



Infotext *Carmina Burana Today*, nemu records

The "Carmina Burana" are a collection of songs from around 1230 which contains European repertoire of the 12th and 13th century. The manuscript has been named in modern times after its discovery site, the Benediktbeuern monastery. Today it is part of the Munich State Library.

The Carmina Burana offer a repertoire that refers to the cathedral schools in various episcopal cities in Europe. Their graduates often found no employment and roamed the countryside as so-called goliards or *vagantes*. In keeping with the tradition of the *vagantes*, the collection contains texts that are both respectful and disrespectful of ecclesiastical and liturgical traditions. The songs are addressed to a more highly educated audience, which also understood satirical allusions to the genres of ancient poets and to images of Christian theology.

For decades, there have been various reconstruction approaches and methods to bring the songs of the original manuscript of the Carmina Burana, which were thought to be lost, back to sonorous life. At the beginning of the 20th century, the process of musicological reappraisal began. The most important method here is the search for concordances, i.e. identical pieces in other, partly later manuscripts, as well as the tracing of contrafacta, i.e. songs with a similar text structure and a corresponding melody that can also be used for a special poem in the Carmina Burana. Likewise, the inclusion of the lineless neume notation under a fifth of the Benediktbeuren texts is helpful for a wide variety of melody recovery procedures. There are also very promising mixed forms of reconstruction methods, especially when dealing with fragments that still require melodic completion. In this program we also use semi-improvisatory invention techniques based on knowledge of the verse schemes and the corresponding recitation formulas. Thus a coherent melodic shape can be developed - but it does not claim to represent the only possible reconstruction. An example of this method is "O fortuna", which has survived only as a text. The verses agree metrically to a large extent with the spiritual hymn "Pange lingua" by the early medieval poet Venantius Fortunatus. The connection between the Fortunatus - hymn and the song from the Carmina Burana must have been obvious to the *vagantes*. So we present the song in the guise of this simple Gregorian hymn!

The program presents an assemblage of monophonic modal chants from the Carmina Burana accompanied by harp, fiddle and transverse flute. Contrast this with music for the loud-sounding

Alta Capella additionally with percussion and bagpipes. Together, the two ensembles present polyphonic works closely related to the monophonic neumated versions of the original manuscript.

The Carmina Burana contain a variety of texts on different themes. We focus on the protest against the avarice of the clergy. Furthermore, springtime love poetry plays a role as a secondary theme in a series of extraordinary women's stanzas. In part, such texts were apparently misunderstood in the past; for example, Carl Orff fantasized that a "Queen of England" was lying in the arms of the longing singer - whereas in reality it was clearly the "King of England".

In the case of an anonymous goliard, the bilingual accusation "Audientes audiant, listen, the shame drives all over the land" is directly connected with the request for an appropriate remuneration of the minstrels: "You free-spirited clerics, notice how it is: 'Pray, and it will be given to you!' You should always leave the door open for us needy vagabonds, so you will gain a home in heaven and in eternal joy. But only so!" Another anonymous singer "cries aloud: the full belly is safe. [...] His church is the heavenly-smelling kitchen" - and this is sung to the famous tune of Walther von der Vogelweide's Palaestinalied. Here the greedy hunger of the vagabond and the stinginess of the giver are sarcastically interwoven: the "pure land" degenerates into a sinful land of milk and honey.

What particularly distinguishes Carmina Burana is a kaleidoscopic versatility of genres and a wonderfully imaginative intermingling of light and heavy repertoire, of the banal and the serious, of dance and contemplative songs, of loud and soft. Today one would say this collection covers a spectrum from serious music to light music. Protest song and youthful love poetry have obviously always been very close to each other.

Norbert Rodenkirchen, 2021

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Tempus transit

Text: Carmina Burana 153

from: Manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (12th ct.)

Hoerstu friunt

Text: Carmina Burana 48

Musick: Carmina Burana; Neum-transcription by von Norbert Rodenkirchen

Alte clamat

Text: Carmina Burana 211

Music: Palästinalied »Nu alrest« of Walther von der Vogelweide, from: Manuscript Münster, Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen / Staatsarchiv (13th ct.)

Ab estatis

Text: Carmina Burana 161, Verse in „Vagantenzeile“

Music: „Ecce torpet probitas“, version Cambridge 12. Jh., Transcription: Norbert Rodenkirchen.

Musa venit

Text: Carmina Burana 145

Music: »Fulget dies celebris«, from: Manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (12th ct.)

Deus largus in naturis

Text: Carmina Burana 10*, Manuscript München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek

Music: »Cleri cetus«, from: Codex Las Huelgas (13. Jahrhundert)

Audientes audiant

Text: Carmina Burana 218

Music: Rekonstruktion Norbert Rodenkirchen

Curritur ad vocem

Music: Conductus »Crucifigat«, from: Manuscript Florenz, Biblioteca mediceo-laurenziana

Transcription: Ian Harrison

Congaudentes ludite

Music: monophonic conductus »Festa dies agitur«, Egerton Chansonier, LOB

Instrumental version, flute solo

O fortuna velut luna

Text: Carmina Burana 17

Music: »Pange lingua«, Hymn of Venantius Fortunatus (6./7th ct.)

In seculum viellatoris

Music: »In seculum«, Hoquetus 4

Transcription: Norbert Rodenkirchen

Ich wil truren

Text: Carmina Burana 180

Music: Rekonstruktion Norbert Rodenkirchen

Please note: No English translations are available for the CD booklet, but please also look at the German Booklet PDF, containing translations to modern High German!