measure 37.

Measures 40-41 set the penultimate strophic text pair to the familiar material of section A, scored here for soprano and alto voices (figure 54). As before, the familiar Aeolian mode is used. Although rhythms in this Section A' differ slightly from the opening section, tempo, dynamics, and scoring nonetheless exactly replicate measures 1-3 (figure 45).

40 **Tempo I**  
**p**  
 Soprano  
 Tu e - ti - am sem - per e - du - cis doc - tos,  
 Alto  
 Tu e - ti - am sem - per e - du - cis doc - tos,  
 41  
 S  
 per in - spi - ra - ti - o - nem Sa - pi - en - ti - e le - ti - fi - ca - tos.  
 A  
 per in - spi - ra - ti - o - nem Sa - pi - en - ti - e le - ti - fi - ca - tos.

Figure 54, mm. 40-41

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Measure 42 comprises an *incipit* setting of the first line of text of the last strophic pair 'Unde laus tibi sit' ('Therefore, praise be to you'), which appears to herald the

understated final section (figure 55). Measure 42 again briefly outlines the Aeolian mode on E. This bass *incipit* serves to introduce the closing section.

42 Slightly Slower

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Un - de laus ti - bi sit,

Figure 55, m. 42  
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The closing section (measures 43-46) is homorhythmically scored for SATB voices, with brief *divisi* in measure 45 (figure 56).

43 Extremely Slow (♩ = 40)

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

qui es so - nus lau - dis et gau - di - um vi - te,

qui es so - nus lau - dis et gau - di - um vi - te,

qui es so - nus lau - dis et gau - di - um vi - te,

qui es so - nus lau - dis et gau - di - um vi - te,

Figure 56, mm. 43-46  
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(figure cont.)

45 *p* *pp*

S *p* *pp*

A *p* *pp*

T *p* *pp*

B *p* *pp*

spes et ho - nor for - ti - si - mus, dans pre - mi - a lu - cis.

Dynamically the *pp* indications in measures 43-44 and 46 are the softest in the motet. The tempo marking is also the slowest. This initially appears to be an anathema to the exuberant, joyous text ‘*qui es sonus laudis et gaudium vite, spes et honor fortissimus, dans premia lucis*’ (‘who are the sound of praise and the joy of life, a hope and a most powerful honor, giving the gifts of light’), until one considers it as an example of understatement.

Harmonically and melodically this entire Coda (measures 43-46) is a direct quote from the last four measures of ‘Articulation of the Body,’ the fourth movement of Ferko’s *Hildegard Organ Cycle* (1996). This organ work is a set of ten symphonic meditations on the visions from *De operatione Dei* of Hildegard von Bingen, which the composer has simply transplanted the organ music to which he added the Hildegard text (figure 57).

In the process of importing the organ music, several new elements appear in the motet: (i) D sharp accidentals in measure 43, which appear in the original organ piece, and; (ii) the necessary division of the chorus in measure 45, due to Ferko’s organ scoring, which is originally in five or six parts or ‘voices.’

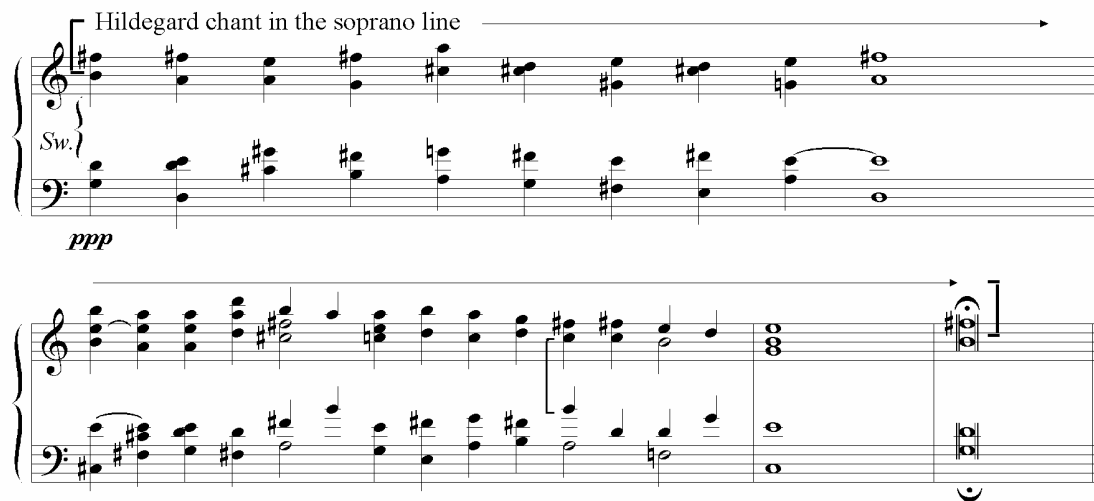


Figure 57, 'Articulation of the Body.'  
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The melody of 'Articulation of the Body' (and consequently of this last section in the motet) has its origins in Hildegard's chant *O gloriosissimi lux vivens, Angeli*, from which Ferko borrowed the last phrase (figure 58).

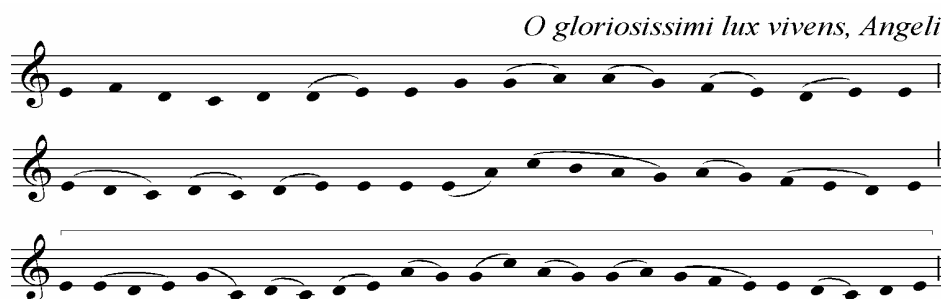


Figure 58, *O gloriosissimi lux vivens, Angeli*  
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Ferko omits a time signature in this motet, possibly reflecting the composer's desire to achieve a certain flow and freeness demonstrative of archetypal plainsong.<sup>252</sup>

<sup>252</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

### **Ranges and Tessituras**

Ferko explores the extremities of range in ‘O ignis Spiritus Paracliti,’ notably in the first soprano and bass parts (figure 59).

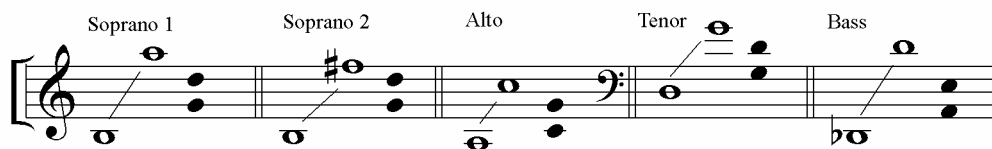


Figure 59, Ranges and Tessituras.

Aside from the occasional pitches found at the extremities of the voice ranges, the tessituras in this motet are quite manageable, falling within the comfortable limits of each voice part.

### **Interpretation**

Ferko sets the first strophic pair of Hildegard’s sequence ‘O ignis Spiritus Paracliti’ in a predominantly neumatic fashion, consisting of mostly eighth notes grouped in one-measure ‘units.’ Each measure unit can be further subdivided into duple or triple ‘groupings’ of eighth notes, from which the conductor should determine his/her beat patterns. The conductor should be encouraged to group each of the eighth notes in this opening section into pairs or threes and beat a hypermeter, rather than beat each individual eighth note (figure 60).

The conductor should avoid accenting the first eighth note in each of the composer’s ‘groupings.’ Rather, he/she must first consider the textual elements of the motet. Having determined where the strong and weak syllables fall, a beat ‘plan’ that reflects the natural textual stresses may then be formulated (figure 61).

*l* With motion (♩ = ca. 108)

*p*

Soprano

O ig - nis Spi - ri - tus Pa - ra - cli - ti,

Alto

O ig - nis Spi - ri - tus Pa - ra - cli - ti,

Figure 60, m. 1.

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1 + + 2 + 3 + + 4 + 5 + + 6

*l* With motion (♩ = ca. 108)

*p*

Soprano

O ig - nis Spi - ri - tus Pa - ra - cli - ti,

Alto

O ig - nis Spi - ri - tus Pa - ra - cli - ti,

Figure 61, Beat Plan of measure 1.

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The cadence of an E major triad following dense chromaticism in measures 10-11 is unexpected, and may require additional rehearsing to achieve accurate intonation (figure 46). It is suggested that each eighth note should be individually conducted in this slower B section. However, great care should again be given to avoid unnecessarily large conducting gestures where no textual stress is intended. Where there are long held notes, as in measures 5, 7, 9 and 11, there is no need to continue beating through these, although slight, continuous upward or outward movement of the hand(s) will help the singers maintain the intensity of the phrase. In this manner the integrity of the melodic lines will be maximized

in performance. Measures 20-21 (figure 49), 25-30 (figure 51), 36-39 (figure 53), and 43-end (figure 56) should be treated in similar fashion.

Careful attention to breath markings should be made at all times. For instance, Ferko has not indicated a breath mark at the end of measure 12 (after '*sanctitatis*'), nor is there any indication that the sopranos or basses may breathe throughout their four-measure pedal point in measures 12-15 (figure 48). Organized staggered breathing will therefore be necessary.

The entirely homorhythmic passage in measures 18-20 draws the listener's attention to the text (figure 49). The disparate dynamic marking in the soprano line at measure 20 is deliberate – undue attention should not be drawn to this soprano A pedal. In all but this measure the voices should be dynamically balanced and even-toned throughout this section. No single voice part should dominate the texture.

The return of the B material at measure 25, transposed up a minor third, and altered melodically and rhythmically, should be sung at a '*p*' dynamic (figure 51). The octavo copy appears to have erroneously omitted this marking.

Although no dynamic marking is provided at measure 31, a '*p*' should likewise be maintained for the seventh strophic pair of Hildegard's text (figure 52). The bass material initially assumes the melodic interest, before it is passed to the tenors.

No dynamic indication has been provided at the triplets in measure 37 (figure 53), which have evolved out of the material in measure 16 (figure 48). Similarly a '*p*' dynamic should be maintained.



The Coda or closing section, beginning at measure 43, indicates a very slow, deliberate tempo, and paradoxically, despite the ecstatic tone of the text, the softest dynamic of the entire motet (figure 56). Great care should be given that the dynamics do not exceed *pp* in measures 43-44, and 46. Likewise a *p* dynamic should be maintained in measure 45. This *may* prove too difficult for most sopranos, who are expected to sing in the uppermost range of their voices in the first half of the measure. It is recommended the conductor select a few voices from the first soprano section – those who can comfortably sing softly at high registers – and have the remaining first sopranos join the seconds.

## VI. Laus Trinitati

	<b>Laus Trinitati</b>	Praise to the Trinity
	<b>que sonus et vita</b>	which is sound and life
	<b>ac creatrix omnium</b>	creator of all beings
	<b>in vita ipsorum est,</b>	in their very life,
5	<b>et que laus angelice turbe</b>	and which is the praise of the angel
		throng
	<b>et mirus splendor archanorum,</b>	and wondrous splendor of arcane
		mysteries,
	<b>que hominibus ignota sunt, est,</b>	which are unknown to humankind,
	<b>et que in omnibus vita est.</b>	and which is life in all things.

Barbara Newman describes the text of ‘Laus Trinitati’, a votive antiphon, as “one of the composer’s [Hildegard’s] least effective lyrics, redundant and grammatically awkward.”<sup>253</sup> A textual error not identified prior to the printing in 1996, occurs in the first

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<sup>253</sup> Newman, 280.

tenor part in measures 36-38; ‘*et que hominibus*’ should read ‘*que hominibus*,’ the ‘*et*’ being superfluous.<sup>254</sup>

‘*Laus Trinitati*’ is scored for unaccompanied *divisi* SATB chorus. Frequently, Ferko varies the texture, employing a three-voice scoring in the A sections, a TBB combination in the B sections, and full SATB chorus in the C passages.

The form of ‘*Laus Trinitati*’ appears to be based on the idea of the Trinity, playing on the three different incarnations of the Deity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) exemplified in the motet by three contrasting formal units, A, B, and C (figure 62).

The opening one-measure motif in section A (measures 1-3) has a prominently rhythmical characteristic reminiscent of the second medieval rhythmic mode (figures 63 and 64).<sup>255</sup> It appears in the sopranos and altos, above a tenor pedal note on B3, and it is stated three times, another possible symbolic reference to the Trinity.

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<sup>254</sup> Newman, 280.

<sup>255</sup> See figure 64.

Formal Units	A mm. 1 - 3	B mm. 4 - 8	A' mm. 9 - 11
Measures	1 - 3	4 - 8	9 - 11
Meter	12/8	4/4	12/8
Tempo Markings	Lively (♩. = ca. 76)		
Dynamic Markings	<i>mf</i>	<i>mf</i>	<i>(mf)</i>
Forces	SAT	T B (div.)	SA
Tonal Aspects	Phrygian mode on F sharp	Phrygian mode on F sharp	Phrygian mode on F sharp
Text ( <i>Latin</i> ) ( <i>English Translation</i> )	Laus Trinitati...	...que sonus et vita ac creatrix omnium...	Laus Trinitati,
	Praise to the Trinity...	...which is sound and life creator of all beings...	Praise to the Trinity...

