

96954

BRILLIANT
CLASSICS

ALONSO
XUÁREZ

Sacred Music

amystis

José Duce Chenoll

Alonso Xuárez 1640-1696
Sacred Music

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|------|---------------------------------------|------|
| 1. Suscipe Domine a 7 | 3'33 | 9. Victimae paschali laudes a 6 | 2'55 |
| 2. Sitivit anima mea a 8 | 2'01 | 10. Memento mei Deus a 8 | 3'58 |
| 3. Vos qui secutis estis me a 8 | 2'00 | 11. Assumpsit Jesus discipulos a 8 | 2'16 |
| | | 12. Lamentatione Heremiae Prophetiae. | |
| | | Lectio I. Feria VI in Paresceve a 8 | 8'15 |
| | | 13. Surgam et circuibo a 9 | 2'12 |
| | | 14. Spiritus meus a 8 | 4'33 |
| | | 15. Magnificat de 8° tono a 8 | 5'56 |

Misa *Surge propera* a 7

- | | | | |
|--------------|------|--|--|
| 4. Kyrie | 2'54 | | |
| 5. Gloria | 3'40 | | |
| 6. Credo | 6'22 | | |
| 7. Sanctus | 1'31 | | |
| 8. Agnus Dei | 2'17 | | |

All the repertoire presented here is unpublished, a first recording.

amystis

Quiteria Muñoz* *soprano* · Carmina Sánchez *soprano*
Adriana Mayer *mezzo-soprano*

Gabriel Díaz *countertenor* · Myriam Arnouk *alto* · Jorge Juan Morata* *tenor*
José Manuel Bustamante *tenor* · Giorgio Celenza** *bass* · Ocidio Giménez *dulcian*
Manuel Vilas *harp* · María Alejandra Saturno *viola da gamba* · Ignasi Jordà *organ*

José Duce Chenoll *musical director*

All recorded music has been researched and transcribed
by musicologist José Luis de la Fuente Charfolé.

* Soloist on track 9

** Soloist on track 13

The *Center for Musical Research and Documentation* (CIDoM, a unit associated with the CSIC) is an institution of the University of Castilla-La Mancha focused on researching the musical heritage of the Iberian Peninsula during the Modern Age. Since 2009, our researchers have been recovering, cataloging, digitizing, and editing musical treasures contained in some of the most active musical centers of the Spanish Baroque period, especially those written by composers who worked at Toledo Cathedral, Cuenca Cathedral, Santa Maria de Talavera Collegiate Church, or San Lorenzo de El Escorial Monastery. Alongside this heritage recovery work, our center also carries out interdisciplinary projects focused on the relationships between music and literature, particularly during the Golden Age, with a special emphasis on how our Golden Age writers – Cervantes, Lope de Vega, Góngora, among others – bear witness to the exceptional musical activity of the time and, in turn, have their own works set to music by the most important masters of the Spanish court and chapels.

This intensive recovery work has allowed us to bring to light works by Francisco Juncá, Juan de Castro y Mallagaray, all of the *villancicos* or Christmas carols by Father Antonio Soler, or the complete works of Alonso Xuárez, as well as to offer the opportunity to study with the best specialists on the musical heritage of Castilla-La Mancha and on the musical relationships between Spain and Italy from the 16th century to the present day. Thanks to the competitive Proof of Concept project "The Musical Heritage of Modern Spain (17th-18th centuries): Transfer of Results and Social Outreach," granted by the Ministry of Science and Innovation (PDC2021-121092-C21), we are now able to take this essential step towards the transfer of scientific knowledge, such as this meticulous recording made by *Amystis* and their director José Duce based on the musical sources found in the Santa Maria and San Julián Cathedral in Cuenca, edited and recovered by Dr. José Luis de la Fuente Charfolé, thus culminating the ultimate goal of an active musicology with practical purposes: the restoration and re-entry onto the scene of the exceptional music that enriched a cultural legacy that is still in the process of being uncovered, as the listener and reader will observe in each of the

musical pieces included in this recording. As Cervantes wrote in *Don Quixote*, "Where there is music, there can be no evil" (II, XXXIV). Let our purpose thus be fulfilled with this exceptional look at the musical past of the city of Cuenca.

