

# Guillaume Du Fay

Opera Omnia 01/01

## Alma redemptoris mater 1

Edited by Alejandro Enrique Planchart



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# Guillaume Du Fay

## Opera Omnia

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Cantus 1  
Al

Cantus 2  
Al

Tenor  
Al

7

ma re - demp - to - - -

ma re - demp -

ma re - demp - to - ris

13

ris ma - - - ter, quae per - - vi - - -

to - ris ma - - - ter, quae per - - vi - - -

ma - - - ter, quae per - - vi - - -

19

a cae - - - cae - - - li Por - - -

a cae - - - cae - - - li Por - - -

a cae - - - cae - - - li Por - - -

25

- - ta ma - - - nes,

- - ta ma - - - nes,

- - ta ma - - - nes,

31

et stel - - - - - la ma - - - - -

et stel - - - - - la ma - - - - -

et stel - - - - - la ma - - - - -

37

ris, Suc - cur - - - re ca - den - - - ti sur - ge -

ris, Suc - cur - - - re ca - den - - - ti sur - ge -

ris, Suc - cur - - - re ca - den - - - ti sur - ge -

43

re qui cu - - - rat po - - - pu - lo. tu quae -

re qui cu - - - rat po - - - pu - lo. tu quae -

re qui cu - - - rat po - - - pu - lo. tu quae -

50

ge - nu - i - - - - sti Na - tu - - - ra mi - ran - -

ge - nu - i - - - - sti Na - tu - - - ra mi - ran - -

ge - nu - i - - - - sti Na - tu - - - ra mi - ran - -

57

te tu - um san - - - ctum ge - - - ni - to - rem:

te tu - um san - - - ctum ge - - - ni - to - rem:

te tu - um san - - - ctum ge - - - ni - to - rem:

64

70

76

81

86

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## Sources

Q15 (I), fols. A 260v-261r, R 231v-232r, M 257, “du fay.” Full black notation with void coloration and flagged semiminims. Separation barline in the contratenor before measure 31 but nowhere else in the piece. Text in all parts.

BU, pp. 64-65, “G. du fay.” Full black notation with void coloration and flagged semiminims. Text in all parts.

Leipzig 1084, fols. 230v-231r. Two copies of the tenor, one in white notation, and another in central European chant notation. Incipits only.<sup>1</sup>

## Clefs and mensurations

		1	20	31	64
Cantus 1	c1	-	♩, Q15, BU	○, Q15, BU	♩, Q15, BU
Cantus 2	c3♭	-	-	○, Q15, BU	♩, Q15, BU
Tenor	c3♭	♩, Q15	-	○, Q15, BU	♩, Q15, BU

## Text

Alma redemptoris mater, quae pervia caeli Porta manes, et stella maris succurre cadenti Surgere qui curat populo: tu quae genuisti, Natura mirante, tuum sanctum genitorem: Virgo prius ac posterius, Gabrielis ab ore Sumens illud Ave, peccatorum miserere.	Loving mother of the Redeemer, who are the open Door of heaven and the star of the sea, help the people, Fallen but striving to rise up. You, who to the Astonishment of nature gave birth to your own creator, Virgin before and after, who heard the “Ave” from the mouth of Gabriel, have mercy upon the sinners.
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The plainsong is in the tenor. In the modern liturgy the *Alma redemptoris* is sung at the end of Compline from Saturday before the first Sunday in Advent until the second vespers of the Purification (February 2). In the middle ages its function varied considerable, either as part of the suffrages for the Virgin, as part of the series of antiphons, for one her feasts, usually the Assumption or the Nativity, at the end of Compline, as in the modern liturgy, or as part of a procession. In this last manner it was often included in a number of special offices endowed by benefactors of a given church, which specifically call for the singing of “the Alma” or “the Salve.” Du Fay’s setting probably was intended for such special offices, which became very frequent in the fifteenth century.

The text is in hexameters; both it and melody had been traditionally ascribed to Hermannus Contractus (1013-54), but the most recent scholarship makes his authorship of the piece improbable.

The use of ♩ in the cantus (measures 20-30) calls for a 4:3 acceleration of the semibreve against ♩; I have retained the same rate of reduction in the transcription.

The ending of the work is notated with a series of longs and breves with *coronae* separated by breve rests. It is possible that it the music was intended indeed as “measured chant,” but the parts are notated inconsistently not only between the two sources but within each source. The original notation in both sources is given at the end of the notes (see Example 1).

The edition provides a conflation following the majority reading for each verticality. It is an open question whether the note values were intended to be strictly observed in this case or whether the music was to be sung as a kind of synchronized *cantus planus*. A tradition of such *cantus planus* in two and three parts survived in northern Italy and southern Germany and in Eastern Europe well into the fifteenth century.

Some scholars have raised the possibility that the *coronae* were intended to provide a locus for improvised ornamentation;<sup>2</sup> this is not impossible, but the medieval references are too unclear and contradictory and thus far all

<sup>1</sup> Facsimile of fol. 231r in Tom Ward, “Music in the Library of Johannes Klein,” *Music in the German Renaissance, Sources, Styles, and Contexts*, ed. John Kmetz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 67.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Warren, “Punctus Organi and Cantus Coronatus in the Music of Dufay,” *Papers Read at the Dufay Quincentenary Conference, Brooklyn College, December 6-7, 1974*, ed. Allan W. Atlas (New York: Brooklyn College Music Department, 1976), 128-143.

modern attempts at such ornamentation I have heard sound very unsatisfactory. Robert Nosow, instead argues for careful attention to the mensural notation of such endings.<sup>3</sup>

Example 1

The image displays two examples of mensural notation for the ending of the motet 'Alma redemptoris mater' by Guillaume Du Fay. Each example consists of three staves (Soprano, Alto, and Tenor) with mensural notation and Latin lyrics. The lyrics are: 're Su - mens il - lud A - ve, pec - ca - to - rum mi - se - re - re.' The first example is labeled 'Q15' and the second 'BU 2216'. The notation shows various rhythmic values and rests, with some notes having flags or beams. The lyrics are written below the staves, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Nosow, "The Florid and Equal-Discantus Motet Styles of Fifteenth-Century Italy," Ph.D. Dissertation (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1992), 156, note 6.