Formal Units	C mm. 12 - 15	A' mm. 16 - 18	B' mm. 19 - 23
Measures	12 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 23
Meter	4/4	12/8	4/4
Tempo Markings	(Lively)		
Dynamic Markings	<i>mp</i> <i>p</i>	<i>mf</i>	<i>mf</i>
Forces	SATB	SAT	T B (div.)
Tonal Aspects	Phrygian mode on F sharp. Sevenths and seconds are typical.	Phrygian mode on F sharp	Phrygian mode on F sharp
Text ( <i>Latin</i> ) ( <i>English Translation</i> )	...in vita ipsorum est,	...et que laus angelice turbe...	...et mirus splendor archanorum, que hominibus...
	...in their very life,	...and which is the praise of the angel throng...	...and wondrous splendor of arcane mysteries, which [are unknown to ] humankind...

Figure 62, Flowchart of 'Laus Trinitati'

(figure cont.)

Formal Units	C' mm. 24 - 28	[E] from A+B mm. 29 - 38	Coda mm. 39 - 40
Measures	24 - 28	29 - 33	39 - 40
Meter	(4/4) 2/4 4/4	12/8 + 4/4 [poly-metrical]	4/4
Tempo Markings	(Lively)		
Dynamic Markings	<i>mp</i>	<i>mf</i>	<i>f</i>
Forces	SATB	SATB (div.)	SATB (div.)
Tonal Aspects	Phrygian mode on F sharp, F sharps and C sharps again used for tonal coloring.	Phrygian mode on F sharp. Much dissonance results from the juxtaposing of sections A, B and C. F sharps and C sharps prevail.	Final chord is open 2 <sup>nd</sup> F sharps and C sharps.
Text (Latin)	... ignota sunt, est, et que in omnibus...	Laus Trinitati... ...in vita ipsorum est...	...vita est.
(English Translation)	... unknown [to humankind], and which [is life] in all things...	...que sonus et vita ac creatrix omnium, et minus splendor archanorum, et que omnibus... Praise to the Trinity... ...in their very life... ... which is sound and life creator of all beings in their very life, and which is the praise of the angel throng and wondrous splendor of arcane mysteries...	all things.

**Lively** (♩. = ca. 76)

*mf*

Soprano  
Laus — Tri - ni - ta - ti, — Laus — Tri - ni - ta - ti, — Laus — Tri - ni - ta - ti,

Alto  
*mf*  
Laus — Tri - ni - ta - ti, — Laus — Tri - ni - ta - ti, — Laus — Tri - ni - ta - ti,

Tenor  
*mf*  
8 Laus, — Laus, — Laus,

Bass

Figure 63, mm. 1-3.

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1. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩

2. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩

3. ♩. ♩ ♩ ♩. ♩ ♩

4. ♩ ♩ ♩. ♩ ♩ ♩.

5. ♩. ♩.

6. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩

Figure 64, Medieval rhythmic modes.

Ferko composed ‘Laus Trinitati’ using a Phrygian mode on F sharp, resulting in F sharps and C sharps, evident in this opening (figure 65).

Figure 65, Phrygian mode on F sharp.

There is a possible tonic-sub-dominant relationship throughout the motet, suggested by the predominance of F sharp minor chords (with the third omitted) and B minor chords (also

with the third missing) (figure 63). Without exception, every cadential chord in the motet (i.e. those immediately preceding the double bar lines) is based on either a B (minor) tonality (with or without a third present), or an F sharp/C sharp ‘open’ tonality. The appearance of ‘open’ chords (i.e. those omitting a third), give this motet a medieval quality. The melodies in ‘Laus Trinitati’ are typically ‘contained,’ falling within the range of a perfect fifth.

In stark contrast to section A, the tenors and basses introduce the five-measure B material in simple quadruple meter in measures 4-8 (figure 66). This section, more lyrical in nature, is predominantly constructed in quarter and eighth notes in simple quadruple meter. The tenor appears to have the main melodic interest, although all voices are scored with a *mf* dynamic. The range of the tenor is slightly more expansive than in the A section – here extending a major sixth. This material contrasts that of section A, serving to balance the opening three measures.

The image shows a musical score for four voices: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The time signature is 4/4. The Soprano and Alto parts are mostly rests. The Tenor part has a melodic line with lyrics: 'que - so - nus et vi - ta ac cre - a - trix om - ni - um'. The Bass part has a more rhythmic line with lyrics: 'que so - nus et vi - ta ac cre - a - trix om - ni - um'. The dynamic is marked *mf* for all parts. The Tenor part is marked with a '4' above the first measure, indicating a quadruple meter. The Bass part is marked with a '4' above the first measure, indicating a quadruple meter. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Figure 66, mm. 4-8.  
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Measures 9-11, an exact re-statement of measures 1-3 (section A) (figure 63), precede the third section, C (measures 12-15) (figure 67). The musical material, scored for SATB chorus, is homorhythmic in nature and comprises four measures in simple quadruple time. The sopranos and basses sing the main theme in quarter notes, but in inversion and contrary motion to each other. The vocal ranges of the melodic material in this third section are the most limited in the motet. The soprano melody does not extend further than a perfect fourth, and the bass motif, which begins in an inverted form of the soprano melody, is contained within the range of a perfect fifth.

The musical score for measures 12-15 is presented for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The time signature is 4/4. The Soprano and Bass parts are in contrary motion, while the Alto and Tenor parts are in inversion. The lyrics are 'in vi - ta ip - so - rum est, in vi - ta ip - so - rum est.' The score includes dynamic markings of mezzo-piano (mp) and piano (p). The Soprano and Bass parts are in contrary motion, while the Alto and Tenor parts are in inversion. The score includes dynamic markings of mezzo-piano (mp) and piano (p).

Figure 67, mm. 12-15.  
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Measure 16 heralds the return of the A theme in the sopranos and altos, with the tenors singing a pedal note on B (figure 68). Melodically and rhythmically measures 16-18 repeat exactly measures 1-3 (figure 63), however the text is altered.

16

*mf*

S Et que laus an-ge-li-ce, et que laus an-ge-li-ce, an-ge-li-ce tur-be

A Et que laus an-ge-li-ce, et que laus an-ge-li-ce, an-ge-li-ce tur-be

T Laus, laus, laus,

B

Figure 68, mm. 16-18.

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An exact melodic and harmonic repetition of section B occurs in measures 19-23, although note values are altered due to the new text (figure 69).

The B material unexpectedly re-appears in measure 24, similarly in simple quadruple time (figure 70). Unlike the first statement of B (measures 12-15) however, one measure of simple duple time is added in measure 26. Apart from the sopranos and basses

19

Soprano

Alto

*mf*

Tenor et mi-rus splen-dor ar-cha-no-rum, que ho-mi-ni-bus

*mf*

Bass et mi-rus splen-dor ar-cha-no-rum, que ho-mi-ni-bus

Figure 69, m. 19-23

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again appearing in inversion to each other, the similarities to the earlier statement ends there. The rhythms and note lengths are now altered in measures 27-28, and the pitches no longer fall on their respective beats of the measure as they did earlier.

Figure 70, m. 24-28.

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The climax of the motet occurs at measures 29-38 (labeled E), where all three themes are combined (figure 71). The choir is divided into SSAATTBB, and the dual time signatures of simple quadruple and compound quadruple appear together. The section A theme occurs in the S2, A1, and A2 voice parts. Simultaneously, the material from section B occurs in the T1, T2, and B2 parts, a pattern that continues for five measures. The simultaneous occurrence of section A and B material is further re-stated over another five measures between measures 34-38. The S2, A1, and A2 voice parts repeat the text in measures 29-31 (which is itself taken from measures 1-3), but the T1, T2, and B2 use the different text, '*et mirus splendor archanorum, que hominibus*' (which is sound and life, which [is known to] humankind), from measures 19-23. During this re-statement of both A and B themes, the

S1 and B1 voices are added to the texture, singing material from section C (measures 12-15) (figure 67).

29

The musical score for measures 29-33 is presented for eight voices: S1, S2, A1, A2, T1, T2, B1, and B2. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 12/8. The score includes lyrics and musical notation with dynamics like *mf*.

**S1:** Rests throughout the measures.

**S2:** *mf* Laus Tri-ni - ta - ti, Laus Tri-ni - ta - ti, Laus Tri-ni - ta - ti,

**A1:** *mf* Laus Tri-ni - ta - ti, Laus Tri-ni - ta - ti, Laus Tri-ni - ta - ti,

**A2:** *mf* Laus, Laus, Laus,

**T1:** *mf* que so - nus et vi - ta ac cre - a - trix om - ni - um,

**T2:** *mf* que so - nus et vi - ta ac cre - a - trix om - ni - um,

**B1:** Rests throughout the measures.

**B2:** *mf* que so - nus et vi - ta ac cre - a - trix om - ni - um,

Figure 71, mm. 29-33.

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The appearance of C in both the first soprano and first bass parts is similarly in contrary motion between the two voices. Unlike the initial statement of C however, here the rhythms have been doubled, or augmented (figure 72).

34

S 1 in vi - ta ip - so - rum est

S 2 Laus Tri - ni - ta - ti, Laus Tri - ni - ta - ti, Laus Tri - ni - ta - ti

A 1 Laus Tri - ni - ta - ti, Laus Tri - ni - ta - ti, Laus Tri - ni - ta - ti

A 2 Laus, Laus, Laus

T 1 et mi - rus splen - dor ar - cha - no - rum, et que ho - mi - ni - bus

T 2 et mi - rus splen - dor ar - cha - no - rum, et que ho - mi - ni - bus

B 1 in vi - ta ip - so - rum, in om - ni - bus

B 2 et mi - rus splen - dor ar - cha - no - rum, et que in om - ni - bus

Figure 72, mm. 34-38.  
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After the culmination of all three themes in the previous E section, the final two measures close the motet with the pivotal words '*vita est*' (*life in all things*) (figure 73). Unlike earlier sections where the melody is essentially contained within the range of a perfect fifth, the final two measures are a dramatic exception, where large leaps are used.

'Laus Trinitati' is one of the few motets in which Ferko has elected to use time signatures. The opening A section restates the one-measure motif three times in 12/8 meter before the B material is introduced in the tenors and basses in simple quadruple time (figure 66). Although the time signature alternates, the pulse remains unchanged and unwavering throughout, as indicated by the composer in measure 4 (figure 66). The meter

39

*f*

Soprano 1

vi - ta est.

Soprano 2

vi - ta est.

Alto 1

vi - ta est.

Alto 2

vi - ta est.

Tenor 1

8 *f*

vi - ta est.

Tenor 2

8 *f*

vi - ta est.

Bass 1

*f*

vi - ta est.

Bass 2

*f*

vi - ta est.

Figure 73, mm. 39-40.  
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reverts to compound quadruple at the restatement of A in measure 9 (an exact re-statement of measures 1-3), where the material is similarly stated three times (figure 63). At measure 12 the third section of the motet is introduced in 4/4 meter, as was the B material (figure 67). Between measures 16-28 all three sections restate their respective themes (with their respective time signatures), before the final section of the motet begins in measure 29 (figure 71). Despite the simultaneous appearance of different time signatures in measures 29-38, the pulse remains constant throughout. The combination of the simple quadruple and compound quadruple meters creates a number of interesting cross-rhythms, which only adds to the drama and tension of this closing section.

### **Ranges and Tessituras**

The ranges and tessituras in ‘Laus Trinitati’ should not present the choir with any problems (figure 74).

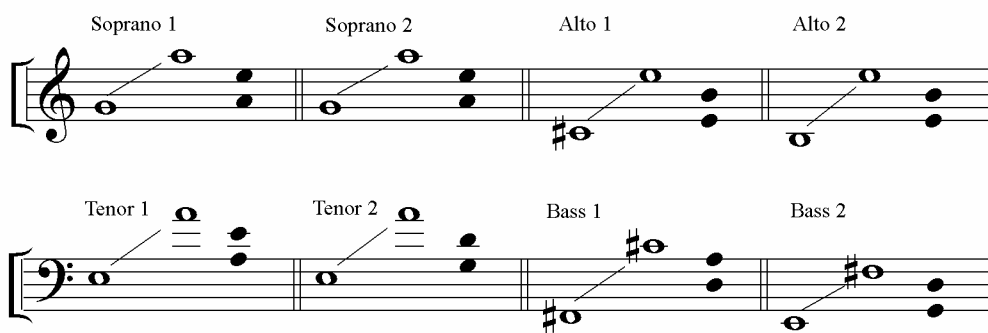


Figure 74, Ranges and Tessituras.

The second basses are frequently required to sing in their lower range, such as found in measures 19-23, and they should be encouraged to brighten the tone and raise the dynamic level to compensate for the low register (figure 69). The majority of the singing for the other voices however, falls comfortably within the mid-range of each voice.

### **Interpretation**

The quarter note always equals the dotted quarter in value, and vice versa, which necessitates the pulse remaining constant throughout the piece. The opening A section, comprising the repeated one-measure motif, should be vital, and energetic. The quirky rhythmical change on beats two, three, and four may need addressing in rehearsal (figure 63).

In section B, measures 4-8 contrast the A section in mood (figure 66). Care should be made to ensure the ‘straight’ eighth notes are executed with precision. The effect of the

meter change from compound to simple is one of slowing down, despite the retention of the same pulse and tempo. The B section, built on longer phrases, suggests more legato and lyrical treatment in performance than the opening A motif. The dynamics, omitted in the score in measures 9-11 (an exact repetition of measures 1-3) should retain the original '*mf*'<sup>256</sup> (figure 63)

Section E (measures 29-38) may require additional rehearsing, particularly to establish rhythmical clarity between the S2 and A1 voice parts (which are in 12/8 meter), and the T1, T2, and B2 parts (which are in 4/4 time) (figure 71). The final two measures must be dynamically balanced between all parts, and it seems reasonable to include a *poco rit.* here (figure 73).

