

TOMÁS LUIS DE VICTORIA

Born 1548 in Avila, Spain; died 20 August 1611 in Madrid

Four Motets for Chorus

Tomás Luis de Victoria, the greatest composer of the Spanish Renaissance, was born in Avila and trained in the rudiments of music as a choirboy at the local cathedral. When his voice broke in 1565, he was sent to study at the Jesuit Collegio Germanico in Rome, where his teachers may have included Palestrina. Four years later he became organist and choirmaster at Santa Maria da Monserrato, a Spanish church in Rome. In 1571, he returned to the Collegio Germanico to teach, and later became choirmaster there. His first publications date from 1572, when he completed his training for the priesthood; he took holy orders in 1575. In 1578, perhaps influenced by the religious teachings of San Filippo Neri, Victoria joined the Oratory of the church of San Girolamo della Carità. In the dedication addressed to Philip II in his second book of Masses, published in 1583, he confessed a desire to return to Spain and lead a quiet priestly life. The Spanish king named him chaplain to his sister, the Dowager Empress Maria, who lived in retirement at a convent in Madrid. Victoria acted as the convent's choirmaster and served the Empress until her death in 1603; he then held the less arduous post of organist until his own death in 1611. Victoria's music comprises exclusively sacred vocal compositions — Masses, motets, hymns, Magnificats and offices — which are noted above all for their fervent, mystical expression.

Dum complerentur dies Pentecostes ("And When the Day of Pentecost Was Fully Come"), published in Venice in 1572 in Victoria's first book of motets, sets the responsory text based on Acts 2:1-2 for the Matins service of Pentecost, the seventh Sunday after Easter, which celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus' Apostles and other followers.

Dum complerentur dies Pentecostes
erant omnes pariter dicentes: Alleluia.

Et subito factus est sonus de caelo.
Alleluia.

Tamquam spiritus vehementis
et replevit totam domum. Alleluia.
Dum ergo essent in unum discipuli
congregati propter metum Judaeorum
sonus repente de caelo
venit super eos. Alleluia.

Tamquam spiritus vehementis
et replevit totam domum. Alleluia.

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come
they were all with one accord in one place
saying: Alleluia.

And suddenly there came a sound
from heaven. Alleluia.

As of a mighty rushing wind
and it filled all the house. Alleluia.
When therefore the disciples were gathered
together for fear of the Jewish people
suddenly a sound came upon them
from heaven. Alleluia.

As of a mighty rushing wind
and it filled all the house. Alleluia.

Surrexit pastor bonus ("The Good Shepherd Has Risen"), published in Venice in 1572 in Victoria's first book of motets, sets a celebratory text that has been associated both with the Communion of the Easter Mass and the Matins service of the following day.

Surrexit pastor bonus,
qui animam suam posuit pro ovibus suis,
et pro grege suo mori dignatus est.
Alleluia.

The good shepherd has risen,
who laid down his life for his sheep,
and deigned to die for his flock.
Alleluia

Victoria used his grand eight-voice setting of *Ave Maria* ("Hail Mary"), the traditional hymn asking for the intercession of the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus, to close his first published book of motets, issued in Venice in 1572. He valued the work highly enough to include it in an anthology of his works published in Madrid in 1600, to which he added a part for organ.

Ave Maria, gratia plena:

Hail Mary, full of grace:

Dominus tecum,
benedicta tu in mulieribus,
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,
ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

The Lord is with you,
you are blessed among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Victoria added his moving funeral motet *Versa est in luctum cithara mea* (“*My Harp Is Tuned for Lamentation*”), based on verses from the book of Job, to the traditional liturgy of the Requiem Mass that he composed in April 1603 in memory of his long-time patron, the Dowager Empress Maria, who had died on February 26th. The music for the entire service was issued as the *Officium Defunctorum* in 1605; it was his final publication.

Versa est in luctum cithara mea,
et organum meum in vocem flentium.
Parce mihi Domine,
nihil enim sunt dies mei.

My harp is tuned for lamentation,
and my flute to the voice of those who weep.
Spare me, O Lord,
for my days are as nothing.