© *Paulino Capdepón Verdú*

Professor at the University of Castilla-La Mancha. Director of CIDoM

Juan José Pastor Comín

Professor of the University of Castilla-La Mancha. Co-Director of CIDoM

Biographical and Professional Sketch of Alonso Xuárez de la Fuente, chapel master of the Cuenca Cathedral.

Alonso Xuárez was born in Fuensalida (Toledo) on April 14, 1640. His parents, Juan Bautista Xuárez and Ana de la Fuente, were natives of Santorcaz, a town in the community of Madrid near Alcalá de Henares; his grandfathers, Torcuato Xuárez and Jerónimo de la Fuente, were also born in Santorcaz. Alonso had two siblings, Juan Bautista and Águeda Xuárez de la Fuente, who were also born in Fuensalida. These and other fundamental data were uncovered in 2012 as a result of the research carried out by the author of these notes, which made it possible to recover the birth certificate and the will of Alonso Xuárez, among other unpublished documents.

The first reference to the father of maestro Xuárez, Juan Bautista Xuárez, appears in a baptismal certificate dated March 18, 1636, as a witness to the baptism of a girl named Magdalena. Although the exact date of birth of Juan Bautista Xuárez is unknown, some of the information confirms that it must have occurred in 1610, whereby he would have begun his role as a sexton at the approximate age of 26, according to the 1673 visitor's book of the Toledo Diocesan Archives: "*Sachristan Juan Bapta Suarez, de edad de 63 años, casado*" [ADT, *Visitas. Caja M. 07, expediente 07, año 1673*]. [Sexton Juan Bapta Suarez, 63 years of age, married, ADT, Visits, Box M. 07, Record 07, 1673]

The lack of data does not allow us to conjecture as to how or where Alonso's first musical steps took place. It appears obvious that he was instructed by his father, both in plainchant and in the rudiments of counterpoint and organ, this being knowledge that was required of anyone who served as a sexton. It is evident that he possessed a natural gift for music, at least enough to be admitted in the workshop of Tomás Micieces sometime before 1659, a training that continued in Madrid, when Micieces held the chaplaincy and *magisterium* of Las Descalzas in 1662.

Upon conclusion of his apprenticeship, Alonso Xuárez accompanied his master to Madrid, where the latter took up his post as chaplain of the monastery of Las Descalzas Reales in 1662; on September 3, 1664, the musician from Fuensalida was appointed chapel master of Cuenca Cathedral, a position he would hold uninterruptedly for twenty-three years.

The last three years of this period (from November 1673 to the first third of 1675) were very problematic in terms of internal discipline in the chapel, leading to a series of events that affected the maestro both personally and professionally: one can only guess the reasons as to why, on June 22, 1675, Xuárez took leave of the teaching post in Cuenca to join the Sevillian church as the successor of the Murcian musician Miguel Tello. When the vacancy arose, the Chapter ordered the abbot to verify and update the state of the books by inventory: because of this, we know that the Toledo-born musician took a good part of his production to Seville and we also have knowledge of the works that remained in Cuenca.

Alonso Xuárez was appointed chapel master of Seville Cathedral on April 29th, 1675, where he remained for nine years. According to the librarian of the Colombina, Juan de Loaysa, his compositions were highly regarded by both the canons and the parishioners, especially the motets for Advent and Lent.

The contrasted documentation has enabled us to determine that, from Seville, Alonso Xuárez intervened with certain frequency in the different musical arrangements of Cuenca Cathedral. The data confirm the existence of a close contact

between the maestro of Fuensalida and some members of the Cuenca chapter, whose purpose was none other than to facilitate Xuárez's return to Cuenca: a fact that the Toledo-born maestro accepted in writing on September 6, 1683, although it did not become effective until July 6, 1684.

