

# Climbing the Musical Stairway to Heaven

## Texts and Translations

*Chant: Ut queant laxis*

**Ut** queant laxis  
**resonare** fibris  
**Mira** gestorum  
**famuli** tuorum,  
**Solve** polluti  
**Labii** reatum, Sancte Joannes.

So that your servants may freely  
sing forth the wonders  
of your deeds,  
remove all stain of guilt  
from their unclean lips,  
O Saint John.

*Michael Praetorius: Magnificat Ut re mi fa sol la*

Magnificat anima mea Dominum.  
Et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.

My soul doth magnify the Lord,  
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae:  
ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes  
generationes.

Because he hath regarded the low estate of his  
handmaiden: for behold: henceforth all generations  
shall call me blessed.

Quia fecit mihi magna,  
qui potens est,  
et sanctum nomen ejus.

For he has done for me great things,  
He who is powerful,  
and holy is his name.

Et misericordia ejus a progenie in progenies

And his mercy is on them from generation to

timentibus eum.

generation that fear him.

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo:  
dispersit superbos mente  
cordis sui.

He hath shown strength with his arm:  
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of  
their hearts.

Deposuit potentes de sede,  
et exaltavit humiles.

He hath put down the mighty from their seats,  
and exalted those of low degree.

Esurientes implevit bonis:  
et divites dimisit inanes.

He hath filled the hungry with good things:  
and the rich he hath sent empty away.

Suscepit Israel puerum suum  
recordatus misericordiae.  
Sicutus locutus est ad patres nostros,  
Abraham et semini ejus in saecula.

He hath helped his servant Israel,  
remembering his mercy.  
As he promised to our forefathers,  
Abraham and his seed, forever.

Gloria Patri, et filio, et spiritui sancto. Sicut erat in  
principio et nunc at semper,  
et in secula seculorum. Amen

Glory be to the father, and to the son, and to the  
holy spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and  
ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto.  
Sicut erat in principio,

Glory be to the Father...

*Josquin Desprez: Missa Hercules Dux Ferrariae : Kyrie I*

Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy.

*Josquin Desprez: Illibata Dei virgo nutrix*

Note from Bob: 'Illibata' reminds me of one of those novels where 'everything happens'. (Think 'Middlemarch'.) Kick-ass duets; rich tutti passages leading to cadences; a fixed ostinato cantus firmus (on solfege syllables, to boot); an extended meditative closing passage. It even includes the composer's name as an acrostic: Just read down the **bold** opening letters of the lyrics in the first part. (Remember that in Latin, J and I are interchangeable, as are U and V.) Plus the Sistine choir itself makes its own appearance in the motet: 'Strengthen us who sing 'La-mi-la' in your praise.' In the context of a Marian motet, and according to a tradition called 'soggetto cavato', 'La-mi-la' is to be identified with 'Ma-ri-a', the benefactress to whom the motet is addressed. The ostinato 'La-mi-la' is in the middle voice, and appears throughout in alternating hexachords, in successively shorter time frames, as Mary is ever more urgently invoked.

**I**llibata Dei virgo nutrix,  
**O**limpi tu regis o genitrix,  
**S**ola parens verbi puerpera,  
**Q**ue fuisti Eve reparatrix,  
**V**iri nephas tuta mediatrix,  
**I**llud clara luce dat scriptura.  
**N**ata nati alma genitura,  
**D**es ut leta musorum factura  
**P**revaleat ymis et sit ave,  
**R**oborando sonos ut guttura  
**E**fflagitent, laude teque pura  
**Z**elotica arte clament Ave.

**A**ve virginum,  
**D**ecus hominum  
**C**oelique porta,  
**A**ve lilium, flos humilium  
**V**irgo decora.

Spotless Virgin, nurse of God.  
O mother of the most high king,  
Whose womb alone brought forth the word,  
Who has made good the offense of Eve  
And stand sure advocate for her guilty mate;  
All this the scriptures clearly tell.  
Lady, born of your son to be his mother dear,  
Grant that, happily fashioned by the muses,our song  
may rise over all, and let it me 'hail'  
As with gathering sound our voices  
Make their heartfelt prayer, and in pure praise  
Let your 'Ave' be proclaimed with devoted heart.

