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The Iconic One-Hit Wonder: The History and Reception of Franz Biebl's Ave Maria

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THE ICONIC ONE-HIT WONDER:
THE HISTORY AND RECEPTION OF FRANZ BIEBL'S *AVE MARIA*

by

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THE ICONIC ONE-HIT WONDER:
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University of Nebraska, 2017

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Franz Biebl's *Ave Maria* is one of the most well-known small-scale choral pieces written in the latter half of the twentieth century. Since its introduction to American choirs in 1970, it has become an important part of the standard choral repertoire and is often performed perennially, especially at Christmas. It was integral to the rise in popularity of Chanticleer, the American professional male chorus, and remains closely associated with the ensemble thanks to it being recorded and published in the United States under Chanticleer's auspices. Despite these facts, very little has been written about the composer or his iconic setting of the ancient prayer to the Virgin. This project attempts to collect currently available biographical and historical information from sources in Germany and the United States and to reveal new discoveries from personal interviews and previously unpublished letters and recordings. I begin with a comprehensive biography of the composer and the circumstances surrounding the composition of the *Ave Maria*. I then provide a musical analysis of the piece, uncovering its formal design and signature harmonies. A chronicle of the *Ave Maria*'s reception in the United States follows, with attention paid to its "discovery" by American collegiate glee clubs, its close association with Chanticleer, and its role in an important legal battle.

I conclude with anecdotes and reflections pertaining to the *Ave Maria* that attempt to help explain why the piece has been so impactful to countless choirs and their audiences.

This document is dedicated to Eugene Wilson, Dr. Robert Larsen, Anne Larson,
Dr. Maria DiPalma, Dr. Peter Seymour, Yvonne Seymour, Joseph Jennings,
Roberta Whittington, Dr. Marika Kuzma, Dr. Joey Martin, Donald Fraser,
Dr. Peter Eklund and The 7, who all demanded excellence
and would suffer nothing less.

I offer my gratitude to Professors Pamela Starr, Clark Potter and Anita Breckbill
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for his exceptional proofreading skills.

“I am just a composer of little songs.”

- Franz Biebl (1906-2001)

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INTRODUCTION

There is little compelling reason why any American choral musician should be familiar with Franz Biebl—a mid-twentieth century, Bavarian composer of mostly folk song arrangements and simple part-songs in the German Romantic style. However, it is rare that any choral musician or lover of choral music has not heard of him. During their “Voices of Spring” choral month, classicalMPR—the division of Minnesota Public Radio known for its promotion of choral music—ran an online poll asking listeners to vote for their favorite choral compositions of all time. For three years in a row, from 2013-2015, a work by Franz Biebl ranked among the top twelve—coming in as high as number two in 2013.¹ How did this obscure German composer achieve international fame? Why is Biebl found, often perennially, on choral programs world-wide? How did he become synonymous with the Christmas season? And, why is he known for causing deeply emotional experiences for his fans?

His fame is due to a single composition: a repetitive, relatively simple, six-minute-long setting of an often-used liturgical text. An oddity—scored for seven-part double male chorus a cappella—it should have been relegated to the dusty archives of a small, regional music publishing house in northwestern Germany. The story of its composition is as unlikely as its introduction into the close-knit world of America’s Ivy

¹ Minnesota Public Radio, “The Choral Countdown Revealed!” classicalMPR, April 30, 2013, accessed March 15, 2017, <http://www.classicalmpr.org/story/2013/04/30/the-choral-countdown-revealed>; Minnesota Public Radio, “Choral Countdown 2014: Your top 25,” classicalMPR, April 20, 2014, accessed March 15, 2017, <http://www.classicalmpr.org/story/2014/04/30/choral-countdown-2014-your-top-25>; Minnesota Public Radio, “Choral Countdown 2015: Your top 25,” classicalMPR, April 30, 2015, accessed March 15, 2017, <http://www.classicalmpr.org/story/2015/04/30/choral-countdown-2015-your-top-25>.

League glee clubs. The composition's break-through moment was largely serendipitous, and catapulted a fledgling, all-male, professional American choral ensemble onto the world stage.

This “little song” (as Biebl humbly referred to his compositions²) is his *Ave Maria (Angelus Domini)* (referred to henceforth as simply the *Ave Maria*). The *Ave Maria* was originally scored for double male chorus (TTB/TTBB or soli trio TTB and chorus TTBB), and was subsequently published in three additional arrangements. It became one of the most ubiquitous small-scale, a cappella choral pieces performed in the United States since its publication here in 1992. The intent of this paper is to address the following questions: Who was Franz Biebl? Why did he write a setting of the *Ave Maria*? How did his *Ave Maria* come to the United States? What caused Biebl's *Ave Maria* to become one of the most popular choral pieces in American choral repertoire? How has this *Ave Maria* influenced musical culture—from the micro-culture of individual choirs to the macro-culture of national legal discourse? Why does it continue to have lasting appeal? And, Why did he never repeat this achievement?

Without exaggeration, my life is tethered to Biebl's *Ave Maria*. I was one of the lucky few to sing it under the direction of Weston Noble in the Iowa All-State Chorus during the fall of 1990. That same year, the professional male choral ensemble, Chanticleer recorded and released the *Ave Maria* on the Christmas album, *Our Heart's Joy*. The recording quickly became Chanticleer's biggest seller.³ After the sheet music

² Wilbur Skeels, “Outstanding Features of Franz Biebl's Works,” Cantus Quercus Press, last modified 1998, accessed March 20, 2017, <https://web.archive.org/web/20110716141225/http://www.cantusquercus.com/features.htm>.

³ Christine Bullin, General Director of Chanticleer, e-mail message to the author, March 23, 2017.

was published in the United States by Hinshaw Music as part of the Chanticleer Choral Series, the *Ave Maria* and Chanticleer became inextricably associated, even though the piece had enjoyed a rich performance history in the United States long before it became a part of Chanticleer's repertoire.

I was but one of many who fell in love with both Chanticleer and the *Ave Maria* during the last decade of the twentieth century. It was therefore one of my life's greatest pleasures and challenges to find myself, at the turn of the twenty-first century, a member of Chanticleer and tasked with singing the piece that, for so many years, had nurtured my musical soul and instilled in me an image of what truly beautiful choral composition and performance could be. I have sung the *Ave Maria* in hundreds of live performances and am regularly asked to conduct it thanks to my unique and lengthy history with the piece. It seemed only fitting that I should dedicate the current focus of my research to this man and this music that has had such an enormous impact on my life.

To date, the most extensive compilation of information about Franz Biebl and his music was done by Rev. Dr. H. Wilbur Skeels (1938-2011).⁴ His research is accessible from the website of Skeels' former publishing company, Cantus Quercus Press. The website was a work in progress when Rev. Skeels passed, but his compilation of Biebl's compositional output is the most complete in existence. Rev. Skeels knew Biebl personally and his website contains many anecdotes and other personal information that is unavailable from other sources. His biography of Biebl's life and short "Program Note" on the *Ave Maria* are often quoted and reprinted.

⁴ In an email to the author dated June 12, 2017, Barbara Wildt, the granddaughter of the *Ave Maria*'s original publisher, confirms that Skeels and Biebl were close contacts and acknowledges him as a reliable source.

Other than two short tributes published in the German journal *Lied und Chor: Zeitschrift für das Chorwesen* commemorating Biebl's seventieth and eightieth birthdays, there is very little written about Biebl's life and work, even on the websites of Biebl's various German publishers. The entry for Franz Biebl on German Wikipedia is a good compilation of available biographical information, and yet it contains less than 600 words. There is currently no entry for Franz Biebl in the *Grove Encyclopedia of Music and Musicians*—including their frequently-updated online service.⁵

The limited amount of available information is disproportionate with the enormous impact Biebl's *Ave Maria* has had on the choral music genre. By compiling the little information already available, identifying new primary-source material, and interviewing key individuals associated with the *Ave Maria*'s introduction into the choral repertoire, this paper intends to expand the current written account of Franz Biebl and his *Ave Maria*, and to provide a comprehensive discussion of the composer and his music.