According to the Hispanic scholar Robert Stevenson, this new period in Cuenca started off on a very bad note for Alonso, as he had just returned from Seville when Ana de la Fuente, his mother, who had accompanied him during the entire period in Seville, died. From the survey of the notarial protocols, it is clear that during this period the maestro was very active in the management and administration of the recently founded school of San José de infantes de Coro, of which he was the first rector.

The few documentary references on the musical activity of the Toledo maestro from 1684 onwards are recurrent and disjointed, relating mainly to the admission and dismissal of singers and minstrels: events linked to a daily activity with no extraordinary events. In this context of daily life, musical obligations, teaching and management, Alonso Xuárez died on June 6th, 1696, almost a month after the queen, Mariana of Austria, and the same year that his disciple Sebastián Durón premiered the work *Salirel amor del mundo*. News of his death spread quickly, as did his works throughout the different Spanish kingdoms. Burgos, Cádiz, Jerez, Las Palmas, Salamanca, Segovia, and Valencia, among other places, acknowledged the musician's death. He was succeeded in his teaching post in Cuenca by his pupil, Julián Martínez Díaz, maestro in Jerez.

The polychoral style of Alonso Xuárez

The polychoral archetype in which Alonso Xuárez's compositions evolve evokes compositional mechanisms adapted to his time, tamed in a certain way by topical, formal, and harmonic elements -also common in the secular repertoire-, spiced with

some instrumental traces of clear Italian influence. The mechanism is conceptually distant from contrapuntal intellectualism, as well as from the monumentality of the compositions for four or five choruses by Francesco Cortezza, Thomas Tallis or Orazio Benevoli. In spite of this, the elegance of its lines and the solidity of its structure invest this music with a great purity of expression, defined by the rhetorical emphasis with which the music embraces and underlines the meaning of the text.

Alonso Xuárez's polychoral nature is eclectic and reflects a relational distribution between groups of singers, in a similar way to the ceremonies associated to the *Triduum Sacrum*, consisting more of an interplay of distribution between the different vocal arrangements – that the composer adjusted to the human means at his disposal – than a composition in which space is one more conditioning factor in the compositional process. Pieces for more than three choirs are exceptional for Xuárez, with most of his pieces written in symmetrical arrangements in two distinct choirs (treble and mixed voices). It is well known that the first choir was intended for a reduced number of paid singers. This preference for asymmetry is evident in pieces for five, seven, nine and eleven voices, with the use of a style that straddles strict antiphony and a lesser developed permanent imitative counterpoint. Here, the interplay of contrasts lends interest to the textures; the polyphony is simplified either through the intervention of soloists, who can define a choir in their own right, or through choirs differentiated either by timbre – including the instrumental couplets of shawms or *bajoncillos* – or by density, in relation to the number of members or parts.

Accompaniment is another fundamental characteristic element of the Spanish Baroque period, particularly in the case of sacred music. In Cuenca Cathedral, the organs, together with the harpsichord and harp, shared this function of reinforcing voices, except during Lent and Holy Week, festivities in which the organ was barred from intervening in liturgical ceremonies. The motets frequently feature accompaniments composed for harp or harpsichord rather than for organ; sometimes the accompaniment is even left unspecified, as is the case of the *Missa Surge propera*.

This was commonly the case when said part was intended to lead rather than be played. According to the inventory commissioned after Alonso Xuárez's departure to Seville, in 1675 the music chapel of Cuenca Cathedral had in its possession a harpsichord "made in Cologne" and an "ancient" three-order harp, both of which had been donated by canon Alonso del Pozo Palomino.

Musical selection: peculiarities

All of the selected pieces are property of the Chapter Archive of Cuenca Cathedral, and constitute an unpublished sample, sufficiently varied, rigorous and adapted to the vocal and instrumental resources required for the historically informed interpretation of this repertoire. In total, the following eleven compositions have been selected from among the one hundred and five pieces contained in the seven volumes that comprise the *integral conquense*, materials published by Alpuerto since 2013 as part of the *Investigación y Patrimonio Musical* collection, supported by the Center for Music Research and Documentation, a unit associated with the CSIC. The Mass based on the motet *Surge prospera* [E-CU, II-4] is one of the two unpublished polychoral masses kept in the Archive of the capital of Cuenca. The parts contained therein comprise the *Ordo Missae*, i.e. the standard chants of the Roman rite: *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Credo*, *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei*. It is a beautiful construction based on the solmization of the hexachord [D-F] within the second tone indicators.