Hail, of all virgins  
Born of men the crown,  
And gateway to heaven.  
Hail, lily, full flower of humility,  
Comely virgin.

Vale ergo, tota pulchra ut luna,  
Electa ut sol, clarissima gaude.  
Salve tu sola cum sola amica,  
Consola la mi la canentes in tua laude.  
Ave Maria, mater virtutum,  
Veniae vena, ave Maria,  
Gratia plena, Dominus tecum,  
Ave Maria, Mater virtutum.  
Amen.

Hail therefore, all-lovely as the moon,  
Preeminent as the sun, rejoice in your brilliance.  
Hail to you alone, our only companion,  
Strengthen us who sing our La-mi-la to your praise.  
Hail Mary, mother of virtues.  
Deep source of pardon. Hail Mary  
Full of grace, the Lord is with you.  
Hail Mary, Mother of virtues.  
Amen.

*Josquin Desprez: Ut Phebi radiis*

Ut Phebi radiis soror obvia sidera luna,  
Ut reges Salo mon sapientis nomine cunctos,  
Ut remi pontum quaerentum velleris aurum,  
Ut remi faber instar ha bens super aera pennas,  
Ut remi fassolva ces traducere merces,  
Petri currere prora,  
Sic super omne quod est regnas, o virgo Maria.

As the Moon, sister of Phoebus, rules with her rays the stars,  
As Solomon rules all kings in the name of the wise,  
As the oars of those in quest of the Golden Fleece rule the sea,  
As [Daedalus], with wings instead of oars, rules the upper air,  
As it is the task of the oar to convey perishable wares,  
As it is the destiny of the Peter's oar to steer one ship,  
So thou, O Virgin Mary, rulest over all that is.

Latius in numerum canit id quoque coelica turba,  
Lasso lege ferens aeterna munera mundo  
La sol fa ta mi na clara praelustris in umbra,  
La sol fa mi ta na dematre recentior ortus,  
La sol fa mi re ta quidem na non violata,  
Ut rore ta na Gedeon quo.

Everywhere the heavenly host in verse sings this also,  
Bringing gifts to a tired world according to Law Eternal:  
A radiant blossom [Jesus] in shelter quickened bright,  
A blossom born from a Mother, as from moistened fleece,  
A blossom, Thou, from fleece truly without blemish,  
A blossom from fleece (moistened) like Gideon's by the dew.

Rex o Christe Jesu nostri Deus alte memento.

O Christ Jesus, King, God on high, remember us.

*Josquin Desprez: Missa La sol fa re mi*

**Kyrie**

Kyrie eleison.  
Christe eleison.  
Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy.

**Gloria**

Gloria in excelsis Deo.  
Et in terra pax  
hominibus bonae voluntatis.  
Laudamus te, benedicimus te,  
adoramus te, glorificamus te.  
Gratias agimus tibi  
propter magnam gloriam tuam.  
Domine Deus, Rex coelestis,  
Deus Pater omnipotens.  
Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe.  
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei,  
Filius Patris.

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace  
to those of good will.  
We praise thee, we bless thee,  
we adore thee, we glorify thee.  
We give thanks to thee  
for thy great glory  
Lord God, heavenly king,  
God the Father almighty.  
The only-begotten Son, Lord Jesus Christ.  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
Son of the Father.

Qui tollis peccata mundi,  
suscipe deprecationem nostram.  
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,  
miserere nobis.

Who takes away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer.  
Who sittest at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy upon us.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus.  
Tu solus Dominus.

For thou alone art holy.  
Thou alone art the Lord.

Tu solus Altissimus,  
Jesu Christe.  
Cum Sancto Spiritu  
in gloria Dei Patris.  
Amen.

### **Sanctus**

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,  
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.  
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.  
Hosanna in excelsis.

### **Benedictus**

Benedictus qui venit  
in nomine Domini.  
Hosanna in excelsis.

### **Agnus Dei**

Agnus Dei,  
qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei,  
qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei,  
qui tollis peccata mundi:  
Dona nobis pacem.

Thou alone art most high,  
Jesus Christ.  
With the Holy Ghost  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

Holy, holy, holy,  
Lord God of hosts.  
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one that cometh  
in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.

Lamb of God,  
who takest away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God,  
who takest away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God,  
who takest away the sins of the world:  
Grant us peace.