⁵ As of June 4, 2017.

CHAPTER 1

FRANZ BIEBL: THE PEOPLE'S COMPOSER

Franz Biebl was born in 1906 in the tiny village of Pursruck, located in the Upper Palatinate (Oberfalz) district of Bavaria—the eleventh child of Johann and Katharina Biebl. He spent “a few years in elementary school” before enrolling in the Humanistische Gymnasium in the nearby town of Amberg. Biebl lost his oldest brother to the First World War in 1917 and his father to ill health in 1921. Due to the financial strain of these events, Biebl knew he could not expect support from his family to attend university. After graduating from the Gymnasium in 1925, Biebl worked for a year to earn the money for enrollment in Munich’s Hochschule für Musik und Theater. He began his studies there in the fall of 1926.⁶ Possessing “a spontaneous musical talent,”⁷ he studied composition with Joseph Haas and Siegmund von Hausegger, conducting with Heinrich Knappe, and Catholic church music with Ludwig Berberich.⁸ In 1932, Biebl found employment as the choir director at the parish church of St. Maria in the Thalkirchen borough of Munich. Seven years later, he was appointed Lecturer of Music Theory and Choral Singing at the Mozarteum’s Musikhochschule and Jugendmusikschule in Salzburg, Austria. That same year, he married a local Austrian girl named Ricarda.⁹

⁶ See Appendix A.

⁷ Erich Valentin, “‘Schöne auserlesene Lieder’: Ein Gruß an den 70jährigen Franz Biebl,” trans. Nancy Truex, *Lied und Chor: Zeitschrift für das Chorwesen* 68 (1976): 213, accessed February 16, 2017, <https://web.archive.org/web/20110625042543/http://cantusquercus.com/valentin.htm>.

⁸ Fränkischer Sängerbund, “Franz Biebl,” last modified January 19, 2005, accessed March 15, 2017, <http://fsb-online.de/geschichte/komponisten/biebl.html>.

⁹ Heike Nasritdinova, “Biebl, Franz Xavier,” Oberpfälzer Kulturbund e. v., last modified 2011, accessed March 15, 2017, http://www.oberpfaelzerkulturbund.de/cms/pages/kultur-der-oberpfalz/dbeintrag_details.php?id=20.

His teaching career was cut short by the outbreak of the Second World War. Biebl provided the music for several Nazi marching songs that were published in collections such as *Morgen marschieren wir: Lieder der deutschen Soldaten* (1939) and *Kameraden, laßt uns singen* (1940, 1942).¹⁰ He was drafted into military service in 1943 and taken captive in Italy by the American army in 1944. He spent two years as an American prisoner of war at Fort Custer in Battle Creek, Michigan. While there, he became acquainted with American folksongs, African-American spirituals, and gospel music. As a POW, he was allowed to form a choir for which he composed simple arrangements of these newly discovered American musical genres. He was released from Fort Custer in 1946.¹¹

In a 1990 conversation with Eph Ehly, the former Director of Choral Activities at the University of Missouri, Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance, Biebl recounted that his first goal upon returning to Austria was to locate his wife, not knowing if she had survived the war. His second goal was to “bring her to this beautiful place called Michigan.”¹² Biebl had fond memories of his time at Fort Custer. He was treated well, by his own account. “It was a good time. I learned to know the Americans and a little bit of American life and 'democracy.' We got enough to eat. Good food, just like the American soldiers had...The Americans helped me to arrange concerts with choir,

¹⁰ Deutsches Lied, “Werke von ‘Franz Biebl’ (1906-2001),” accessed May 15, 2017, <http://www.deutscheslied.com/de/search.cgi?cmd=composers&name=Biebl%20Franz>. See Figure 1.1 for one of his arrangements.

¹¹ Nasritdinova.

¹² Eph Ehly, telephone interview by the author, March 30, 2017.

Auf, Ansbach-Dräger!

1. Auf, Ans-bach-Dra-go-ner! Auf, Ans-bach-Bayreuth! Schnell
um dei-nen Sä-bel und rü-ste dich zum Streit! Prinz
Karl ist er-schie-nen auf Fried-bergs Höhen, sich das
preu-ßi-sche Heer mal an-zu-sehn. Drum, Kin-der, seid
lu-stig und al-le-samt be-reit: Auf, Ans-bach-Dra-go-ner! Auf,
Ans-bach-Bayreuth! Drum, Kin-der, seid lu-stig und al-le-samt be-
reit: Auf, Ans-bach-Dra-go-ner! Auf, Ans-bach-Bayreuth!

2. Habn Sie keine Angst, Herr Oberst von Schwerin, ein preußischer
Dräger tut niemals nicht fliehn! Und stündn sie auch noch so dicht
auf Friedbergs Höhen, wir reiten sie zusammen wie Frühlingsschnee.
Ob Säbel, ob Kanon, ob Kleingewehr uns dräut: Auf, Ansbach-
Dräger! Auf, Ansbach-Bayreuth! Drum, Kinder usw.

3. Halt, Ansbach-Dräger! Halt, Ansbach-Bayreuth! Wisch ab dei-
nen Säbel, laß ab vom Streit; denn ringsumher auf Friedbergs Höhen
ist weit und breit kein Feind mehr zu sehn. Und ruft unser König,
zur Stelle sind wir heut: Auf, Ansbach-Dräger! Auf, Ansbach-
Bayreuth! Drum, Kinder usw.

Worte: E. H. Freiberg. Weise: Friedrich der Große. Satz: Franz Biebl. Eigentum des
Eduwig Doggenreiter Verlages Potsdam

Figure 1.1. Biebl's two-part arrangement of *Auf, Ansbach-Dräger!* (*Der Hohenfriedberger Marsch*), a well-known German military march from the mid-eighteenth century celebrating the Prussian victory over the Austrians and Saxons during the Second Silesian War, included in Hans Baumann's *Morgen marschieren wir: Lieder der deutschen Soldaten* (1939).

soloists and chamber music."¹³

After finding his wife alive and well in Salzburg, Biebl tried to reclaim his position at the Mozarteum. Because of his German nationality, his reapplication was rejected, and he and his wife spent several weeks living in a refugee camp outside of Munich.¹⁴ In 1947, he took a position as the choir director at the parish church of St. Magdalena in Fürstenfeldbruck, an outlying suburb east of Munich, where he remained for eleven years.¹⁵



Figure 1.2. Interior of the parish church of St. Magdalena, Fürstenfeldbruck. Photo by Rufus46.¹⁶

¹³ Wilbur Skeels, "Franz Xavier Biebl (1906-2001)," Cantus Quercus Press, last modified 2004, accessed May 15, 2017, <https://web.archive.org/web/20110625032716/http://cantusquercus.com/biebl.htm>.

¹⁴ See Appendix A.

¹⁵ Nasritdinova.

¹⁶ Rufus46, *Wikipedia*, June 29, 2011, accessed June 3, 2017, https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/F%C3%BCrstenfeldbruck#/media/File:Kirchstr._6_St._Magdalena_innen_Fuertenfeldbruck-1.jpg.