## VII. O vos angeli

	<b>O vos angeli,</b>	O you angels,
	<b>qui custoditis populos,</b>	who protect the people,
	<b>quorum forma fulget</b>	whose form shines
	<b>in facie vestra,</b>	forth in your face,
5	<b>et o vos Archangeli</b>	and O, you Archangels,
	<b>qui suscipitis</b>	who receive the
	<b>animas justorum,</b>	souls of the just,
	<b>et vos, Virtutes,</b>	and you Virtues,
	<b>Potestates,</b>	Powers,
10	<b>Principatus, Dominationes,</b>	Principalities, Dominions,
	<b>et Troni,</b>	and Thrones,
	<b>qui estis computati</b>	who are counted
	<b>in quintum secretum numerum,</b>	in the fifth secret number,
	<b>et o vos Cherubin</b>	and O, you Cherubim
15	<b>et Seraphin,</b>	and Seraphim,
	<b>sigillum secretorum Dei:</b>	seal of the secrets of God:

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<sup>256</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

	<b>Sit laus vobis, qui loculum antiqui cordis in fonte aspicitis.</b>	Praise be to you, you who behold in the fountain, the little place of the ancient heart.
20	<b>Videtis enim interiorem vim Patris, que de corde illius spirat quasi facies.</b>	For you see the inner strength of the Father, which breathes from his heart like a face.
25	<b>Sit laus vobis, qui loculum antiqui cordis in fonte aspicitis.</b>	Praise be to you, you who behold in the fountain, the little place of the ancient heart.

Hildegard designated ‘O vos angeli’ as a ‘responsory for the angels,’<sup>257</sup> although Ferko more specifically stipulates the motet to be sung for the celebration of St. Michael and All Angels.<sup>258</sup> This descriptive text lauds the angels, originating as the result of a Hildegard vision. Newman explains the significance and history of the angels through the century in her ‘Introduction’:

Ever since Psuedo-Dionysius the Areopagite, a sixth-century mystic, angel-watchers have acknowledged nine orders in ascending rank: ordinary angels, archangels, virtues, powers, principdoms, dominations (Vulg. Eph. I:21), thrones, cherubim, and seraphim. In *Scivias* I.6 Hildegard recorded a vision of these orders, which the accompanying miniature illustrates as shimmering concentric circles around the white light of divinity. Although for the sake of numerology the angels were commonly divided into three groups of three, Hildegard counted them instead as two, five, and two. Allegorically the lower ranks, who deal most often with human beings, represent body and soul; the cherubim and seraphim, closest to the ineffable light, signify the love of God; and the five orders in between (II. 8-13) correspond to the five senses and the five wounds of Christ.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> Newman, 283.

<sup>258</sup> Frank Ferko, Notes to ‘Motets,’ compact disc, ARSIS CD102.

<sup>259</sup> Newman, 283-4.

Again, Ferko's preference for the Otto Muller texts over Barbara Newman's, accounts for the occasional text discrepancies.<sup>260</sup> In Measure 10 Newman's '*suscipitis*' (receive) appears as '*suscepitis*'; in measure 17 '*iustorum*' (just) appears as '*justorum*'; and in measure 52 '*asspicitis*' (behold) appears as '*aspicitis*.'

This seventh motet in the *Hildegard* cycle is scored for unaccompanied SATB chorus. There are several brief instances where *divisi* is required, but the writing is predominantly in four parts and is typically homorhythmic in nature.

'O vos angeli' is comprised of contrasting sections. Each phrase within the encompassing sections (with the exception of the eighth and tenth sections, which are identical) is unique. The resulting form – non-traditional in appearance – is thus controlled by the text (figure 75).

Section A comprises measures 1-5 (figure 76). Scored for SATB voices, it has no time signature, and is entirely homorhythmic in nature. The composer describes this motet as "all harmonic color...one gigantic angel who stands...with fiery swords."<sup>261</sup> Ferko achieves harmonic coloring through the use of accidentals and also through chromaticism, which is abundant in the motet. In these opening five measures, only E flat and D flat accidentals are used.<sup>262</sup> The soprano has a disjunct melodic line, which outlines intervals of predominantly sixths, fourths, and thirds. The soprano leaps down a major sixth from E to G in measure one, and, almost inversely, leaps up the same interval in measures 4-5. Harmonically the lower three voices are static. The altos and tenors sing

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<sup>260</sup> Ferko consulted *Hildegard von Bingen: Lieder*, ed. P. Barth, and others. 1969, Otto Muller Verlag, Salzburg. Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>261</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>262</sup> See footnote 186.



Formal Units	Section A mm. 1 - 5	Section B mm. 6 - 9	Section C mm. 10 - 15
Measures	1 - 5	6 - 9	10 - 15
Meter	None		
Tempo Markings	Very Slowly ( <i>J</i> , ca. 52)		
Dynamic Markings	<i>p</i>	<i>(p)</i>	<i>pp</i> <i>poco</i>
Forces	SATB	SATB	SB (div.) AT
Tonal Aspects	C major tonalities with added accidentals used for tonal color	Further coloring/possible text-painting	Addition of F sharp to harmony.
Text ( <i>Latin</i> )	O vos angeli, qui custoditis populos,	quorum forma fulget in facie vestra,	et o vos Archangeli qui suscipitis...
( <i>English Translation</i> )	O you angels, who protect the people,	whose form shines forth in your face,	and O, you Archangels,

Formal Units	Section D mm. 16 - 19	Section E mm. 20 - 30	Section F mm. 31 - 36
Measures	16 - 19	20 - 30	31 - 36
Meter	None		
Tempo Markings	(Very Slowly)		
Dynamic Markings	<i>mp</i>	<i>(mp) cresc. mf dim. p</i>	<i>pp</i>
Forces	SATB	SATB ST SATB	SATB
Tonal Aspects	F sharps used more consistently; also E flats and G sharps used for tonal coloring	The accidentals cease; white notes proliferate	Taken from the <i>Organ Cycle</i> (fourth movement); various accidentals used; no tonal center.
Text ( <i>Latin</i> )	... animas iustorum [iustorum], et vos, Virtutes,	Potestates, Principatus, Dominationes, et Troni, quiescitis computati in quintum secretum numerum,	et o vos Cherubin et Seraphin,
( <i>English Translation</i> )	...the souls of the just, and you Virtues,	Powers, Principalities, Dominions, and Thrones, who are counted in the fifth secret number,	and O, you Cherubim and Seraphim,

Figure 75, Flowchart of ‘O vos angeli’

(figure cont.)

Formal Units	Section G mm. 37 - 46	Section H [from m. 1] mm. 47 - 53
Measures	37 – 46	47 – 53
Meter	None	
Tempo Markings	(Very Slowly)	
Dynamic Markings	<i>pp</i>	<i>p</i>
Forces	SAB T (div.)	SATB
Tonal Aspects	No tonal center. Harmonies (use of accidentals) represent colors. From Ferko's <i>Hildegard Organ Cycle</i> . Preparation for Christ: sigillum secretorum Dei.	No accidentals.
Text ( <i>Latin</i> )		Sit laus vobis, qui loculum antiqui cordis in fonte aspicitis [aspicitis].
( <i>English Translation</i> )	Seal of the secrets of God:	Praise be to you, you who behold in the fountain, the little place of the ancient heart.

Formal Units	Section J mm. 54 - 64	Section H' mm. 65 - 71
Measures	54 – 64	65 – 71
Meter		
Tempo Markings	(Very Slowly)	
Dynamic Markings	<i>mf</i>	<i>p</i>
Forces	SATB	SATB B (div.)
Tonal Aspects	Begins in an E modal scale but quickly becomes more chromatic	Several flat chords are employed before tonality settles into C major
Text ( <i>Latin</i> )	Videtis enim interiorum vim Patris, que de corde illius spirat quasi facies.	Sit laus vobis, qui loculum antiqui cordis in fonte aspicitis [aspicitis].
( <i>English Translation</i> )	For you see the inner strength of the Father, which breathes from his heart like a face.	Praise be to you, you who behold in the fountain, the little place of the ancient heart.

only two different pitches, and the basses maintain a constant G throughout the opening five measures. The repetition of notes – the bass G in particular – serves as a pedal point, although it generally serves no larger *formal* function. In measures 1-5 it could possibly serve as a dominant pedal to what are essentially C major chords in second inversion.

*l* Very Slowly (♩ ca. 52)

Soprano  
Alto  
Tenor  
Bass

O vos an - ge - li, qui cus - to - di - tis po - pu - los,

Figure 76, mm. 1-5.

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Only a breath mark at the end of measure 5 separates Section A from Section B (measures 6-9) – there is no formal delineation between sections such as the double bar lines found in earlier motets (figure 77). This four-measure section is similarly homophonic in texture (although no longer homorhythmic), and is considerably more chromatic than the opening measures of the motet. Unlike the opening section, the soprano line is predominantly conjunct in nature, and features intervals of augmented seconds and diminished thirds. The basses continue singing the G pedal, although the harmonies here are far-removed from the C major chords of the opening.

6

Soprano  
quo - rum for - ma ful - get in fa - ci - e ves - tra,

Alto  
quo - rum for - ma ful - get in fa - ci - e ves - tra,

Tenor  
quo - rum for - ma ful - get in fa - ci - e ves - tra,

Bass  
quo - rum for - ma ful - get in fa - ci - e ves - tra,

Figure 77, mm. 6-9.

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The first instance of *divisi* briefly occurs in Section C (measures 10-15) (figure 78).

The melodic interest appears in the soprano and bass lines, which each divide into two parts. The lines begin in predominantly disjunct fashion, leaping melodic sixth and seventh intervals, before becoming conjunct in measures 13-15. The alto and tenor voices are melodically and rhythmically static by comparison, singing pedal notes on E and C respectively. The dynamics have reduced to *pp* with a *poco crescendo* in measure 14.

10 *pp* *poco*

Soprano  
et o vos Arch - an - ge - li qui su - sce - pi - tis

Alto  
*pp* *poco*  
et o vos qui su - sce - pi - tis

Tenor  
*pp* *poco*  
et o vos qui su - sce - pi - tis

Bass  
*pp* *poco*  
et o vos qui su - sce - pi - tis

Figure 78, mm. 10-15.

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Section D (measures 16-19) introduces the first sharp accidentals (G sharp) in the soprano and alto voices, and is homophonic in texture (figure 79). Like section C, the melodic interest appears predominantly in the outside voices, where the lines are initially disjunct in character, then becoming more static.

16 *mp*

Soprano  
a - ni - mas jus - to - rum, et vos, Vir - tu - tes,

Alto  
a - ni - mas jus - to - rum, et vos, Vir - tu - tes,

Tenor  
a - ni - mas jus - to - rum, et vos, Vir - tu - tes,

Bass  
a - ni - mas jus - to - rum, et vos, Vir - tu - tes,

Figure 79, mm. 16-19.  
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Section E, the longest in the motet, spans measures 20-30 (figure 80). The melodic intervals and ranges of each voice part are considerably larger than they have previously been, and the dynamics briefly increase to *mf* in measure 22, before immediately diminishing. There is a sense of anticipation as the angels are acknowledged, each in ascending order of importance. The ‘leaping’ interval, here a major seventh, is featured in a voice exchange between the altos and tenors in measure 20, occurring in a possible symbolic gesture on the highest tenor pitch in the piece. This pattern continues in measure 21, on the text ‘*Potestates, Principatus*’ (‘powers, principalities’). The sopranos and basses engage in voice exchange in measure 24 to the text ‘*Troni*’ (Thrones). Perhaps in anticipation of the ensuing central section, or alternatively, as a possible example of text

20

Soprano *cresc.* *mf* *dim.*  
Po - te - sta - tes, Prin - ci - pa - tus, Do - mi - na - ti -

Alto *cresc.* *mf* *dim.*  
Po - te - sta - tes, Prin - ci - pa - tus, Do - mi - na - ti -

Tenor *cresc.* *mf* *dim.*  
Po - te - sta - tes, Prin - ci - pa - tus, Do - mi - na - ti -

Bass *cresc.* *mf* *dim.*  
Po - te - sta - tes, Prin - ci - pa - tus, Do - mi - na - ti -

23

S *p*  
o - nes, et Tro - ni, qui es - tis com - pu - ta - ti

A *p*  
o - nes, et Tro - ni,

T *p*  
o - nes, et Tro - ni, qui es - tis com - pu - ta - ti

B *p*  
o - nes, et Tro - ni,

27

S  
in quin - tum se - cre - tum nu - me - rum,

A  
in quin - tum se - cre - tum nu - me - rum,

T  
in quin - tum se - cre - tum nu - me - rum,

B  
in quin - tum se - cre - tum nu - me - rum,

Figure 80, mm. 20-30.  
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painting on the words ‘*secretum numerum*’ (secret numbers), Ferko has written one measure of rest – the first of only two instances in the piece – in measure 30.

The central section, comprising Sections F and G (measures 31-46), forms the most substantial part of the motet (figure 81). The harmony of this central section is based upon the seventh movement of Ferko’s *The Hildegard Organ Cycle*, titled ‘Preparation for Christ,’ with only several small pitch changes (figure 82).