The motet *Assumpsit Jesus discipulos* [E-CU, XX-14], an antiphon of the *Dominica 2^a in Quadragesima* and of the Transfiguration of the Lord, the textual source of which is the pericope of the Gospel of St. Luke [Lk. 18: 31-33], complements the recording; in addition, a *Lamentación 1^a de Miércoles Santo* [E-CU, XXV-15] from the *Sacred Triduum* has been included. From the versions of the *Magnificat* found in the Vespers, *Magnificat Tone 8* [E-CU, XXIII-23] has been selected.

The pieces selected from the *Officium Defunctorum* are Psalm 129, *Memento mei*

Deus [E-CU, XXVII-11]; the eight-voice motet, *Sitivit anima mea ad Deum* [E-CU, XXVII-17], a verse pertaining to the Offertory antiphon of the Mass for the Dead; the invitatory *Spiritus meus* [E-CU, XVII-28] from the *1st Lesson of the 3rd Nocturne*; and the six-voice motet for the day of the dead *Suscipe Domine* [E-CU-XXVII-15], in which the text reproduces another of the verses of the Offertory of the Mass for the Dead.

The last works included are the following: the motet *Surgam et circuibo* [E-CU, XIII-13] for nine voices, used in the procession of St. Julian, from the *Canticum Canticorum* (Chap. III: 587-588); the Sequence for Easter, *Victimae paschallaudes* [E-CU, XIX-2], for six voices; and finally, the eight-voice motet of St. Barnabas, *Vos qui secutis estis me* [E-CU, XVI-36], from the Common of Apostles and Evangelists.

These pieces provide a comprehensive and adequate overview of Alonso Xuárez's compositional and expressive talent, consisting mostly of unpublished pages that, stripped of their immediate functionality, are full of freshness and beauty. This premiere international recording illustrates and completes previous musicological recovery efforts of Alonso Xuárez's works.

© Ph. D. José Luis de la Fuente Charfolé

Regarding the cover

Although it may seem somewhat paradoxical, in a record release, the image is usually the prelude to the sound; since our beginnings at Amystis, we have tried to establish a direct connection between the image and the music. Thus, we have always sought to tell the story behind the sound element in such a way that the meaning of the subject at hand and its subsequent investigation can be understood clearly at a glance. In this way, our work is intended to be attractive both for the music lover who finds us by chance as well as for the avid seeker of new contributions to the Hispanic repertoire of the Renaissance and Baroque periods.

In our fifth recording for Brilliant Classics, we present a previously unpublished

work by a little-known, yet valuable composer: Alonso Xuárez. Once again, the need to delve into the Hispanic archives, in this case cathedral archives, becomes evident, in order to restore the voice of repertoires that should have never been lost and thus expand the repertoire of Spanish music for the benefit of performers and listeners alike.

Thinking of this return to the light, of this tireless work of musicologists and performers to make dormant musical sources thrill audiences once again, I thought it appropriate to use an image captured with an infrared camera. The infrared technique uses body heat to generate a different light, that is, it captures the light produced by the accumulation of energy, so that what at first glance had a certain appearance, when viewed through this prism, shows us a new world hidden from our eyes. It seemed to me a wonderful metaphor to reflect this change of state in the historical musical sources, which, thanks to the warmth infused by the members of Amystis, have acquired a new light that makes them shine beyond the darkness of the archives.

The use of elements from nature to complete the symbolism of the cover has not been chosen at random. Although it is a recurring image, it is no less powerful to use trees as a metaphor for the connection between heaven and earth, the corporeal and the spiritual. Is this not what sacred repertoires are all about? I thus hope that the listener will approach our work with a special predisposition motivated by this beautiful visual stimulus.