During that time, he did freelance production work for the Bayerische Rundfunk (Bavarian State Radio), and, in 1959, they asked him to form a choral department. His duties entailed recording choral performances, programming choral music for broadcast, and promoting choral music in Bavaria.¹⁷ His position at the Bayerische Rundfunk afforded him a great amount of influence over the choral community.¹⁸ He was especially interested in promoting amateur choral singing and frequently organized choral festivals and sing-along concerts to foster public outreach.¹⁹ Biebl authored several articles in German music journals that argued the importance of amateur choirs to cultural identity.²⁰ He believed that singing in an ensemble was a right that should be enjoyed by everyone, not just the musical elite. For his efforts in the development of amateur choral singing, Biebl was awarded the Nordgau Culture Prize of the City of Amberg in 1974 and the East Bavarian Cultural Prize in 1976.²¹

Biebl was a prolific composer. He wrote well over 2000 individual pieces, with as many as 2209 of them available from at least seventy-five publishers.²² Most of these are

¹⁷ Martina Bulla, Archivist at Bayerischer Rundfunk, e-mail to the author, May 16, 2017.

¹⁸ Nasritdinova.

¹⁹ Christoph Hauser, current Music Director and Organist at St. Magdalena, Fürstenfeldbruck, e-mail message to the author, April 6, 2017.

²⁰ For examples, see: Franz Biebl, "Chorgesang, eine kulturelle Aufgabe oder vernünftlicher Zeitvertreib?" *Lied und Chor: Zeitschrift für das Chorwesen* 65, no. 3 (1973): 51-52; Franz Biebl, "Ist Notenkenntnis für den Chorsänger erforderlich? Überlegungen zu einer Grundsatzfrage," *Musik und Gottesdienst* 36, no. 5 (1982): 194-196.

²¹ Nasritdinova.

²² Wilbur Skeels, "The Principal Works of Franz Biebl," Cantus Quercus Press, last modified February 16, 2007, accessed March 15, 2017, <https://web.archive.org/web/20110716141342/http://www.cantusquercus.com/biebindx.htm>.; Katalog der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek, accessed May 5, 2017, http://www.dnb.de/DE/Home/home_node.html.

folksong arrangements and folk-inspired original compositions. Biebl collected material from all over the world including the United States, Latin America, Russia, China, and many European countries. He often created his own German translation of foreign lyrics or wrote original poetry that he set to pre-existing or original melodies. His music is scored for choirs of all types—mixed, male, female, youth, youth and adults, both a cappella and accompanied. Most of Biebl’s compositions are short, straightforward and simple. Because of their accessibility, Biebl’s music was widely adopted into the repertoire of amateur choirs throughout the German-speaking world. The German musicologist Franz Miller wrote,

He fills the [choral] archive with song sets and also with popular choral music. He nourishes the life of the country choral society with appropriate tasks; he listens to them; he hears from them; he is present in the smallest villages; he produces under the most challenging conditions; and he always demands a little more than the chorus is capable of doing.²³

Miller traces Biebl’s musical heritage back to Carl Friedrich Zelter (1758-1832) and Friedrich Silcher (1789-1860). Zelter is best known for introducing the music of J. S. Bach to his young pupil, Felix Mendelssohn. Silcher is primarily remembered for his research into German folksongs. Both were prolific arrangers of choral music and championed the formation of amateur singing societies—especially men’s choruses. They believed that folk music was the most appropriate genre for fostering the musical education of the general public.²⁴ This educational strategy was carried through the

²³ Franz R. Miller, “Franz Biebl, Achtzig,” trans. Heike Baars, *Lied und Chor: Zeitschrift für das Chorwesen* 78 (1986): 197.

²⁴ Raymond Barr, “Zelter, Carl Friedrich.” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), vol. 20:663-664; Luise Marretta-Schär, “Freidrich Silcher,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), vol. 17:316.

twentieth century by composers such as Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967) and Carl Orff (1895-1982), and then adopted by Biebl who perpetuated the practice for the present day. Biebl was praised for his ability to compose music of high quality, that was also accessible to the amateur choir. Professor Erich Valentin wrote in 1976, “Franz Biebl brought together his experience as a teacher, his creative sensibility, and his astonishing choral mastery to produce a unified expressive musical achievement.” He continued his praise by stating, “Every composition is crafted with the same sense of honesty and careful attention to detail... [Biebl’s music] speaks directly to the heart without making pretentious demands on either performer or listener.”²⁵ Miller’s compliments are more qualified: “[Biebl] is equally concerned with the leveling of taste, the willingness to surrender to the superficially entertaining, to choral schmaltz, to folk music hits, to mere tralalism. Cleverness in composition is Biebl’s motto, which is an essential necessity for simple technical writing.”²⁶ No matter the evaluation of the content of Biebl’s compositional output, his impact on the amateur chorister is undisputed.

His composing mantra has been, ‘keep it simple.’ It has been just as important for him that amateurs sing well, and that there be good music available for them, as it has been to encourage professional choirs. Hundreds of his pieces are still in the active catalogs of German music publishers, where their popularity defies the dismissive snobbery of those who consider him beneath their elevated tastes.²⁷

Time and geography have had negative consequences on Biebl’s legacy. His impressive catalog of choral folksong arrangements and original compositions is obscure. Many choral directors from the United States have gone in search of a Biebl “gem” only

²⁵ Erich Valentin, “‘Schöne auserlesene Lieder’: Ein Gruß an den 70jährigen Franz Biebl,” *Lied und Chor: Zeitschrift für das Chorwesen* 68 (1976): 213.

²⁶ Miller, 197.

²⁷ Skeels, “Outstanding Features of Franz Biebl’s Works.”

to find overly sentimental, dated compositions of school song-book simplicity. His arrangements of African-American, Latin American, and Asiatic folk music now seem naïve and culturally insensitive. Even his arrangements of Bavarian folksongs are not popular outside the German-speaking world, precisely because of their simplicity and accessibility.

His long-term relevance and continued recognition throughout most of the world is solely due to the universal and timeless appeal of the *Ave Maria*. Yet there is very little information about Biebl's original reason for writing it and where and when the *Ave Maria* was premiered. The most often recounted story is full of inaccuracies and misinformation. Many details about the true events have been lost to failing memories, poor record-keeping, and the deaths of most of the key figures, including Biebl himself. It is important, therefore, to retrieve as much information as possible before more facts are lost to time.

CHAPTER 2

A FIREMAN'S *AVE MARIA*

According to Wilbur Skeels,

Herr Biebl told me that when he was organist/choirmaster and teacher in the Fürstenfeldbruck parish near Munich he had in his church choir a fireman. It was common for companies, factories, police and fire departments, etc. to sponsor an employees' choir, which often would participate in choral competitions and festivals with other similar choirs. This fireman asked Biebl to please compose something for his fireman's choir for such an occasion. The result was the *Ave Maria* (double male choir version).⁵²

The only known example of Biebl's comment on the origin of his *Ave Maria* is less clear. "I was conducting a church choir and a man-choir. During the month of May (catholic=Marien month) wanted the man choir once to sing in the church. We didn't want to sing every Year the same and therefore I composed the *Ave Maria*."⁵³ A letter from Biebl to Herr Wildt of the Dortmund-based music publishing company, Wildt's Musikverlag, dated October 24, 1961, expresses Biebl's hope that Wildt would consider publishing the *Ave Maria* (as well as a *Männerchore Mass*). After praising Wildt's "beer guzzling skills," Biebl promotes himself by explaining that "the *Ave Maria* was sung two years ago and also this year at the Münchner Dom at the May Day service [*Maiandacht*] (also recorded and broadcast by the radio station) and has been received very well by the

⁵² Wilbur Skeels, "Franz Biebl's *Ave Maria (Angelus Domini)*," Cantus Quercus Press, last modified 2004, accessed March 15, 2017, <https://web.archive.org/web/20110719132345/http://cantusquercus.com/ave.htm>. Both Skeels and Thomas Sokol, the former director of the Cornell Glee Club, met Biebl in person, and both report that the *Ave Maria* was written for a fireman's chorus. As of the present date, the name of the chorus has not been identified.