The image displays a musical score for a four-part vocal motet, measures 31 through 46. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system (measures 31-36) includes staves for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. Each staff begins with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic marking. The lyrics for these measures are: "et o vos Che - ru - bin et Se - ra - phin,". The second system (measures 37-46) includes staves for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The lyrics for these measures are: "si - gil - lum se - cre - to - rum, se - cre - to - rum,". The music is written in a key with one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The notation includes various note values, rests, and phrasing slurs. The lyrics are written below the corresponding vocal staves.

Figure 81, mm. 31-46.  
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(figure cont.)

42

S  
se - cre - to - rum De - i:

A  
se - cre - to - rum De - i:

T  
se - cre - to - rum De - i:

B  
se - cre - to - rum De - i:

*Sw: Rohrflöte S', Gemshorn S', Gemshorn celeste S'*  
*(Rohrflöte may be omitted)*  
*Gt: Bourdon S', Nachthorn 4', Quint 2 2/3'*  
*(4' may be omitted)*  
*Ped: Quintaton 16' (or Erzähler 16')*  
*Swell to Pedal S'*

**Slowly, meditatively**

*Gt*  
[O splendissima gemma]

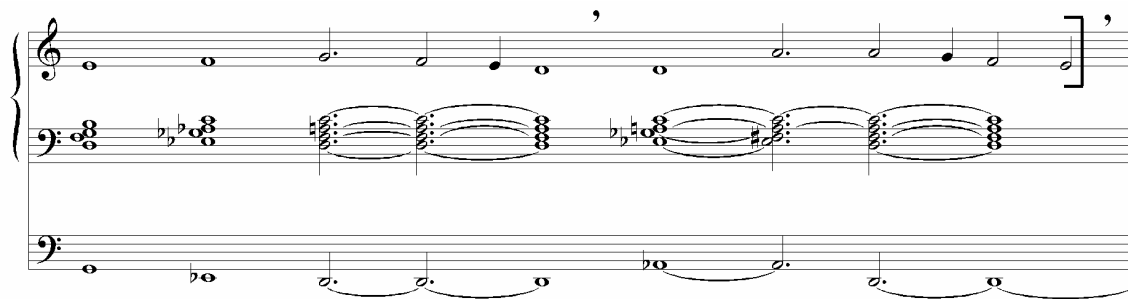
*Sw*

*pp*

Figure 82, 'Preparation for Christ.'  
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(figure cont.)



The soprano melody is likewise taken directly from ‘Preparation for Christ,’ and is melodically identical to the organ meditation, until the point it breaks down in measure 40 of ‘O vos angeli’ (figures 81 and 82). The organ work itself is based on Hildegard’s own chant *O splendidissima gemma*, which appears in the upper ‘voice’ part of the right hand organ score, and consequently in the soprano line of ‘O vos angeli’ (figure 83).

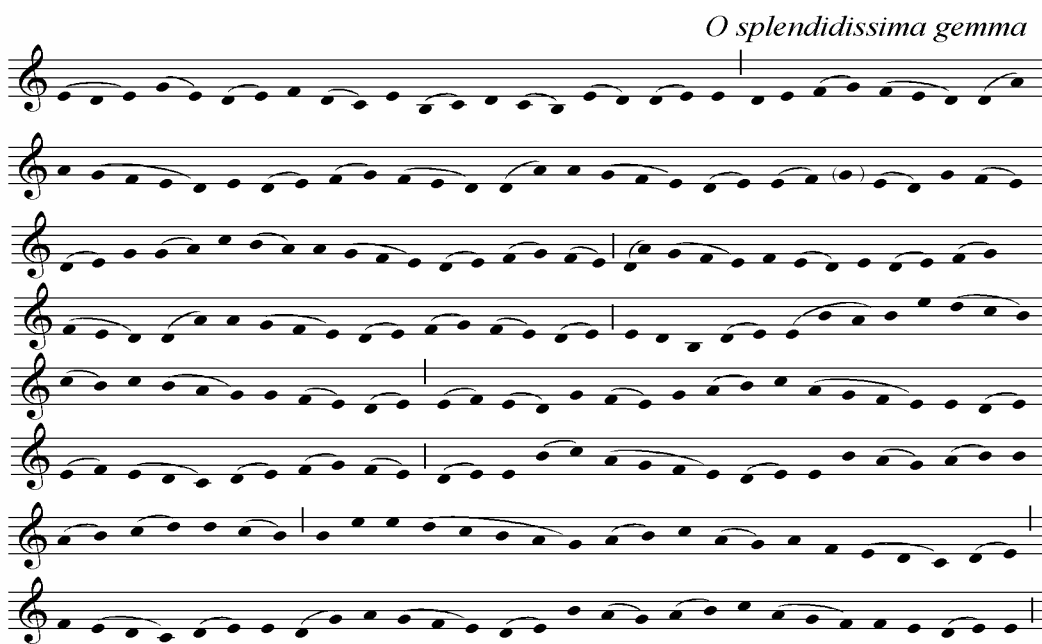


Figure 83, *O splendidissima gemma*  
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Together, Sections F and G of ‘O vos angeli’ appear to retain the characteristics of the organ work. The low bass D2 notes in measures 43-46 even originally appeared as pedal notes in ‘Preparation for Christ,’ “to be played by 16 foot organ stops.”<sup>263</sup>

A comparison of the first six melodic and harmonic changes of the organ work illustrates how closely the motet resembles ‘Preparation for Christ’ (figure 84). As a result of ‘re-scoring’ the original Ferko piece for voices, there are several pitch omissions in the choral work: the note A is missing in the first chord; the note C is missing in the second change of harmony; notes F and D are absent in the third chord; the A is absent in the next and so on (figure 84).

Chord: 1      2      3      4      5      6

Opening six chords of 'Preparation for Christ'

Soprano *pp* 3/ et o vos Che -

Alto *pp* et o vos Che -

Tenor *pp* et o vos Che -

Bass *pp* et o vos Che -

Figure 84, Opening chords of ‘Preparation for Christ,’ and mm. 31-33.  
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Section H (measures 47-53) resumes in a similar homorhythmic style as the opening section (figures 76 and 85). The melodic lines in all voice parts are relatively static, although the soprano leaps intervals of octaves and major sixths in measures 47, 49, and 51-52, reminiscent of the opening measures of the motet (figure 76). The dynamics have similarly returned to the familiar *p* of the opening.

47 *p*

Soprano  
Sit laus vo - bis, qui lo - cu - lum an - ti - qui

Alto  
Sit laus vo - bis, qui lo - cu - lum an - ti - qui

Tenor  
Sit laus vo - bis, qui lo - cu - lum an - ti - qui

Bass  
Sit laus vo - bis, qui lo - cu - lum an - ti - qui

50

S  
cor - dis in fon - te a - spi - ci - tis.

A  
cor - dis in fon - te a - spi - ci - tis.

T  
cor - dis in fon - te a - spi - ci - tis.

B  
cor - dis in fon - te a - spi - ci - tis.

Figure 85, mm. 47-53.  
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<sup>263</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

Section J (measures 54-64) begins with a *subito mf* dynamic and is typically homorhythmic throughout (figure 86). The melodic ranges are considerably larger than the previous section and are not restricted to the soprano line. Measures 54-60 contain only F sharps, while measures 61-62 contain considerable chromaticism, mixing flat note accidentals with sharp note accidentals. The second example of a complete measure rest, perhaps to ‘sectionalize’ or separate J from H, occurs in measure 64.

54 *mf*

Soprano  
Vi - de - tis e - nim in - te - ri - o - rem vim Pa - tris,

Alto  
Vi - de - tis e - nim in - te - ri - o - rem vim Pa - tris,

Tenor  
8 Vi - de - tis e - nim in - te - ri - o - rem vim Pa - tris,

Bass  
Vi - de - tis e - nim in - te - ri - o - rem vim Pa - tris,

60

S  
que de cor - de il - li - us spi - rat qua - si fa - ci - es, qua - si fa - ci - es.

A  
que de cor - de il - li - us spi - rat qua - si fa - ci - es, qua - si fa - ci - es.

T  
8 que de cor - de il - li - us spi - rat qua - si fa - ci - es, qua - si fa - ci - es.

B  
que de cor - de il - li - us spi - rat qua - si fa - ci - es, qua - si fa - ci - es.

Figure 86, mm. 54-64.  
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In closing the motet, Section H' (measures 65-71), is an exact repeat of measures 47-53 with one exception: Ferko has dropped the bass line in measures 69-71 an octave lower than the original (measures 51-53) (figures 85 and 87). Otherwise dynamics and all other parameters remain consistent with the earlier passage.

65 *p*

S Sit laus vo-bis, qui lo-cu-lum an-ti-qui cor-dis in fon-te a-spi-ci-tis.

A *p*

A Sit laus vo-bis, qui lo-cu-lum an-ti-qui cor-dis in fon-te a-spi-ci-tis.

T *p*

T 8 Sit laus vo-bis, qui lo-cu-lum an-ti-qui cor-dis in fon-te a-spi-ci-tis.

B *p*

B Sit laus vo-bis, qui lo-cu-lum an-ti-qui cor-dis in fon-te a-spi-ci-tis.

Figure 87, mm. 65-71.

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Aside from the melodic material that is directly related to 'Preparation for Christ' from *The Hildegard Organ Cycle*, it is the frequent recurrence of melodic intervals, particularly those of a leaping major sixth, major or minor seventh, that function as unifying device. For example, the opening soprano interval of a major sixth occurs three times in the first two sections (figures 76 and 77). Other examples occur in the bass and soprano parts in measure 24 (figure 80), the soprano part in measure 47 and again in measures 49 and 52 (figure 85). In measures 10-12, the sopranos leap upward a minor seventh on the words 'o vos' (O you). The first basses follow suit, then, in tandem with the second sopranos, leap by intervals of major sixths followed by a major seventh in measures

11-13 (figure 78). These unifying intervals of sixths or larger also occur in inversion. The major sixth interval of the opening for instance, leaps downward in measure 3 (figure 76), 47, 49, and 52 (figure 85), and again in measures 65, 67, and 70 (figure 87). The frequent appearance of this interval alone seems to suggest it has melodic significance.

Like ‘O ignis Spiritus Paracliti’ and ‘O factura Dei,’ no time signatures are used in ‘O vos angeli.’ At times the motet assumes a plainsong quality, particularly when only quarter notes and half notes are used, such as in measures 20-28 (figure 80). The number of beats in successive measures fluctuates throughout the work, another similarity to the relatively ‘free’ and metrically unstructured plainsong.

### **Ranges and Tessituras**

Although the ranges and tessituras of the soprano, alto, tenor and first bass voices are generally accessible (figure 88), the second basses are occasionally required to sing in the lowest part of their range – D2 notes in measures 45-46, and optional C2 pitches in the last three measures of the piece (figure 87). The composer has noted alternative pitches for the basses, stating: “Upper bass notes are sung only if there are basses who cannot sing the lower notes.”<sup>264</sup>

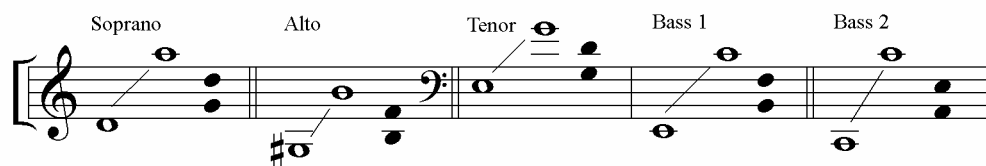


Figure 88, Ranges and Tessituras.

<sup>264</sup> Ferko, ‘O vos angeli’ from *The Hildegard Motets*, 10.

The pitches C2-G2 were written to activate specific upper partials of the harmonic series.<sup>265</sup> Despite these few instances of extremely low singing, the bulk of the motet falls comfortably within the mid-range of each voice, making this an overall accessible work.

### **Interpretation**

The opening five measures introduce several important events: one, as previously alluded to is the leaping interval of the sixth (which later evolves into wider leaps), and another is the prominent rhythmic pattern of half and quarter notes (figure 76). Such leaps may require additional rehearsing. The tempo should always be as slow as it is possible to comfortably maintain good breath support and the implied legato line, but probably should not exceed quarter note = 60. The slower tempo will also aid accurate tuning of the disjunct lines.

The sudden and frequent modulations in measures 6-9 (and elsewhere in the motet) could prove awkward and may present intonation problems for the choir (figure 77). Intervals of an augmented or diminished quality, such as those in the soprano line in measures 7 and 9 will almost certainly require additional rehearsing.

The score does not clearly state how the sopranos should divide in measures 10-13 (figure 78). The second sopranos should not sing until measure 11; however the first sopranos should continue singing throughout measures 10-15, joining the second sopranos in measure 13, rather than dropping out.<sup>266</sup>

All four parts of Section D (measures 16-19) are more active than previously, and although there is no change in tempo, there is more activity and a sense of climactic

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<sup>265</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

anticipation (figure 79). Dynamically this is approaching the loudest part of the motet, and care should be taken to ensure an evenly-graded crescendo in measure 21, and also that the diminuendo in the following measure is evenly spaced across three beats (figure 79).

Another possible example of symbolism is the pitch level in all voices, which drops considerably at '*qui estis computati in quintum secretum numerum*' ('who are counted in the fifth secret number') in measures 27-29 (figure 80). This should have a subdued, mysterious and contained quality to it, playing on the possible text-painting.

A different mood occurs in Section F (measures 31-36) (figure 81). Note lengths have increased, and the textual importance is highlighted through a decrease in dynamics, in what the author believes is an example of understatement. Care should be taken to not only maintain a *pp* dynamic level at all times, but also to sustain the long phrases when called for. This particular phrase will no doubt require 'staggered' breathing.