© José Duce Chenoll



Amystis was founded by José Duce Chenoll in 2010 with the aim of sharing his passion for vocal and instrumental music of the Spanish Renaissance and Baroque periods. Since its beginnings, the group has combined musicological research with performance development, focusing on the recovery and dissemination of unpublished repertoires written by Spanish composers throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The result of this work are four recordings distributed internationally by Brilliant Classics: *Moratales que amáis*, *complete vocal music* by Joan Baptista Cabanilles; *O Pretiosum*, *music for the Blessed Sacrament* by Juan Bautista Comes, *Ecos del Parnaso*, *Spanish Madrigals* and *De Ribera & Navarro: Masters of the Spanish Renaissance*. This last recording was a finalist in the prestigious ICMA awards for best musical recovery work and winner of the Carles Santos Awards for Valencian music.

With the purpose of recreating sounds lost in time, Amystis has remained faithful to a historically informed practice, respecting historical sources and following the treatises of each era, while reinventing and exploring new forms in order to please an continuously changing audience.

If there is one thing that characterizes Amystis, it is its purely vocal training, accompanied by historical instruments depending on the repertoire, which over the years has produced a very characteristic sound and led to a way of understanding music based on respect for the text and its rhetoric.

Discography

Mortales que amáis, Joan Baptista Cabanilles Complete vocal music (Brilliant Classics, 94781)

Juan Bautista Comes, *O Pretiosum*, Music for the Blessed Sacrament (Brilliant Classics, 95231)

Ecos del Parnaso, Spanish Madrigals (Brilliant Classics 95905) (Semi-finalist for the ICMA 2020 awards)

De Ribera & Navarro: Masters of the Spanish Renaissance (Brilliant Classics 96409) (Winner of the Carles Santos Valencian Music Award 2022. Finalist for the ICMA Awards 2023)

www.amystis.com – info.amystis@amystis.com



Upon completion of his studies in piano and chamber music, **José Duce Chenoll** obtained a professional degree in singing and musical language, complementing his training with studies in choral conducting, singing, repertoire, Gregorian chant, musicology, organ, and harpsichord.

He also obtained a Master's degree in Ancient Music from the Polytechnic University of Valencia and was awarded a PhD *cum laude* from the UCLM in Research in Humanities, Arts, and Education with his work *La obra vocal de Juan Bautista Cabanilles*

en su contexto. Una reflexión sobre la práctica musical histórica [The Vocal Works of Juan Bautista Cabanilles in their Context: A Reflection on the Practice of Historical Music].

As a career civil servant of the faculty of music and performing arts of the Generalitat Valenciana, he complements his work through collaborations as an accompanying pianist and continuo player, both with soloists as well as with groups such as the *Orquesta del Mediterráneo* or the Valencia Cathedral Choir, with which he has produced several recordings, both as an organist and as a singer. He serves as part of the support staff both for the Valencia Cathedral Choir and the Choir of the Generalitat Valenciana.

Acknowledgements to:

*The Illustrious Chapter of Cuenca Cathedral;
the Honorable City Council of Requena;
Paulino Capdepón Verdú and Juan José Pastor Comín
for placing their trust in me and in Amystis to carry out this project;
José Luis de la Fuente Charfolé for all his work,
research, and help during the recording process.*

*A special thanks, with all my love, to Inma Ruiz Valdés
for all her help and support, without which it would be impossible
to balance my family life with my creative endeavors.
A special mention to my daughter, Jimena Duce Ruiz,
who has sacrificed her time so that her father can continue working
on what he loves most.*

This CD is the sound culmination of the project "The musical heritage of modern Spain (17th-18th centuries): Transfer of results and social projection". Proof of Concept Projects. Ministry of Science and Innovation. PDC2021-121092-C21



Recording: April 2023, Hermitage of San Sebastián, Requena, Valencian Community, Spain
Produced by Amystis chamber choir & musicological society
Artistic direction: José Duce Chenoll
Sound engineer: Alfred Fernández Pons
Cover: © Susana Mar
Artist photos: © Revelarte
English translation: Laura Gatzkiewicz and Julia Sanz
© & © 2023 Brilliant Classics