⁵³ Franz Biebl, letter to Adrian Fischer, former Managing Director of Chanticleer, February 4, 1991. Here and elsewhere, quotations from Biebl's letters written in English will faithfully reproduce all his spelling, grammatical, and capitalization errors without remark.

singers and the audience. (Often I am considered to have only composed the *Ave Maria*).”⁵⁴ This letter is important for four reasons: first, it proves that the *Ave Maria* was written sometime before May 1, 1959; second, it alludes to a recording made for an unnamed radio station; third, it suggests that the *Ave Maria* enjoyed immediate success; and, lastly, considering how prolific a composer Biebl was, for some to assume that the *Ave Maria* was his only composition is an early testament to the significance of this work.

Prior to the discovery of this letter, it was widely accepted that Biebl wrote the *Ave Maria* in 1964, the year of its publication. In fact, the incorrect date appears on both the English and German Wikipedia webpages.⁵⁵ Since Biebl gave up his position at the church in Fürstfeldbruck sometime in 1959, a composition date prior to May 1 of that year explains how Biebl “was conducting a church choir *and* a man-choir” at the time of the *Ave Maria*’s completion.⁵⁶

Perhaps the most significant conclusion drawn from this letter is the existence of a recording broadcast by “the radio station.” In 1961, Biebl was already working full-time for Bayerischer Rundfunk, so it is safe to assume that Wildt would understand to which radio station Biebl referred. The recording was made on November 20, 1960 by Der Männerchor des Sängerkreises München under the direction of Max Eisenrieth. Biebl, as part of his regular employment at Bayerischer Rundfunk, served as the recording engineer.⁵⁷ This is the only known recording of the *Ave Maria* for which Biebl had direct

⁵⁴ Translation by Heike Baars. There are hints that these May Day performances may have been part of a choral festival or competition.

⁵⁵ As of May 17, 2017.

⁵⁶ Biebl, letter to Adrian Fischer, February 4, 1991.

⁵⁷ Bulla, e-mail message to the author, May 16, 2017.

input, and it demonstrates several notable performance features that give an insight into how he expected the composition to sound.

The biggest surprise is the key: D major rather than eventual published key of C major. This requires the first tenors to ascend multiple times to a high B (B₄), a range that is an audibly challenging for the men of Sängerkreises München. Drawing further attention to the extreme range is the operatic vocal style of the singers. Their performance resembles an especially stentorian rendition of “The Pilgrim’s Chorus” from Richard Wagner’s *Tannhäuser*, rather than that of a pure-toned, well-blended choir that one would expect to hear today. Their approach to phrasing is also surprising, with every syllable receiving a weighty pulse that is contrary to the present-day expectation of a smooth melodic line.

Other aspects of the performance reinforce details that appear in the published score. The three repetitions of the first half of the “Ave Maria” text are sung at the same dynamic level rather than the varying levels that many choirs favor today. The decrescendo over the last measure, now almost universally ignored, is executed—although the final chord is momentarily held *forte* rather than immediately softening as the printed score directs. The dynamic contouring that is indicated throughout the rest of the score is generally followed. To what extent these details existed in Biebl’s manuscript and what, if any, revisions were made prior to the *Ave Maria*’s publication are unknown.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Another difference between the 1960 Bayerischer Rundfunk recording and the published score is the word underlay in the “Amen” section. On the recording, the second syllable, “-men,” consistently falls on beat four, while in the published score, it falls on beat three with a slur to beat four.

As previously noted, the *Ave Maria* was published by Wildt's Musikverlag in 1964. Skeels states that it gained practically no attention in Germany for many years,⁵⁹ and Biebl lamented that it was performed infrequently because German men's choirs didn't typically sing religious music.⁶⁰ It must have achieved some popularity, however, because Biebl made two alternate arrangements for mixed choir (SAT/SATB and SSA/TTBB) which were both published by Wildt's Musikverlag in 1985.⁶¹ It is unclear if Biebl wrote these arrangements at the same time or separately. A 1991 letter from Biebl suggests that they were prepared at the request of specific choirs.⁶² Either way, it was a wise decision. Because there are simply more mixed choirs than men's choirs, having versions available for mixed choirs to perform promoted larger sales.

In 1993, the former Director of Choral Activities at The University of New Mexico, Bradley Ellingboe, formed a university women's chorus called *Las Cantates*. He believed in "creating traditions for choirs" and wanted to arrange a version of the *Ave Maria* for women's chorus with which they could close each of their concerts. Ellingboe reached out to Wildt's Musikverlag for permission to make the arrangement. They agreed, but stipulated that it could only be sung by *Las Cantates* under Ellingboe's direction. Ellingboe recounts, "After several years of singing this version, I offered it to the publisher for their consideration." A few months later, Wildt's Musikverlag replied

⁵⁹ Skeels, "Franz Biebl's *Ave Maria (Angelus Domini)*."

⁶⁰ Biebl, letter to Adrian Fischer, February 4, 1991.

⁶¹ The Deutschen Nationalbibliothek website lists 1988 for the year of publication for both arrangements. A fax from Wildt's Musikverlag to Hinshaw music dated April 30, 1992 and an e-mail from Wildt's Musikverlag to the author dated May 5, 2017, however, both state that the year of publication was 1985.

⁶² Biebl, letter to Adrian Fischer, February 4, 1991.

“that Biebl had rejected [Ellingboe’s] arrangement and planned to make one himself.”⁶⁴

This fourth and final re-voicing of the *Ave Maria* was published by Wildt’s Musikverlag in 1998. Interestingly, it contains a dynamic scheme that differs significantly from the three earlier versions. Whether Biebl’s ideas about the dynamics changed over time or whether he chose not (or neglected) to reference the other arrangements remains a mystery.

⁶⁴ Bradley Ellingboe, e-mail message to the author, May 18, 2017.

CHAPTER 3
 AN ANALYSIS OF FRANZ BIEBL'S *AVE MARIA*
 (INCLUDING A COMPARISON TO ITS COMPANION PIECE,
PATER NOSTER)

The original version of Biebl's *Ave Maria* is scored for double male chorus ("two male choruses or solo trio and four-voice male chorus"), a cappella. It is in the key of C major and has a time signature of 4/4. The text is a variation of the modern-day *Angelus*. In modern Catholic tradition, the devotional *Angelus* is recited three times per day, at 6:00 a.m., noon, and 6:00 p.m.⁶⁵ It consists of three recitations of the *Ave Maria* prayer as codified by the Council of Trent in 1566.

American choirs typically use Roman (Italianate) Latin pronunciation. Biebl, however, would have expected Germanic Latin pronunciation as evidenced by the 1960 Bayerischer Rundfunk recording. In Germanic Latin, e's and o's in open, stressed syllables tend to be long and closed: "plena" = [ˈpleː na] rather than [ˈplɛ na] and "nostre" = [ˈnoː strɛ] rather than [ˈnɔ strɛ]. I's tend to be short except in accented, open syllables: "nobis" = [ˈnoː bɪs] rather than [ˈnɔ bis]. U's are short in closed syllables: "nunc" = [nʊnk] rather than [nʊnk]. There are several differences between Roman and Germanic pronunciation of Latin consonants, with the following being relevant to the *Ave Maria* text: in Germanic Latin, all g's are hard, soft c's are pronounced "ts" rather than "s," and

⁶⁵ Michael Martin, "Angelus," *Thesaurus Precum Latinarum*, accessed April 21, 2017, <http://www.preces-latinae.org/thesaurus/Cotidiana/Angelus.html>.

h's are aspirated. So: "angelus" = ['an ge IUs], "concepit" = [kɔn 'tse: pIt], "hora" = ['ho: ra], and "mihi" = ['mi hi].⁶⁶

*Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Dominus tecum.
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, I[*J*]esus.*

*Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,
ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.*⁶⁷

Translation:
Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou amongst women
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now, and in the hour of our death. Amen.⁶⁸

Interspersed with the repetitions of the *Ave Maria* prayer are three versicles pertaining to the story of the virgin birth:

*Angelus Domini nuntiavit Mariae;
Et concepit de Spiritu Sancto.*

Translation:
The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary;
And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.
– from Luke 1:28, 35.