The bracketed bass notes in measures 69-71 are to be sung only if the basses cannot sing the lower notes (figure 87).<sup>267</sup> Another possibility is to ignore the optional notes (which double the tenor line), and have those basses incapable of singing the low pitches, simply sing the second bass line up one octave.

### VIII. O speculum columbe

**O speculum columbe  
castissime forme,  
qui inspexisti mysticam largitatem  
in purissimo fonte:**

O mirror of the dove,  
most chaste form,  
you who behold the mystical bounty  
in the purest fountain:

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<sup>267</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.



5	<b>O mira floriditas, que numquam arescens cecidisti, quia altissimus plantator misit te:</b>	O wondrous blooming, you who never fell withering, because the Highest Gardener planted you:
10	<b>O suavissima quies amplexuum solis: tu es specialis filius Agni in electa amicitia nove sobolis.</b>	O sweetest calm of the sun's embraces: you are the special son of the Lamb in the chosen friendship of a new generation.

This psalm antiphon for St. John the Evangelist abounds in imagery, in which Jesus' disciple is metaphorically represented in the Hildegard text by five principle symbols: mirror (*speculum*); fountain (*fonte*); blooming/blossoming (*floriditas*); sun (*solis*), and; the Son of the Lamb (*filius Agni*), which is also a symbol of Christ. It is such imagery that led Ferko to set this Hildegard poem to music, the subject matter inspiring him to "utilize the rich male vocal colors to reflect the poem."<sup>268</sup> 'O speculum columbe' is unique in that it is the only motet in the *Hildegard* cycle for male voices.

Christians throughout the centuries held St. John the Evangelist in the highest regard. Newman notes that a twelfth-century handbook for nuns, *Mirror of Virgins*, places the apostle "beside Christ, Mary, and John the Baptist as one of the four horses leading the triumphal chariot of virgins."<sup>269</sup> Although John was never martyred, Newman considers that his exceptional standing among the apostles was due in part to his "preserved lifelong virginity."<sup>270</sup> She further notes:

His virginity was, for Hildegard, the source of his unique intimacy with Christ. Virginity is figured by the flower that

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<sup>268</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>269</sup> Newman, 287.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid., 287.

never withers (cf. No. 61). As “the disciple that Jesus loved” (John 13:23), John also lay closest to him at the Last Supper and received a special privilege of contemplation, to which Hildegard alludes in the first and last sections. The “chosen...generation” (ll. 11-12) is the new elite of virgins and celibate clergy (*Scivias* II.5.15).

Like much of Hildegard’s imagery, and without exception in ‘O speculum columbe,’ there is frequent cross-referencing, or inter-relating of important symbols, including two of the most common she ever used – those of ‘sun’ (*solis*) (and those images related to the sun, such as ‘light’ (*lucis*)), and ‘greenness’ (*viriditas*). Bowie and Davies connect the life-giving *viriditas* theme to the ‘light’ motif in ‘O speculum columbe’: “...the source of her visions is precisely the ‘living light’ together with the ‘reflection of the living light.’”<sup>271</sup> They also mention another crucial symbol, ‘*speculum*’ (mirror), in their discussion of light: “the universe itself becomes a mirror which captures and throws back the divine light in a symphony of brilliance and grandeur.”<sup>272</sup>

The relevance of *solis* (sun) or *lucis* (‘light’) is also important at a more fundamental level. Bowie and Davies elaborate: “Men and women possess the power of reason, which is the noblest element in the soul and which Hildegard describes in terms of light so that ‘we are flooded with light itself in the same way as the light of day illumines the world’ (*DW I, 6*).”<sup>273</sup>

The ‘purest fountain’ (‘*purissimo fonte*’) is the God-given stream of life, which is also connected to the *viriditas* imagery. Bowie and Davies describe this greenness as “the

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<sup>271</sup> Bowie and Davies, 33.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., 33.

living life of the fruitful earth”<sup>274</sup> and quote Hildegard: “‘The rivers give rise to smaller streams that sustain the earth by their greening power’ (DW 4, 59).”<sup>275</sup>

The imagery of the flower as representative of virginity is particularly clear in the third line of Hildegard’s song, where the “wondrous blooming” never “fell” nor “withered.” St. John never gave in to temptation, hence retaining his virginity.<sup>276</sup>

‘O speculum columbe’ is unique to *The Hildegard Motets*, in that it is the only work of the cycle set for TTBB unaccompanied chorus, with brief tenor solos. There are essentially two main sections to the motet, A and B, which are contrasting in nature in several respects: section A contains shorter note values and it employs a more highly evolved contrapuntal style; section B is slower and more deliberate, often progressing in a homophonic and homorhythmic ‘organ’ style. The work is divided in an ABAB form (figure 89).

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<sup>274</sup> Bowie and Davies, 31.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>276</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

Formal Units	Incipit m. 1	Aa mm. 2 - 10	Ab mm. 11 - 19
Measures	1	2 - 10	11 - 19
Meter	None	2/4	3/4 2/4
Tempo Markings	None	Moderately slow (♩ ca. 60)	
Dynamic Markings	None	<i>p</i> (S and B) <i>mp</i> (A and T)	<i>mf</i>
Forces	T solo	SATB	AT
Tonal Aspects	Dorian mode		
Text ( <i>Latin</i> )	O speculum columbe...	O speculum columbe castissime forme,	O speculum columbe...
( <i>English Translation</i> )	O mirror of the dove...	O mirror of the dove, most chaste form,	O mirror of the dove...

Formal Units	Ac mm. 20 - 25	Ad mm. 26 - 31	Ad <sup>b</sup> mm. 32 - 36
Measures	20 - 25	26 - 31	32 - 36
Meter	3/4 2/4	2/4 4/4	3/4 2/4
Tempo Markings	(Moderately slow)		
Dynamic Markings	<i>mf</i>	<i>mf</i>	( <i>mf</i> )
Forces	ATB	SATB	SATB
Tonal Aspects	Dorian mode		
Text ( <i>Latin</i> )	O speculum columbe...	O speculum columbe...	qui inspexisti mysticam largitatem ...
( <i>English Translation</i> )	O mirror of the dove...	O mirror of the dove...	you who behold the mystical bounty...

Figure 89, Flowchart of ‘O speculum columbe’

(figure cont.)

Formal Units	<i>Ad'</i> mm. 37 - 45	<b>B</b> mm. 46 - 56	<b>B'</b> mm. 57 - 65
Measures	37 - 45	46 - 49 50 - 51 51 - 56	57 - 60 61 - 65
Meter	2/4	None	
Tempo Markings	(Moderately slow)	$\frac{1}{d} = d$	
Dynamic Markings	<i>p</i> (S and B) <i>mp</i> (A and T)	<i>pp</i>	( <i>pp</i> )
Forces	SATB	SATB	SATB
Tonal Aspects	Dorian mode	F sharps (in m. 48) becomes Lydian mode on C.	
Text ( <i>Latin</i> )	...in purissimo fonte:	O mira floriditas, que numquam areseens cecidisti,	quia altissimus plantator misit te:
( <i>English Translation</i> )	...in the purest fountain:	O wondrous blooming, you who never fell withering,	Because the Highest Gardener planted you:

Formal Units	Incipit [from m. 1] m. 66	<i>Ad'</i> mm. 67 - 75	<i>Ad'</i> mm. 76 - 81
Measures	66	67 - 75	76 - 81
Meter	None	2/4	3/4 4/4
Tempo Markings	Free	[As beginning?]	
Dynamic Markings	None	<i>p</i> (S and B) <i>mp</i> (A and T)	<i>mf</i>
Forces	T solo	SATB	SATB
Tonal Aspects	Returns to Dorian mode.	Dorian mode.	Dorian mode.
Text ( <i>Latin</i> )	O suavissima qui es...	O suavissima qui es amplexuum solis:	O suavissima qui es amplexuum solis:
( <i>English Translation</i> )	O sweetest calm...	O sweetest calm of the sun's embraces:	O sweetest calm of the sun's embraces:

(figure cont.)

Formal Units	B' [Coda or Closing Section] mm. 82 - 95		
Measures	82 - 83	84 - 89	90 - 95
Meter	None		
Tempo Markings	$\text{♩} = \text{♩}$		
Dynamic Markings	<i>sub. pp</i>		
Forces	SATB		
Tonal Aspects	Transposed Lydian mode (final on C). Last chord is C major tonality.		
Text ( <i>Latin</i> )	tu es specialis quies filius Agni in electa amicitia nove sobolis.		
( <i>English Translation</i> )	you are the special son of the Lamb in the chosen friendship of a new generation.		

The harmonies in ‘O speculum columbe’ are based on modes. Ferko uses the notes of a Dorian mode in the A sections (measures 1-45, 66-81) (figure 90), and pitches of a Lydian mode on C in the B sections (measures 46-65, 82-95) (figure 91).

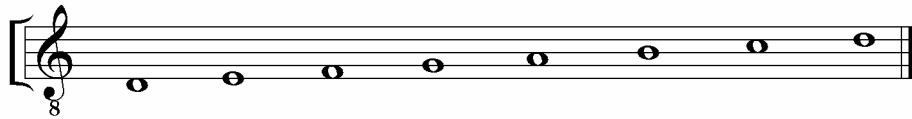


Figure 90, Dorian mode



Figure 91, Lydian mode on C

Immediately preceding the first phrase is a one-measure *incipit* sung by a tenor 1 soloist (figure 92).

1 *Tenor solo*

Tenor 1

O spe - cu - lum co - lum - be

Tenor 2

Bass 1

Bass 2

Figure 92, m. 1

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The first large formal unit, *Aa*, occurs in measures 2-10 (figure 93), and is set in simple duple time for all four voice parts, with a moderately slow tempo. The crux of the *A* section centers around the second tenor part, which presents the primary melodic material beginning in the second measure. Entering in canon exactly one beat later, the first bass presents this same melodic material, but in an inverted form of the tenor. This inversion exemplifies the first incidence of ‘mirroring’ in this motet, appropriately reflecting the ‘*speculum*’ (mirror) image. This particular example of strict tonal inversion is sustained

**Moderately slow** (♩ = ca. 60)

6

T 1  
8 cu - lum co - lum - be

T 2  
8 be cas - tis - si - me for - me,

B 1  
lum - be cas - tis - si - me for - me,

B 2  
cu - lum co - lum - be

Figure 93, mm. 2-10  
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through measure 10. While this counterpoint occurs, the tenor 1 and bass 2 voices provide slow, harmonic material, which function as pedal notes, implying alternating D minor and A minor tonalities. The contrapuntal texture of the A sections frequently results in different harmonies, which sometimes change as often as consecutive eighth-note beats. Longer held notes, such as the T1 and B2 voices in measures 2-10, outline D minor and A minor tonalities (the Dorian ‘tonic’ and ‘dominant’ harmonies).

Section *Ab* (measures 11-19), is set for the tenor 2 and bass 1 voices to a *mf* dynamic (figure 94).

The musical score for measures 11-19 is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 11-14) shows four staves: Tenor 1, Tenor 2, Bass 1, and Bass 2. Tenor 1 and Bass 2 have whole notes, while Tenor 2 and Bass 1 have eighth-note patterns. The second system (measures 15-19) shows the same four staves. Tenor 1 and Bass 2 have whole notes, while Tenor 2 and Bass 1 have eighth-note patterns. The lyrics 'O, O' are under the Tenor 2 staff, and 'spe - cu - lum co - lum - be' are under the Bass 1 staff.

Figure 94, mm. 11-19  
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The inner voices in the succeeding section of measures 20-25, *Ac*, draw on melodic material found in measures 11-19, but with the addition of a second bass part (figure 95). Here, the second bass recapitulates the same three-note motif outlining a D minor triad over a span of five measures. At measure 26, the first tenor presents the *Ab* theme of measure 20, while the second bass continues the recurring three-note ostinato before

20

Tenor 1

Tenor 2

Bass 1

Bass 2

O spe - cu - lum co -

23

T 1

T 2

B 1

B 2

lum - be, spe - cu lum

spe - cu - lum co - lum - be

lum - be, spe - cu - lum co - lum - be

Figure 95, mm. 20-25  
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disintegrating. At the same time, the inner two voices present unfamiliar counterpoint against the main themes.

The fourth voice is added in the fourth large phrase, *Ad*, in measures 26-31 (figure 96). Here the first tenor repeats the second tenor line of measures 20-23, but now transposed an octave higher. Sixteenth-notes appear in the T1 voice in measures 30-31 for the first time in the motet. Also making a first appearance is the simple quadruple time signature in the same measures.

26 *mf*

Tenor 1

Tenor 2

Bass 1

Bass 2

29

T 1

T 2

B 1

B 2

Figure 96, mm. 26-31  
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An almost exact repetition of *Ad* occurs in measures 32-36, but with rhythmical alterations to accommodate the different text (figure 97). Unlike the first statement in

measures 26-31, which introduced shorter note values in the fifth measure of the *Ad* motif (figure 96), here the opposite is true – half notes appear in measure 36.

32

Tenor 1

8

qui in - spe - xis - ti mys - ti - cam lar - gi - ta - tem

Tenor 2

8

qui in - spe - xis - ti mys - ti - cam lar - gi - ta - tem

Bass 1

qui in - spe - xis - ti mys - ti - cam lar - gi - ta - tem

Bass 2

in - spe - xis - ti mys - ti - cam lar - gi - ta - tem

Figure 97, mm. 32-36  
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Measures 37-45 are an exact melodic and harmonic repetition of measures 2-10, and comprise the last phrase in the A section (figure 98). Slight rhythmic changes occur, which are a result of the new text (figure 93).