*Ecce ancilla Domini:
Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.*

⁶⁶ Harold Copeman, *Singing in Latin*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Harold Copeman, 1992), 214-225.

⁶⁷ "Ave Maria – Hail Mary," *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 1 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907), accessed April 21, 2017, <http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=786>.

⁶⁸ Michael Martin, "Angelus," *Thesaurus Precum Latinarum*, accessed April 21, 2017, <http://www.preces-latinae.org/thesaurus/Cotidiana/Angelus.html>.

Translation:
Behold the handmaid of the Lord:
Be it done unto me according to Thy word.
– from Luke 1:38.

*Et verbum caro factum est.
Et habitavit in nobis.*

Translation:
And the Word was made flesh:
And dwelt among us.⁶⁹
– from John 1:14.

Biebl assigns each versicle to a soloist [*Choraliter*] (original version: Bass, Tenor II, Tenor I, respectively) and alternates them between three repetitions of the first half of the *Ave Maria* text. This tri-fold structure is followed by the second half of the *Ave Maria* text (“*Sancta Maria*”) and a nine-measure “Amen.” Including the repetitions, the piece is eighty-nine measures long and lasts approximately seven minutes.⁷⁰

In the context of a small choral piece, the structure is not surprising. Only the separation of the two halves of the *Ave Maria* text, by way of the insertion of the versicles, is out of the liturgical norm. Biebl showed great enthusiasm for sharing the piece with a wide variety of choirs as is evidenced by the three arrangements he made for choral ensembles of varying make-up. It is therefore doubtful that Biebl intended for the *Ave Maria* only to be performed in sacred contexts. If liturgical usefulness has not been the primary reason for its enduring legacy, what can be discovered in the music itself that

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ The 1960 Bayerische Rundfunk recording is seven minutes and twenty-two seconds.

has been the cause of its lasting appeal? A careful analysis of the harmonic and formal structure of the piece offers some clues.

The three versicles, which give structure to the *Ave Maria's* musical arc, are related tonally and melodically. The first is essentially a rising C major scale; a simple melodic structure that becomes an important motif throughout the piece. The second is also essentially scalar, moving up and down from G to D and acting as a prolonged dominant. The third is back in C, but sits an octave higher than the first versicle and ascends a fifth before returning to tonic. The use of ascending scales for melodic material is carried into the polyphonic sections. The first entrance of Choir II, for example, is also a rising C major scale, reminiscent of the first versicle. Similarly, Choir II's entrance in the second section ("Sancta Maria") begins on a C an octave higher and rises a fifth, imitating the melodic contour of the third versicle.

Structurally, the listener first notices the sonorous use of Renaissance-inspired polychoral techniques. After the bass soloist intones the first versicle, the two choirs begin by alternately presenting short musical ideas that build through rising melodic phrases until both choirs join in a mini-climax before returning to an alternating pattern and climaxing again. All of this happens in just twenty-one measures and comprises the first iteration of the first half of the *Ave Maria* text. After the second versicle is intoned by the Tenor II soloist, these twenty-one measures are repeated, followed by the third versicle and a third repetition. By now, the listener understands how the two choirs interact with one another both melodically and harmonically. The third repetition, even upon someone's first exposure to the piece, already starts to sound familiar, allowing the listener to anticipate the rise and fall of the overlapping phrases. The "Sancta Maria"

section begins immediately following the conclusion of the third repetition of “Ave Maria.” Biebl continues the pattern of passing short, alternating phrases between the choirs. Many of these phrases are embellishments of those found earlier in the piece, but with expanded range and greater melodic sweep. The two choirs once again join in a climactic moment before ebbing just prior to the start of the “Amen.” This coda-like section is only nine measures long and begins with yet another rising C major scale. Wave after wave of ascending scales follow until it quickly builds to a final climax that is one of the most satisfying in all choral literature.⁷¹

This economy of form is one of the principal attributes that distinguishes the *Ave Maria* from its companion piece, a setting of the *Pater noster*, for which Biebl wrote two arrangements. Both are scored for double male chorus (TTB/TTBB)—the same voicing as the original version of *Ave Maria*. The two arrangements are only superficially different. Fundamentally, they are attempts to recreate (or prolong) what Biebl already understood to be his masterpiece, the *Ave Maria*. The more recent of the two arrangements (Wildt’s Musikverlag catalog number W 962358 M) provides explicit instruction on how it can be performed alongside the *Ave Maria*. After the text “sed libera nos a malo” (“and deliver us from evil”), Biebl inserts the following note: “Hier kann man das ‘Pater noster’ beenden oder zum ‘Ave Maria’ übergehen oder auch den nachfolgenden Nachsatz anfügen.” (“Here, one can end the ‘Pater noster’ or go to the ‘Ave Maria’ or even the following postlude.”) The postlude to which Biebl refers sets a text similar to the phrase often appended to the Lord’s Prayer as written in Matthew 6:9-

⁷¹ Dr. Peter Eklund, Director of Choral Activities at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, has identified this “Amen” as one of the three most beautiful ever written, along with those from Handel’s *Messiah* and Brahms’ *Geistliches Lied*.

13: “Salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi, qui tuus est regnum et potestas et gloria in saecula, Amen.” (“Savior, Jesus Christ, who is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen.”)

Biebl’s attempt at composing a companion piece failed to capture the same qualities that make his *Ave Maria* so appealing. While he utilizes the same basic structure of short melodic phrases that alternate between the two choirs and eventually converge for climactic effect, the non-repetitive nature of the *Pater noster* text lends itself to a through-composed, meandering musical setting that lacks the formal tidiness of the *Ave Maria*. The listener no longer has a concise, easily digestible, thrice-repeated and once elaborated structure on which to grab hold. The two settings of the *Pater noster* also differ substantially from the *Ave Maria* in how they apply polychoral composition techniques. They are more rigid in their division of the two choirs, with each choir overlapping only at cadences or when the choirs are brought together for dynamic purposes. This is more akin to the model of the late-Renaissance Venetian masters and their early-Baroque German offspring where spatial affect was the goal. The *Ave Maria* differs strikingly because of its continuous overlapping of the two choirs, achieved by terminating each short phrase with a sustained chord (usually four, but sometimes three, beats). While one choir has the melodic interest, the other supplies a chordal foundation. The effect of the two choirs accompanying each other gives the *Ave Maria* a richer, more sonorous soundscape than the *Pater noster*.

Another notable feature of the two compositions is Biebl’s use of a particular “color” chord. A survey of Biebl’s oeuvre demonstrates his tonal indebtedness to nineteenth century German Romanticism. It is therefore not surprising that Biebl would

use the extended harmonic palate of Schumann, Mendelssohn or Brahms. What is remarkable, however, is that he uses only one “Romantic” chord in the *Ave Maria*, which, because of the repetitions inherent to its form, is heard seven times: first surprisingly, then with ever-growing predictability. The chord (\flat VII⁹, spelled B \flat D F A \flat C in the key of C) makes its first appearance in measure six where it descends from tonic and is sustained for three tension-building measures until it resolves back to tonic at exactly the point when the two choirs join for their first climax. The chord is used similarly in measure eighteen, but for only one measure, coinciding with the second climax of the choirs. This harmonic material repeats two times verbatim, as previously noted, with ever-growing expectancy and gratification. By the time the “Sancta Maria” begins, the listener is already anticipating the use of this chord in a final climax. Biebl waits to employ it until the “Amen” where Choir I begins with the aforementioned C major scale that builds triadic harmony as the melodic line rises.⁷² Choir II then imitates the scalar melody on F while Choir I shifts gratifyingly to the \flat VII⁹ chord without the seventh. The A natural in Choir II’s F major scale completes the chord—altering it to \flat VII^{Maj9}. Rather than allowing the harmony to return immediately back to tonic, Biebl delays the resolution by means of a deceptive vi⁷ chord that leads to the final plagal cadence.

By contrast, the two settings of the *Pater noster* are much more tonally daring. They meander into distantly related keys by abrupt direct modulations and by progressions of densely chromatic borrowed chords. An attempt at recreating the sound of the *Ave Maria*’s “Amen” can be found in the earlier of the two *Pater noster*

⁷² Druffel, Benjamin J, “In-Depth Analysis and Program Notes on a Selection of Wind Band Music” (master’s thesis, Minnesota State University, Mankato, 2012), 49.

arrangements where the $\flat VII^9$ harmony is sustained through five measures of its “Amen,” underpinning short, arching, and directly imitative melodic lines. Anyone familiar with the *Ave Maria* would immediately recognize this sonority, especially because of its placement just prior to the final cadence. However, the *Pater noster*’s frequent use of secondary dominants and other borrowed chords earlier in the piece reduces the distinction of the $\flat VII^9$ chord when incorporated into its “Amen.” The only apparent importance of this chord in the *Pater noster* is its ability to recall the *Ave Maria*’s “Amen.”

CHAPTER 4

THE *AVE MARIA* COMES TO AMERICA

The Cornell Glee Club is the oldest student organization at Cornell University and, founded in 1868, is one of the oldest collegiate men's glee clubs in the United States.⁷³ In January 1970, under the direction of Tom Sokol, the Glee Club made a tour of Germany with performances in Frankfurt, Heidelberg, Heilbronn, Augsburg, Munich, Nuremberg and Würzburg. They also recorded performances for several radio broadcasts including one at Bayerischer Rundfunk in Munich on the 28th of that month.⁷⁴ According to Michael Slon in *Songs from the Hill: A History of the Cornell University Glee Club*,

During the session a voice made repeated intelligent comments over the loudspeaker about intonation and phrasing, and according to [Thomas] Sokol 'what he was saying was absolutely correct.' When the session ended, the man came out of the booth to introduce himself – Franz Biebl, music director of the network.⁷⁵

Following the session, Biebl gave Sokol several of his choral arrangements and compositions, including the *Ave Maria*, and asked him to consider adding some of them to the Glee Club's repertoire. After the group returned to the United States, Sokol chose the *Ave Maria* as the first of Biebl's compositions to introduce to American audiences. According to Sokol, "It had immediate appeal and conductors of collegiate ensembles at Harvard, Amherst and Michigan (along with many others from the Intercollegiate Musical Council) introduced 'the Biebl' to their audiences."⁷⁶

⁷³ Michael Slon, *Songs from the Hill: A History of the Cornell University Glee Club* (Ithaca: Cornell University Glee Club, 1998), 1.

⁷⁴ Tom Sokol, e-mail message to the author, November 10, 2010.

⁷⁵ Slon, 174.

⁷⁶ Sokol, e-mail message to the author, November 10, 2010.

The *Ave Maria* made its first concert appearance with the Harvard Glee Club in 1977 under the direction of F. John Adams.⁷⁷ This performance was included on the album *Christmas with the Harvard Glee Club*, issued by the Musical Heritage Society in 1979. The album is a collection of sacred songs and motets recorded by the Glee Club over several years during their annual Christmas concerts. Although this was the first commercially available recording of the *Ave Maria*, its distribution was mostly limited to the Harvard community. Today, it has been lost in obscurity; however copies of the album occasionally appear on auction websites.

When Jameson Marvin took over direction of the Harvard Glee Club in 1978, he “found a copy of *Ave Maria* on a table in what was then the choral library. It said, ‘*Ave Maria*, property of the Cornell Glee Club.’ [He] played through it and liked it and knew it would be very warm-hearted/contemplative and stunning.”⁷⁸ He programmed the piece on the glee club’s tour in 1980 and again on a performance at the American Choral Directors Association National Convention in New Orleans in 1981. Marvin recalls that the glee club ended their set with the *Ave Maria* and that it was a “huge success.” He received numerous phone calls and letters from directors asking for copies, and he encouraged them to contact Wildt’s Musikverlag. After initially reading off photocopies made from the original that Sokol had carried across the Atlantic, the Harvard Glee Club eventually ordered their own copies from the publisher as well. This purchase made Biebl aware that the Harvard Glee Club was performing his music and he sent Marvin “a very

⁷⁷ Bernard Kreger, former member of the Harvard Glee Club, e-mail message to the author, November 8, 2010.

⁷⁸ Jameson Marvin, e-mail message to the author, March 24, 2017.

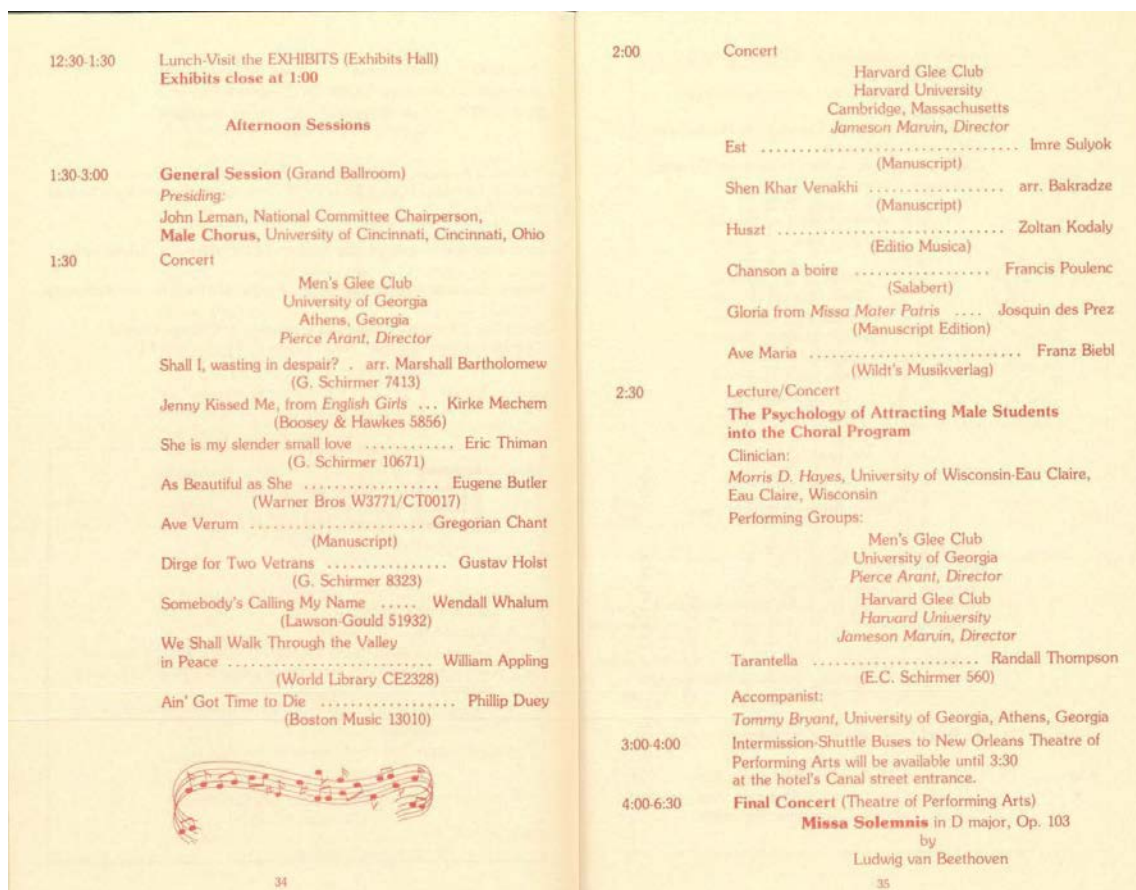


Figure 4.1. Pages from the 1981 American Choral Directors Association National Convention booklet from 1981.⁷⁹ The Harvard Glee Club ended their concert set with the *Ave Maria*.

nice letter,” along with several other compositions including a manuscript copy of his *Pater noster*.⁸⁰

Throughout the 1980s, the Harvard Glee Club continued to promote the *Ave Maria* to an ever-widening audience. On the Friday nights preceding Harvard-Yale or Harvard-Princeton football games, the respective glee clubs would give joint “football

⁷⁹ *American Choral Directors Association National Convention, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1981* (Oklahoma City: ACDA, 1981), 34-35, accessed June 3, 2017, http://acda.org/files/choral_journals/1981%20ACDA%20National%20SMALL.pdf.