37

*p*

Tenor 1

8

in pu - ris - si - mo

*mp*

Tenor 2

8

in pu - ris - si - mo, pu - ris - si - mo fon - te

*mp*

Bass 1

in pu - ris - si - mo, pu - ris - si - mo fon -

*p*

Bass 2

in pu - ris - si - mo

Figure 98, mm. 37-45  
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(figure cont.)

The musical score shows four staves labeled T 1, T 2, B 1, and B 2. Above the first staff is the number 42. The lyrics are written below the staves: 'fon' under T1, 'in pu - ris - si - mo fon te:' under T2, 'te, in pu - ris - si - mo fon - te:' under B1, and 'fon - te:' under B2. The notation includes various note values, rests, and a fermata over the final 'te:' in each part.

The B section of the motet begins in measure 46 (figure 99). The texture is homophonic (and predominantly homorhythmic), the dynamics are subdued (*pp*), and the harmonic rhythm is very slow. The first appearance of the B motif (measures 46-56) can be divided into three smaller phrases, corresponding to breath marks in measures 49, 51, and 56. This section uses the opening three-note motif of the Aa theme (which is itself derived from the measure 1 ‘incipit’), here transposed and augmented (figures 94, 95, and 101). The tenor 1 and bass 2 parts briefly appear in contrary motion, the first tenors having inverted the opening three-note motif. The B theme persists for eleven measures before it is almost exactly repeated, both melodically and harmonically. Rhythmic alterations occur to accommodate the text. The B sections appear to tonicize C major, particularly at the beginnings and endings of each B statement, however, the inclusion of F sharps determine the harmonic structure not as C major, but one based around a Lydian mode on C (figure 93).<sup>277</sup>

<sup>277</sup> Liane Curtis, in her article ‘Mode’ in *Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music* states “because of the desire to avoid the f – B natural tri-tone, the use of B flat in the fifth [Lydian] and sixth [hypo Lydian] modes was commonplace from the eleventh century onwards.”

46 *sub. pp*

Tenor 1

8 O mi - ra flo - ri - di - tas, flo - ri - di - tas, que

Tenor 2

8 O mi - ra flo - ri - di - tas, flo - ri - di - tas, que

Bass 1

8 O mi - ra flo - ri - di - tas, flo - ri - di - tas, que

Bass 2

8 O mi - ra flo - ri - di - tas, flo - ri - di - tas, que

52

T 1

8 num - quam a - re - scens ce - ci - di - sti,

T 2

8 num - quam a - re - scens ce - ci - di - sti,

B 1

num - quam a - re - scens ce - ci - di - sti,

B 2

num - quam a - re - scens ce - ci - di - sti,

Figure 99, mm. 46-56  
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Measures 57-65 are an almost exact melodic and harmonic repetition of measures 46-56, although rhythms and text different from the original B statement (figure 100).

Measure 66 returns to the *incipit* motif of measure 1, although here it is melodically, textually, and rhythmically altered (figure 101). Here it appears in quasi-inverted retrograde form, preceding an exact restatement of A, but with different text.

57

Tenor 1

8 qui - a al - tis - si - mus

Tenor 2

8 qui - a al - tis - si - mus

Bass 1

qui - a al - tis - si - mus

Bass 2

qui - a al - tis - si - mus

61

T 1

8 plan - ta - tor mi - sit te, mi - sit te.

T 2

8 plan - ta - tor mi - sit te, mi - sit te.

B 1

plan - ta - tor mi - sit te, mi - sit te.

B 2

plan - ta - tor mi - sit te, mi - sit te.

Figure 100, mm. 57-65  
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66 *Tenor solo*

Tenor 1

8 O su - a - vis - si - ma qui - es

Tenor 2

-

Bass 1

-

Bass 2

-

Figure 101, m. 66  
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A repeat of *Aa* occurs in measures 67-75, although a different text is used (figure 102).

67 *p tutti*

Tenor 1: O su - a - vis -

Tenor 2: *mp* O su - a - vis - si - ma - qui -

Bass 1: *mp* O su - a - vis - si - ma qui -

Bass 2: *p* O su - a - vis -

71

T 1: si - ma qui - es,

T 2: es am - ple - xu - um - so - lis:

B 1: es - am - ple - xu - um - so - lis:

B 2: si - ma qui - es,

Figure 102, mm. 67-75  
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Measures 76-81 are an exact repeat of *Ad* (measures 26-31), but with a different text than the initial statement (figure 103).



76 *mf*

Tenor 1: O su - a - vis si - ma qui - es am -

Tenor 2: O su - a - vis si - ma qui - es am -

Bass 1: O su - a - vis si - ma qui - es am -

Bass 2: O su - a - vis si - ma qui -

79

T 1: ple - xu - um so - lis:

T 2: ple - xu - um so - lis:

B 1: ple - xu - um so - lis:

B 2: es am - ple - xu - um so - lis:

Figure 103, mm. 76-81  
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Measures 82-95 are an almost exact repetition of the initial B statement in measures 46-56 (figure 104), although measures 86-87 do not appear in the earlier version (figure 99). These two measures appear to be an extension of measure 84 (beat 3), and measure 85. New text appears in this ‘re-statement’ of B.

Time signatures appear in the A sections, but are omitted in the B sections and also in the two *incipit*<sup>278</sup> measures (1 and 66). Ferko’s reasoning for such omissions is

<sup>278</sup> The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines *incipit* as the “first words (of book etc., or fig.). [L= ‘(here) begins’, formerly used by scribes to mark beginning of book or section].

82 *sub. pp*

Tenor 1  
tu es spe - ci - a - lis

Tenor 2  
tu es spe - ci - a - lis

Bass 1  
tu es spe - ci - a - lis

Bass 2  
tu es spe - ci - a - lis

86

T 1  
fi - li - us A - gni in e -

T 2  
fi - li - us A - gni in e -

B 1  
fi - li - us A - gni in e -

B 2  
fi - li - us A - gni in e -

91

T 1  
8 lec - ta a - mi - ci - ti - a no - ve so - bo - lis.

T 2  
8 lec - ta a - mi - ci - ti - a no - ve so - bo - lis.

B 1  
lec - ta a - mi - ci - ti - a no - ve so - bo - lis.

B 2  
lec - ta a - mi - ci - ti - a no - ve so - bo - lis.

Figure 104, mm. 82-95  
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unequivocal: clearly the *incipit* measures are intended to be performed as Medieval plainsong would have been, which allows for a certain degree of rhythmical flexibility.<sup>279</sup> The B sections are reminiscent of plainsong, a quality the composer has created by varying the numbers of pulses in successive measures, and also by using long notes and uncomplicated rhythms.<sup>280</sup> In measures 46 and 82, Ferko has clearly indicated that the half note remains constant (figures 99 and 104).<sup>281</sup>

### **Ranges and Tessituras**

The extreme ranges required to perform this motet may present a number of concerns for most choirs (figure 105).

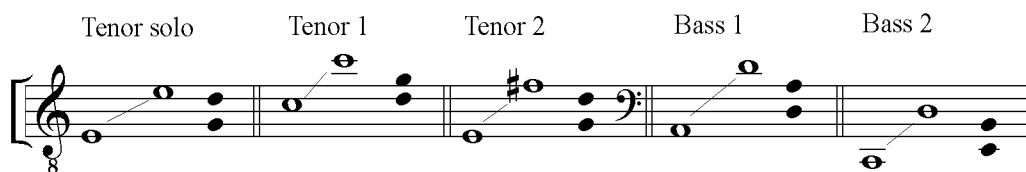


Figure 105, Ranges and Tessituras.

The first tenors are required to sing up to C5, while the second basses must frequently sing notes in the C2-F2 range. The second tenor and first basses, however should have little difficulty with their respective ranges or tessituras.

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<sup>279</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

## **Interpretation**

The incipit measures 1 and 66 suggest a certain degree of rhythmical flexibility must be permitted (figures 92 and 101). There could be a slight breath or lift before proceeding to the subsequent measures.

In measures 2-10 of the *Aa* section, the outside voices should avoid overpowering the inside voices, who have dynamic markings one grade higher than the tenor 1 and bass 2 parts (figure 93). Their role is to provide a sustained chant around the interior Tenor 2 and Bass 1 parts, which sing the melodic material. This material appears to have evolved out of the measure 1 incipit (more specifically the rising third followed by the descending third intervals).

All three voices in measures 20-25 have the same *mf* dynamic, and careful attention may be necessary to maintain a balance in the group (figure 95). Similarly, all voices are marked *mf* in measures 26-31, and care should be taken to avoid overpowering the second basses by the first tenors. Measures 30-31 introduce faster rhythmic units and the tessitura of the three upper voices is higher (figure 96). The inner two voices present material related both rhythmically and melodically to A, which should be clearly heard above the outer voice parts.

Careful attention should likewise be given to the dynamics in 37-45; as before the inner voices sing the main melodic material and are marked *mp* accordingly (figure 98). The outside voices should not dominate the texture.

The slower B section beginning in measure 46 may present a number of performance issues. Some re-voicing may be required if the second basses do not have

C2 notes in their range (figure 99). Falsetto singing may be necessary in measure 50 by the first tenors, and possibly the second tenors also.

Ferko has explicitly indicated breath marks throughout this motet, and they should be observed at every occurrence. In particular, a breath should not be taken between measures 47-48 (figure 99).

The *incipit* at measure 66 should be treated similarly as in the opening measure (i.e. with some rhythmical flexibility) (figure 101). Care should be taken with the fermata over the bar line at measure 81. This implies a brief pause for silence to occur. The conductor may decide to release the notes on the syllable ‘-lis,’ pause for the value of one half note, then give a half note preparatory beat for the next phrase.

As in the previous B section, re-voicing of the basses may be required in measures 82-95. The tenors should be encouraged to sing in falsetto (figure 104).

## IX. Nunc gaudeant

	<b>Nunc gaudeant materna viscera Ecclesie, quia in superna simphonia filii eius</b>	Now rejoice, motherly heart of the Church, because in supernal harmony her offspring
5	<b>in sinum suum collocati sunt. Unde, o turpissime serpens, confusus es, quoniam quos tua estimatio in visceribus suis habuit,</b>	are gathered into her bosom. Hence, O repulsive serpent, you are confounded, because those whom you estimated,
10	<b>nunc fulgent in sanguine Filii Dei,  et ideo laus tibi sit, rex altissime. Alleluia.</b>	jealously, in your hold, now gleam in the blood of God's Son, and therefore, praise be to you, King Most High! Alleluia.

Hildegard's 'Nunc gaudeant' text was designated as a votive antiphon for the dedication of a church, which "celebrates the end of schism and the restoration of peace."<sup>282</sup> The text describes how Ecclesia's children have returned to the fold, for which she celebrates and rejoices. "Satan or his agent is confounded, and the sacraments have been restored to those who lay under ban (l. 10)."<sup>283</sup> According to Newman this is the last of Hildegard's compositions in D, following which "the manuscript continues in a different hand with a text on exorcism."<sup>284</sup>

The principle symbols found in this song could be considered more 'traditional' and more widely accepted, and include the serpent (*'serpens'*), and blood (*'sanguine'*). In her letter to Abbess Hazzecha of Krauftal (a recluse at a Benedictine community), Hildegard clearly personified the serpent as the devil disguised: "When the blackest of birds – the devil – senses that someone wants to banish illicit longings and ceases from sins, it curls itself into the fasting, prayers and abstinence of that person, like a viper into its den..."<sup>285</sup>

To Hildegard, blood "possessed a special greening power"<sup>286</sup> and was closely associated with *viriditas*, or 'life-force.' For example, on the matter of sex (a popular topic of the Abbess's), the greenness of a woman's blood "showed when she was fertile and revealed with particular clarity the vital essence of her femininity."<sup>287</sup> In other songs of

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<sup>282</sup> Newman, 315.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid., 315-6.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid., 316.

<sup>285</sup> Bowie and Davies, 137.

<sup>286</sup> Schipperges, 67.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., 67.

hers, most notably those on Ursula,<sup>288</sup> Hildegard even associates blood with water – the religious connection being a “venerable one in the Christian tradition, epitomized by the blood and water that flowed from Christ’s side on the cross.”<sup>289</sup>

‘Nunc gaudeant,’ the final motet in the *Hildegard* cycle is scored for unaccompanied SATB chorus. The sopranos are frequently required to divide, and the altos split briefly on one occasion. Neither alto nor counter-tenor soloists are used.

The motet resembles a rondo in form (i.e. the section A material recurs throughout the work), although the overall structure of ‘Nunc gaudeant’ does not rigorously adhere to any traditional compositional form as such (figure 106). Interspersed between the repeating A sections are passages of new material, which are in stark contrast to A, most noticeably in rhythm and meter.

The opening A section (measures 1-8), which presents the initial ‘*Nunc gaudeant*’ motif, comprises measures in asymmetrical meter alternating with ‘regular’ metered bars for sopranos and altos (figure 107). Melodically, the soprano line contains the essential interest, possibly reflecting the text ‘*Nunc gaudeant materna viscera Ecclesia*’ (Rejoice now, Mother Womb of the Church). Tonalties of A major open and close section A, and are interspersed with non-functioning chords predominantly built using intervals of seconds, fourths, and sevenths. Accidentals of B flat, F sharp, C sharp, and D sharp are common, sometimes all appearing in the same measure, such as measure 4. Measures

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<sup>288</sup> St. Ursula was a British princess who had repudiated her marriage, and with a company of 11,000 like-minded maidens (the large number apparently arose from a copyist’s error) made a journey to Rome. On the way back the entire company was martyred by the Huns at Cologne (Flanagan, 135).