⁸⁰ Marvin, telephone interview by the author, April 3, 2017.

concerts.” This venue resulted in the dissemination of the *Ave Maria* into the repertoires of other collegiate glee clubs. The Harvard Glee Club also featured the piece on their annual spring tours and semi-annual summer tours, the latter of which would last up to eight weeks.⁸¹ The close association among collegiate men’s glee clubs and their propensity to tour helps to explain the initial wave of popularity the *Ave Maria* enjoyed among choirs of that type. It continues to be a staple in the repertoire of male collegiate choruses—a tradition stretching directly back to Cornell University and their chance encounter with Franz Biebl in Munich. It would take another chance encounter, this time in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, to open the door on the next chapter of the history of the *Ave Maria*.

⁸¹ Ibid.

CHAPTER 5

CHANTICLEER FINDS ITS VOICE

On February 22, 1978, a group of singers selected from the San Francisco Symphony Chorus and the Grace Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys met at the home of Rob Bell, an active Bay Area choral performer and interpreter of early music. Bell recalls that the singers came at the invitation of John Mihaly, who had recently left the Yale Divinity School where the King's Singers, a UK-based professional male choral ensemble, was in residence. Mihaly had the idea of creating an all-male vocal ensemble in San Francisco that would "merge two traditions – the repertoire of the King's Singers ... and the size and informality of Yale singing groups." Also in attendance was another local vocalist and early music scholar, Luis Botto. Botto had recently moved to San Francisco from Washington, DC and was completing a master's degree in musicology at Dominican College (now Dominican University). In addition to being a respected singer and scholar, Botto was an entrepreneur with a keen business sense.⁸² His leadership is credited with turning Mihaly's idea into reality and founding Chanticleer, which became America's only independent choral ensemble to offer singers full-time, year-round employment.⁸³ Chanticleer gave their first public performance at San Francisco's historic Mission Dolores on June 27, 1978 for an audience of mostly friends and family. The

⁸² Rob Bell, founding member of Chanticleer, e-mail message to the author, May 16, 2017.

⁸³ Gregory Alan Grove, "Chanticleer: A Brief History of America's Only Full-Time Independent Choral Ensemble and a Survey of Its Repertoire" (DMA diss., University of Iowa, 1996), 2. This distinction was true at the time of Chanticleer's founding. Since then, other independent choral ensembles have offered full-time, year-round employment.

program was comprised of music by Dufay, Ockeghem, Isaac, Josquin, Morales, Byrd and Morley, showcasing the founding members' exploration into the performance practice of early choral music. From these humble beginnings, the original singers worked with determination and at great personal sacrifice to see the fledgling organization achieve national and international recognition. The early years were characterized by arduously long tours, small but enthusiastic audiences, and meager pay. The core of the repertoire remained choral music from the Renaissance, but with the hiring of Joseph Jennings in 1983, their repertoire began to rapidly expand.⁸⁴

Jennings was a native of Augusta, Georgia and grew up in the musically rich Southern Baptist tradition. While gospel music, spirituals, hymn tunes and folk music formed the core of his musical upbringing, he was an insatiable consumer of music of all types. His musical voracity, coupled with his prodigy-like vocal and piano skills, led him to get a degree in choral music education from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio.⁸⁵ Jennings first heard the *Ave Maria* while attending an Intercollegiate Musical Council convention during his senior year in the Case Men's Glee Club.⁸⁶ He recalls thinking it was "wonderful" and was one of many pieces that made a strong impression on him at that stage in his life.⁸⁷ It remained in the back of his mind for over a decade until the subject of the *Ave Maria* came up in a conversation about repertoire between himself and Botto. Botto's close friend, the Pennsylvania-based composer and

⁸⁴ Chanticleer, "Mission and History," accessed May 12, 2017, <http://www.chanticleer.org/mission-and-history/>.

⁸⁵ "Joseph Jennings, Director," Singers.com: Your Source for Vocal Harmony, accessed May 12, 2017, <https://www.singers.com/choral/director/Joseph-Jennings/>.

⁸⁶ Joseph Jennings, e-mail message to the author, January 4, 2011.

⁸⁷ Jennings, telephone interview by the author, March 31, 2017.

conductor, Steven Sametz, mentioned to Botto that he had heard the Harvard Glee Club sing the *Ave Maria* and thought it would be a good fit for Chanticleer. Botto asked Jennings if he had ever heard of the piece, to which Jennings emphatically replied, “Yes!” With his memory of the piece refreshed, Jennings became determined to find a copy.⁸⁸

A short time later, Chanticleer performed at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire where Bruce McInnes was the new director of the university’s men’s chorus, the Singing Statesmen. Prior to this appointment in 1988, Jameson Marvin had shared with him a copy of the *Ave Maria*, and he was quick to add it to the Singing Statesmen’s repertoire. Jennings and McInnes both recall their conversation during a reception at the Comaraderie, a once popular bar in Eau Claire, since destroyed by fire, following Chanticleer’s performance. Jennings asked McInnes if the Singing Statesmen possessed a copy of the *Ave Maria* and McInnes confirmed that they did. The next morning, McInnes “stole” copies of the piece from the UWEC choral library and raced to meet the Chanticleer members prior to their departure.⁸⁹ Chanticleer’s assistant director at the time, Frank Albinder, vividly remembers the event:

I drove to the parking lot of a shut-down Holiday Inn (one of those round ones with the spinning restaurant on top). Bruce drove up to our van, we rolled down our windows and he handed me a manila envelope with about 20 photocopies of the piece. Since they were copies, he could have given us just one. I always remember strange things. The copies were stamped Cornell Glee Club.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Jennings, e-mail message to the author, January 4, 2011.

⁸⁹ Bruce McInnes, e-mail message to the author, March 3, 2017; Jennings, e-mail message to the author, January 4, 2011.

⁹⁰ Frank Albinder, e-mail message to the author, October 13, 2010.

Once back home at their rehearsal venue, Chanticleer began rehearsing the *Ave Maria*. Jennings recalls that the singers were “on the ceiling” by the time they reached the end of their first sing-through.⁹¹ They gave their first public performance of the piece on December 4, 1989 in San Francisco’s City Hall at a benefit concert for the HIV/AIDS charity, Project Open Hand.⁹² It was included on their subsequent holiday concerts and on the following year’s tour program. Adrian Fischer, Chanticleer’s first executive director, admits that he gets “goosebumps to this day remembering those first performances. Audiences went crazy. Even when [the *Ave Maria*] was not yet known to Chanticleer audiences, the effect was profound.”⁹³

Fischer joined the Chanticleer administration in the spring of 1990. He worked closely with Luis Botto focusing on new business initiatives, including the creation of Chanticleer Records which was the principal legacy from Fischer’s administration. With the financial benefits of a full-time, salaried ensemble and a focus on recording music in the public domain, Chanticleer Records quickly amassed a catalog of eleven recordings and became among the most profitable small record labels at the time.⁹⁴

The first album produced for Chanticleer Records was *Our Heart’s Joy*, recorded in June, 1990 at St. Ignatius Church in San Francisco. Due to traffic noise, recording sessions took place late at night and through the early hours of the morning. The singers were arranged in a circle in front of the *baldaccino* on the church’s large stone dais with microphones set up in the center. Jennings and Botto chose music by Renaissance and

⁹¹ Jennings, telephone interview by the author, March 31, 2017.