<sup>289</sup> Flanagan, 112.

Formal Units	A mm. 1 - 8			B mm. 9 - 17	A' mm. 17 - 21
Measures	1 - 8			9 - 17	17 - 21
Mefer	None				
Tempo Markings	Exuberantly (♩ = ca. 120 - 132)				
Dynamic Markings	<i>f</i>			<i>mf</i>	<i>f</i>
Forces	S (div.) A			SATB	S (div.) A
Tonal Aspects	Begins and resolves on A major chords. Ferko creates different tonal colors through various accidentals and chords.			Chords without accidentals open this section before non-functional chromatic chords predominate.	Restatement of the opening measures but transposed down a fourth into a (brief) tonal center of E major.
Text (Latin)	Nunc gaudeant materna viscera Ecclesie,			qui in superna simphonia filii eius in sinum suum collocati sunt.	Nunc gaudeant materna viscera Ecclesie,
(English Translation)	Now rejoice, motherly heart of the Church,			because in supernal harmony her offspring are gathered into her bosom.	Now rejoice, motherly heart of the Church,

Formal Units	C mm. 22 - 36				A mm. 36 - 40
Measures	22 - 24	25 - 26	27 - 29	30 - 32	33 - 36
Mefer	None				36 - 40
Tempo Markings	(Exuberantly)				
Dynamic Markings	<i>mp</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>mf</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>
Forces	SATB (A div. briefly)			SATB	S (div.) A
Tonal Aspects	Very chromatic section; a number of tonal colors are used. No tonal center; much dissonance.				Original A material is re-established at the tonal level of the opening A major.
Text (Latin)	Unde, o turpissime serpens, confusus es, quoniam quos tua estimatio in visceribus suis habuit,				et ideo laus tibi sit,
(English Translation)	Hence, O repulsive serpent, you are confounded, because those whom you jealously estimated in your hold,				now gleam in the blood of God's Son, and therefore, praise be to you,

Figure 106, Flowchart of 'Nunc gaudeant'



(figure cont.)

Formal Units	D mm. 41 - 42	Closing Section mm. 43 - 65		
Measures	41 - 42	43 - 50	51 - 58	59 - 65
Meter	None			
Tempo Markings	Slowly, deliberately	Moderately (♩ = ca. 108)		Much Slower (♩ = ca. 80)
Dynamic Markings	<i>f</i>	<i>mf</i> (S) <i>mp</i> (ATB)	<i>cresc. f</i>	<i>mp</i>
Forces	SATB	SATB (T div. briefly)	SATB (B div. briefly)	SATB (ATB div. briefly)
Tonal Aspects	No accidentals are used.  Harmonically very rich and diverse. C major chords frequent; open and close this section.			
Text ( <i>Latin</i> ) ( <i>English Translation</i> )	rex altissime.	Alleluia.		
	King Most High!	Alleluia.		

**Exuberantly** (♩ = ca. 120 - 132)

Soprano  
Nunc gau - de - ant ma - ter - na vi - sce - ra Ec - cle - si - e, Nunc

Alto  
Nunc - gau - de - ant ma - ter - na vi - sce - ra Ec - cle - si - e, Nunc

Tenor

Bass

5

S  
gau - de - ant ma - ter - na vi - sce - ra Ec - cle - si - e,

A  
gau - de - ant ma - ter - na vi - sce - ra Ec - cle - si - e,

T

B

Figure 107, mm. 1-8.

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5-8 (including the anacrusis in measure 4), are an almost exact repetition of measures 1-4.

The texture throughout is homophonic and homorhythmic.

A change of pace and mood occurs at measure 9, the beginning of the B section, where the full choir is utilized (figure 108). The meter is mixed, although no longer asymmetrical. The texture remains homophonic, but is no longer homorhythmic. The soprano melody is essentially built on ascending melodic intervals of predominantly minor sixths and minor sevenths. Harmonically, this B section is much more tonally vague or indeterminate than section A, and it randomly combines sharps and flats within the same

9

*mf*

Soprano

qui - a in su - per - na sym - pho - ni - a fi - li - i e -

*mf*

Alto

qui - a in su - per - na sym - pho - ni - a fi - li - i e -

*mf*

Tenor

qui - a in su - per - na sym - pho - ni - a fi - li - i e -

*mf*

Bass

qui - a in su - per - na sym - pho - ni - a fi - li - i e -

13

*f*

S

ius in si - num su - um col - lo - ca - ti sunt. Nunc

*f*

A

ius in si - num su - num col - lo - ca - ti sunt. Nunc

*f*

T

ius in si - num su - um col - lo - ca - ti sunt.

*f*

B

ius in si - num su - um col - lo - ca - ti sunt.

Figure 108, mm. 9-17.  
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measure. C major chords open in measure 9, before non-functional chromaticism takes over in measures 10-16. The passage eventually arrives at an E major chord, with an added sixth, in measure 17.

A brief return to the A material in measure 17 (transposed down a perfect fourth), links section B to C (figure 109). The returning A section (measures 17-21) restates the opening four measures of the motet only, but here a perfect fourth lower than the original. As a consequence of the transposition, the opening and closing chords are E major.

17

Soprano *f* sunt. Nunc gau - de - ant ma - ter - na vi - sce - ra Ec - le - si - e,

Alto *f* sunt. Nunc gau - de - ant ma - ter - na vi - sce - ra Ec - le - si - e,

Tenor 8 sunt.

Bass sunt.

Figure 109, mm. 17-21.  
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Section C spanning measures 22-36, contrasts the opening A material in texture (all four voices are used), dynamics (it ranges only from *p* to *mf*), and rhythm (no eighth-notes or dotted rhythms are used) (figure 110). The phrases are predominantly two or three measures in length, with the exception of measures 27-32. The section begins and ends in homophonic and homorhythmic fashion, although measures 30-32 feature a soprano melody in predominantly quarter notes, which is supported by sustained half-notes and whole-notes in the lower voices. The melody appears in the soprano voice only, with the exception of measures 25 and 26, where it briefly appears in the first alto part. Although there are instances of predominantly conjunct writing, such as measures 27-29, (reminiscent of plainsong), there are also melodic phrases of a disjunct nature, such as in measures 30-32. The harmonies comprise a fertile mix of both ‘flat’ and ‘sharp’ chords, possibly reflecting the tone of the text ‘*Unde, serpens, confusus es,*’ (‘Wherefore, O foul serpent, you are confounded’) in an example of text painting. In similar fashion to section B, there is no functional tonal system in this section. Significant cadential points in

22 *mp*

Soprano Un - de, o tur - pis - si - me ser - pens,

Alto Un - de, ser - pens, con - fu - sus

Tenor 8 *mp* Un - de, ser - pens, con - fu - sus

Bass 8 *mp* Un - de, ser - pens, con - fu - sus

26 *p* *poco*

S quo - ni - am quos tu - a es - ti - ma - ti - o

A es, quo - ni - am quos tu - a es - ti - ma - ti - o

T es, quo - ni - am quos tu - a es - ti - ma - ti - o

B es, quo - ni - am quos tu - a es - ti - ma - ti - o

30 *mf* *p*

S in vi - sce - ri - bus su - is ha - bu - it, nunc

A vi - sce - ri - bus su - is nunc

T vi - sce - ri - bus su - is nunc

B vi - sce - ri - bus su - is nunc

Figure 110, mm. 22-36.  
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(figure cont.)

34

S  
ful - gent in san - gui - ne Fi - li - i De - i, et

A  
ful - gent in san - gui - ne Fi - li - i De - i, et

T  
8 ful - gent in san - gui - ne Fi - li - i De - i,

B  
ful - gent in san - gui - ne Fi - li - i De - i,

measures 24, 26, 32, and 36 correspond to breath marks. The chords of each of these cadential measures are: A major (2<sup>nd</sup> inversion); E major (2<sup>nd</sup> inversion); D major 6, and; C major 6, and clearly bear no tonal relationship to each other (figure 110).

The opening four measures of section A are stated without repetition in measures 36-40, again with the melody in the first soprano vocal line, and set to a different text (figure 111).

36

Soprano  
i, et i - de - o laus ti - bi sit, laus ti - bi sit,

Alto  
i, et i - de - o laus ti - bi sit, laus ti - bi sit,

Tenor  
8 i,

Bass  
i,

Figure 111, mm. 36-40.

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Section D (measures 41-42) is in stark contrast to the preceding A section. Here the pace slows considerably, and the voicing is for SATB chorus, which sings a five-note homorhythmic passage at a *forte* dynamic, heralding the ensuing ‘Alleluia’ section (figure 112). These two measures function as a climax both melodically and textually. Here, in a possible example of text painting, the most important lines of the poem ‘*Rex altissime*’ (‘O King most High’) are set to the highest soprano pitches used thus far in the motet. This brief two-measure section possibly functions as a climax of the work. No accidentals are used, and the harmonies, built on intervals of seconds and sevenths, appear to be non-functional.

The closing section beginning in measure 43-65 features a series of two-measure phrases set to an *Alleluia* text, which gradually gather momentum culminating in a *forte* climax at measure 55 (figure 113). The motet then slows and the dynamics decrease in the final section beginning in measure 59. Textually, although there are instances of homorhythm in measures 59-65, the alto, tenor, and bass voices (occasionally in *divisi*),

41 Slowly, deliberately

The musical score for measures 41-42 is for a SATB chorus. It is marked '41 Slowly, deliberately' and 'f' (forte). The Soprano part has a fermata on the final note. The Alto, Tenor, and Bass parts also have fermatas on their final notes. The text is 'Rex al - tis - si - me,'.

Figure 112, mm. 41-42.  
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43 Moderately (♩ = ca. 108)

*mf*

Soprano

Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia,

Alto

*mp*

Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia,

Tenor

*mp*

Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia,

Bass

*mp*

Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia,

47

S

Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia,

A

Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia,

T

Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia,

B

Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia,

51

S

*cresc.* Al - le - lu - ia, *cresc.* Al - le - lu - ia, *f* Al - le - lu - ia,

A

*cresc.* Al - le - lu - ia, *cresc.* Al - le - lu - ia, *f* Al - le - lu - ia,

T

*cresc.* Al - le - lu - ia, *cresc.* Al - le - lu - ia, *f* Al - le - lu - ia,

B

*cresc.* Al - le - lu - ia, *cresc.* Al - le - lu - ia, *f* Al - le - lu - ia,

Figure 113, mm. 43-65.  
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(figure cont.)

57 **Much Slower** (♩ = ca. 80) *mp*

S Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia,

A Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia,

T Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia,

B Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia,

62 *rallentando* *p*

S Al - le - lu - ia!

A Al - le - lu - ia!

T Al - le - lu - ia!

B Al - le - lu - ia!

typically support a soprano melody that spans the range of a diminished 12<sup>th</sup> interval. The melodic material of this closing section, uses the characteristic intervallic leaps of earlier presented material, such as the soprano leap of a minor sixth in measure 60. The sopranos must then leap from an E flat 4 to and E 5 in the penultimate and final measures.

Harmonically, the section begins on a C major chord in measure 43, and likewise concludes on a C major chord in the final measure of the work. Enclosed within the opening and final C major tonalities are numerous non-functioning chromatic chords, which feature harmonic intervals of seconds and sevenths. Similarly to preceding passages,

dual-chromaticism occurs within the same chord, such as in measures 43 (beat 3), and 61 (beat 1). A C major tonal hierarchy of sorts is established, not only because this section opens and closes on C major tonalities, but also because they occur at almost all cadence points in the passage (measures 44, 46, 50, 52, 54, 58, 60, (61), and 65) (figure 113). In all but measure 65, the chords are in 2<sup>nd</sup> inversion, possibly to create an effect of incompleteness. The cadence on C major in measure 65 is in root position, possibly an example of harmonic text painting to suggest finality.

At no point in the motet does Ferko employ time signatures, suggesting his desire to create a feeling of medieval plainsong. The composer does, however, provide tempo indications in measures 41, 43, and 59 (figures 112, and 113). The measures are varied in length throughout the work, frequently alternating between asymmetrical meters, mixed and regular meters, or measures in compound or simple time. The recurring ‘*Nunc gaudeant*’ figure of the A section consists of measures in asymmetrical meter. In the B section the measure lengths are quite irregular (figure 108); and the phrases of section C are predominantly two or three measures in length (figure 110). Measure 22, asymmetrical in nature, is the only exception.

### **Ranges and Tessituras**

The ranges and tessituras of the individual voices in ‘*Nunc gaudeant*’ are generally quite accessible and should not present any concerns (figure 114). The majority of the singing falls comfortably within the mid-range of each voice without exception; although the sopranos have awkward leaps up to high A and B flat in measures 41 and 55 respectively (figures 112 and 113).

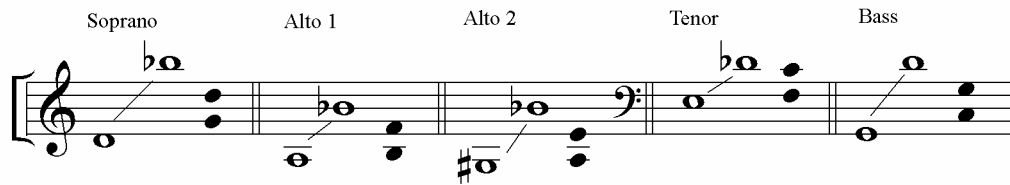


Figure 114, Ranges and Tessituras.

## Interpretation

Section A may require careful planning, to ensure the grouping of asymmetrical measures into appropriate beat patterns of either two or three eighth notes (figure 115). Text stress should be the most important factor in determining where the downbeats of the conducting pattern should fall.

Figure 115, mm. 1-4.

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The dynamically contrasting B section suggests a change of conducting gesture may be appropriate, perhaps requiring a smoother *legato* approach (figure 108). The long

phrase in measures 9-17 should be performed without a break,<sup>290</sup> and the returning A phrase in measure 18 should be performed similarly to the opening measures (figure 109).

Section D is comparable in disposition to section C, consisting of long phrases, which are clearly indicated by phrase or breath marks in measures 24, 26, 32, and 36 (figures 110 and 111). Again a more legato line should be maintained here. In both this section and also in the B section, the conductor may consider beating half-note patterns in order to encourage a *legato* interpretation from the singers (figure 108). It should be noted, however, that measure 22 is asymmetrical in nature and will require a modified beat pattern (figure 116).

22 1 (+) 2 (+) 3 4 (+)

*mp*

Soprano  
Un - de, o tur - pis - si - me

*mp*

Alto  
Un - de,

*mp*

Tenor  
8 Un - de,

*mp*

Bass  
Un - de,

Figure 116, m. 22.

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The notes in measures 41-42 could be performed with *tenuto* markings, or may be sung with extra ‘weight’ to reflect the ‘deliberately’ performance directive of the composer (figure 112).

In contrast, a legato approach should be maintained throughout the Closing section, beginning at measure 43 (figure 113). The *tenuto* marks in measure 55 should be carefully observed in the soprano voice. Ferko returns to a softer dynamic level from measures 59 to the end, and indicates a slowing in tempo. Care must be taken to observe the breath articulations, and also the rallentando and diminuendo marks. The final two measures may require additional rehearsing due to the difficulty in tuning the tone cluster in measure 64, and also due to the awkward augmented octave leap in the sopranos in measures 64 and 65 (figure 113).

### Conclusions

Frank Ferko's *The Hildegard Motets* (1996), an unaccompanied collection of choral works for SATB choir, and counter-tenor and alto soloists, comprise a cycle of nine choral motets for various seasons in the Christian liturgical calendar.<sup>291</sup> Ferko, who selected only nine of the over seventy *Symphonia* texts<sup>292</sup> for his cycle *The Hildegard Motets*, offers insight into the reasons behind his preference:

The nine poems used in this cycle were selected according to their appropriateness to seasons in the Christian liturgical calendar...and to their appropriateness to the structured plan of this cycle as well as for their sheer poetic beauty.<sup>293</sup>

Of the nine *Symphonia* texts Ferko set, the only responsory in the collection is the 'O vos angeli' text. Two others, 'O Verbum Patris,' and 'O factura Dei' were originally

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<sup>290</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>291</sup> Frank Ferko, Notes to 'Motets,' compact disc, ARSIS CD102.

<sup>292</sup> Ferko used only Hildegard's *texts* for his *Hildegard* motet cycle. On several occasions, however, he does briefly quote the abbess's music, which is subsequently discussed in this document.

<sup>293</sup> Frank Ferko, Notes to 'Motets,' compact disc, ARSIS CD102.

lyrics without chants; ‘O ignis Spiritus’ was a sequence; ‘Laus Trinitati’ and ‘Nunc gaudeant’ were votive antiphons, and; ‘O splendidissima gemma,’ ‘Hodie aperuit,’ and ‘O speculum columbe’ were psalm antiphons in the original Hildegard collection.

Ferko began writing the first motet of the *Hildegard* cycle in the early nineties, before completing the set with the addition of eight further motets. The cycle comprises the second part of a proposed triptych of Hildegard-inspired works. The third composition in the cycle, yet to be completed, is intended for orchestra, organ, and large chorus.

Ferko intentionally avoided “formalized structures such as those found in the Baroque and Classical periods.”<sup>294</sup> In the *Hildegard Motets* Ferko has opted for forms that “parallel the art and architecture” of the medieval period, reflected particularly in the second motet, ‘O splendidissima gemma’ in particular, where “no larger sections repeat that would define [such] a larger form.”<sup>295</sup> This Advent motet is “very asymmetrical,”<sup>296</sup> a “concept of medieval composition” that he has applied to numerous of his Hildegard-inspired works, and which is characteristic of these nine motets in particular.<sup>297</sup> The overall form is functional but “not necessarily symmetrical.”<sup>298</sup>

Although Ferko states he did not have “any concrete form”<sup>299</sup> in mind when he wrote the motets, there are obvious formal *elements* found in the majority of them. For example, in ‘O verbum Patris,’ the schematic design is roughly that of a mirror or palindrome, illustrated in figure 7. Ferko sought to capture the image of eternity – which

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<sup>294</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid.

the wheel symbolizes – through the palindromic structure.<sup>300</sup> ‘*Laus Trinitati*,’ one of the more formally organized motets in the cycle, centers around the idea of the Trinity, possibly playing on the three different incarnations of God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). In this motet, textual content determines the overall form; the motet comprises three central motifs (A, B, and C), possibly depicting the three aforementioned states of God (figure 62). Ferko similarly uses form to portray the Trinity at smaller levels in the motet, an example of which is the twofold repetition of measure 1, again possibly symbolizing the Trinity (figure 63). The Trinity idea thus determines form in this work at both micro and macro levels.

Modes play an important role in the *Hildegard* cycle, bringing an element of ‘antiquity’ to the pieces. In ‘*O splendidissima gemma*’ Ferko oscillates between authentic Phrygian mode (a favorite of his),<sup>301</sup> and Aeolian, popular during the Middle Ages and Renaissance period (figures 16 and 17).<sup>302</sup> Another use of mode is found in the fifth *Hildegard* motet. Here, the opening A section of ‘*O ignis Spiritus Paracliti*’ is centered around an Aeolian mode on (figure 44).

Many rhythms Ferko employs closely resemble several of the medieval rhythmic modes, such as those appearing in ‘*O splendidissima gemma*’ (figures 19 and 20). The use of rhythmic modes is another example of how the composer creates a feeling of antiquity in the *Hildegard* cycle. A further connection to the medieval period, is the incorporation into the cycle actual material composed during the Middle Ages. ‘*O ignis Spiritus*

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<sup>300</sup> Frank Ferko, Interview with David Childs, December 17, 2001.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

<sup>302</sup> Tess Knighton and David Fallows, ed., *Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music*, 255.

Paracliti' is such an example. This fifth motet in the cycle has its origins in Hildegard's chant *O glorissimi lux vivens, Angeli*, of which Ferko uses the last phrase only (figure 58).

Just as Ferko sought to create a distinctive medieval sound through the use of modes, rhythms and plainsong, so too, does he generate medieval qualities through harmony. Frequently the third degree above the root of a chord is omitted, resulting in an antiquated sound. The sixth *Hildegard* motet, 'Laus Trinitati,' contains a number of these 'open' harmonies, such as the first chord in measure 1, and the final chord in the third measure (figure 63). Tertian harmonies (i.e. chords with added 7ths, 9ths, 11ths, and 13ths), frequently appear in the *Hildegard Motets*, and are often scored in 'close' position, where the distances between the intervals have been inverted, or contracted to within an octave. As a result, many perfect and/or augmented fourths, and major and minor seconds are found throughout the cycle. In measures 1-4 of 'Hodie aperuit' a bi-chordality occurs between the flat-note chords and the sharp-note chords, while the second altos hold a pedal note A (figure 30). There are also instances of chordal 'planing' in this section and in others.

Melody plays an important text-painting role in each of the *Hildegard Motets*, ranging from the explicit, as seen in the soprano line of measure 20 of 'O factura Dei,' where the highest pitch corresponds to the word '*angeli*' (angels) (figure 39), to the more obscure, such as the opening motet, 'O verbum Patris,' where the melodic line of the counter-tenor soloist is possibly representative or symbolic of God (figure 8). In perhaps one of the clearest examples of text painting, the textual climax of the poem '*Rex altissime*'



(O King most High) is set to the highest pitches of 'Nunc gaudeant' in measures 41-42 (figure 112).

*The Hildegard Motets* are substantial, well-crafted choral works, which will no doubt remain an integral part of the modern choral oeuvre. It is obvious that much forethought, research, preparation and creative energy has been invested in this cycle. The motets may be performed singly, in pairs or groups, or as a complete cycle, and would suit an advanced college or community choir. Several of the motets, such as 'O verbum Patris' may even be suitable for, and accessible to high school choirs. No matter how they are presented in performance *The Hildegard Motets* make a compelling choice of programming for choir directors in the United States and around the world.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Newman Poetic Translations of *The Hildegard Motets*<sup>303</sup>**

#### **I. O verbum Patris (Song to the Creator)**

You, all-accomplishing Word of the Father,  
Are the light of primordial daybreak over the spheres.  
You, the foreknowing mind of divinity,  
foresaw all your works as you willed them,  
your presence hidden in the heart of your power,  
your power like a wheel around the world,  
whose circling never began  
and never slides to an end.<sup>304</sup>

#### **II. O splendidissima gemma (Antiphon for the Virgin)**

Resplendent jewel and unclouded brightness of the sunlight  
streaming through you,  
know that the sun is a fountain leaping from the father's heart,  
his all-fashioning word.  
He spoke and the primal matrix teemed with things unnumbered-  
but Eve unsettled them all.

To you the father spoke again but this time the word he uttered  
was a man in your body.  
Matrix of light!  
through you he breathed forth all that is good,  
as in the primal matrix he formed all that has life.<sup>305</sup>

#### **III. Hodie aperuit (Antiphon for the Virgin)**

Today a closed portal has opened to us the door  
the serpent slammed on a woman:  
the flower of the maiden Mary  
gleams in the dawn.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> In addition to providing poetic interpretations of the Hildegard texts, Barbara Newman has appointed different titles to the poems (in parentheses).

<sup>304</sup> Newman, 259.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid., 117.

#### **IV. O factura Dei (Song to the Redeemer)**

O handiwork of God, O human form divine!  
In great holiness you were fashioned,  
for the Holy One pierced the heavens in great humility  
and the splendor of God  
shone forth in the slime of the earth:  
the angels that minister on high  
see heaven clothed in humanity.<sup>307</sup>

#### **V. O ignis Spiritus Paracliti (Sequence for the Holy Spirit)**

Fiery Spirit, fount of courage, life within life of all that has being!  
Holy are you, transmuting the perfect into the real.  
Holy are you, healing the mortally stricken.  
Holy are you, cleansing the stench of wounds.  
O sacred breath O blazing love O savor in the breast and balm  
flooding the heart with the fragrance of good,  
O limpid mirror of God  
who leads wanderers home and hunts out the lost,  
Armor of the heart and hope of the integral body,  
sword-belt of honor: save those who know bliss!  
Guard those the fiend holds imprisoned, free those in fetters  
whom divine force wishes to save.  
O current of power permeating all in the heights  
upon the earth and in all deeps:  
you bind and gather all people together.  
Out of you clouds come streaming, winds take wing from you, dashing rain against stone;  
and ever-fresh springs well from you, washing the evergreen globe.  
O teacher of those who know,  
a joy to the wise is the breath of Sophia.  
Praise then be yours! you are the song of praise, the delight of life,  
A hope and a potent honor granting garlands of light.<sup>308</sup>

#### **VI. Laus Trinitati (Antiphon for the Trinity)**

To the Trinity be praise!  
God is music, God is life  
that nurtures every creature in its kind.

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<sup>307</sup> Newman, 263.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid., 149-151.

Our God is the song of the angel throng  
and the splendor of secret ways  
hid from all humankind,  
But God our life is the life of all.<sup>309</sup>

### **VII. O vos angeli (Responsory for the Angels)**

Angles that guard the nations  
(the form of them gleams in your faces),  
Archangels that welcome souls of the just,  
Thrones, dominations, principedoms, virtues, powers,  
reckoned in the mystic five,  
And cherubim, O seraphim, seal upon the secret things of God:  
All praise! you behold in the fountain the place of the everlasting heart.  
For your eyes are fixed on the father's pulse  
as on a face that breathes from his soul.  
All praise! you behold in the fountain the place of the everlasting heart.<sup>310</sup>

### **VIII. O speculum columbe (Antiphon for Saint John the Evangelist)**

O mirror of the dove, the all-chaste beauty,  
you who saw the secret largesse at its limpid source:  
O wondrous blossom, you who never withered, never faded,  
since the gardener of Eden planted you:  
O sweet refreshment in the sun's embraces:  
you are the Lamb's special son,  
beloved among the chosen friends of the age to come.<sup>311</sup>

### **IX. Nunc gaudeant (Antiphon for [the] Dedication of a Church)**

Let Mother Ecclesia sing for joy!  
Her children are found,  
she gathers them home to celestial harmony.  
But you, vile serpent, lie low!  
For those your jealousy held in its maw  
now shine in the blood of Christ.

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<sup>309</sup> Newman, 143.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid., 157.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid., 167.

Praise to our King,  
praise to the Highest!  
Alleluia.<sup>312</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> Newman, 253.



## Appendix B Consent Letters

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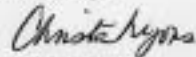
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## **Vita**

Teacher, conductor, and composer David N. Childs holds degrees from the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand, The Florida State University (Master of Music), and Louisiana State University (Doctor of Musical Arts). His teachers have included Professor Rodney Eichenberger, Dr. André Thomas, Professor Philip Spurgeon, Dr. Ken Fulton, Dr. Sara Lynn Baird, Professor Michael Buttermann, and Dr. Robert Peck. He is an active composer and clinician, and currently is Assistant Professor of Choral Studies at the Blair School of Music, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, where he has resided since 2000. He will be awarded the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in May of 2003.