⁹² This is the earliest program on which the *Ave Maria* appears in Chanticleer’s program archives.

⁹³ Adrian Fischer, telephone interview by the author, March 20, 2017.

⁹⁴ Grove, 42.



Figure 5.1. Nave and sanctuary inside San Francisco's St. Ignatius Church. Photograph by Teresa Garcia.⁹⁵

early Baroque masters such as Mouton, Guerrero, A. Gabrieli, and M. Praetorius alongside contemporary holiday arrangements by John Rutter and Malcolm Sargent. Sandwiched between was Biebl's *Ave Maria*. According to Jennings,

That recording was like wildfire. The CD was really successful. It got air play. And we did tour with it [the *Ave Maria*], but it was one of those things. It was like 'our song.' A lot of people wondered if it had been written for us.⁹⁶

Wanting to capitalize on the impact that the *Ave Maria* had on Chanticleer's audience, Botto and Fischer pursued the rights to print and distribute it in the United States as part of the Chanticleer Choral Series published by Hinshaw Music of Chapel Hill, North Carolina. For Chanticleer, publishing rights offered valuable publicity due to the *Ave Maria*'s rapidly rising popularity.⁹⁷ Botto and Biebl had already struck up a

⁹⁵ Teresa Garcia, "Sunset Over San Francisco," *First Impressions* (Blog), September 22, 2010, accessed June 3, 2017, <https://teresacgarcia.wordpress.com/2010/09/22/sunset-over-san-francisco/>.

⁹⁶ Jennings, telephone interview by the author, March 31, 2017.

⁹⁷ Fischer, telephone interview by the author, March 20, 2017.

casual correspondence following the making of *Our Heart's Joy* and by the beginning of 1991, official negotiations began to secure United States publishing rights.

Biebl was very enthusiastic about the idea. He mentioned that he had already discussed this possibility with Wildt's Musikverlag and suggested that Fischer contact its president, Klaus Wildt, directly.⁹⁸ Unaware of several details surrounding the publishing history of the *Ave Maria* or Wildt's business dealings with Biebl, Fischer took the assertive measure of sending Wildt a contract along with his initial correspondence on February 11, 1991. The contract draft would have granted Chanticleer the rights for world-wide printing and distribution. Not knowing Wildt Musikverlag's distributional reach, he included alternate drafts that would have granted rights to print and distribute world-wide, exclusive of Europe and in North America only. He included the rights to publish "both versions of the piece, for men's voices and mixed voices," even though Fischer had never seen a mixed voice version and was unaware that there were actually two.⁹⁹ Fischer wrote a second letter on February 25, 1991, encouraging Wildt to expedite his consideration of the proposal. Chanticleer was scheduled to sing at the American Choral Directors Association National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona on March 25, 1991, and Fischer tried to impress upon the German publisher how advantageous it would be to use the convention as a venue to announce the publishing of the *Ave Maria* in the United States.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Biebl, letter to Fischer, February 4, 1991.

⁹⁹ Fischer, letter to Klaus Wildt, February 11, 1991. How Fischer knew of the existence of a mixed chorus version will be dealt with later in this chapter.

¹⁰⁰ Fischer, letter to Wildt, February 25, 1991.

On March 28, 1991, Fischer wrote Biebl to inform him that there had been no response from Wildt. Biebl claimed that he didn't receive Fischer's letter until April 20, but the very next day he wrote a hasty response in his broken English:

It was a very good idea to write again to me. I have at once Mr. Wildt called by phone and it became a long talking with him. He is a kindly man, but he could not decide, what he should do.

I explaint him the whole situation: that it would be a good luck for my work and for the edition, that You will be ready the "Ave Maria" to spredd in the States. He could never reach all the choirs and other positions like You can do it.

My be, he is thinking a little bit to narrow-minded.

But at last I could convince that it will be a very good thing, if You get the possibility to represent the "Ave Maria" in the States.¹⁰¹

By May 22, Fischer still had no response from Wildt. He sent another letter to the publisher asking for a response to his proposal and mailed a copy to Biebl.¹⁰² Again, Biebl responded first. His letter, dated June 3, 1991, explained that he had once again called Wildt to do some nudging on Fischer's behalf. He assured Fischer that Wildt was prepared to enter into an agreement but that he was "not very fast in his working" and asked Fischer to have patience.¹⁰³

On June 10, 1991, Fischer sent yet another letter, followed by a fax on June 17. Chanticleer was scheduled to perform in Cologne on July 18, and Fischer proposed that he and Botto could travel to Dortmund that morning for a face-to-face meeting with

¹⁰¹ Biebl, letter to Fischer, April 21, 1991.

¹⁰² Fischer, letter to Wildt, May 22, 1991.

¹⁰³ Biebl, letter to Fischer, June 3, 1991.

Wildt.¹⁰⁴ At last, Fischer received a reply. Wildt proposed they meet at his office, and Fischer responded affirmatively.¹⁰⁵

The meeting was not at all what Fischer and Botto expected: first, “Wildt’s office” was actually his living room; second, there were several members of Wildt’s family also in attendance, none of whom (including Wildt) spoke English; and third, Wildt seemed more interested in talking about the local beer than the publishing deal. With Fischer’s modest skills in German, and after several hours of tangential side-talk, they finally shook hands on an agreement that would allow Chanticleer to publish the *Ave Maria* with Hinshaw Music. Fischer promised Wildt he would draw up the new contract immediately upon returning to the United States.¹⁰⁶ Fischer faxed the contract to Wildt on August 5, 1991 and followed it up with a letter sent on August 12 asking for confirmation that everything was acceptable.¹⁰⁷

After a long delay, Wildt finally responded to Fischer in January of 1992, although it was with an entirely new contract that outlined a very different proposal than that agreed upon in Wildt’s living room the previous summer. On January 31, 1992, Fischer wrote to Donald Hinshaw, president of Hinshaw Music, that Wildt’s new terms were “simply unacceptable” and that he had sent Wildt “a very firm letter to that effect.”¹⁰⁸ After a year of work, Fischer finally gave up on the idea of trying to secure the rights to publish the *Ave Maria* directly from Wildt. He gathered all the letters, faxes and

¹⁰⁴ Fischer, letter to Wildt, June 10, 1991; Fischer, fax to Wildt, June 17, 1991.

¹⁰⁵ Fischer, letter to Wildt, June 26, 1991.

¹⁰⁶ Fischer, telephone interview by the author, March 20, 2017.

¹⁰⁷ Fischer, fax to Wildt, August 5, 1991; Fischer, letter to Wildt, August 12, 1991.

¹⁰⁸ Fischer, letter to Hinshaw, January 31, 1992.

contracts sent among himself, Biebl and Wildt and handed them all to Hinshaw, giving the seasoned music publisher permission to cease or continue negotiations as he saw fit. Fischer knew this would likely cut Chanticleer out of any financial gains off the sale of the printed music, but he requested that if Hinshaw was able to strike a deal with Wildt, the *Ave Maria* would still be published as part of the Chanticleer Choral Series. Fischer hoped this publicity might lead to a boost in sales of *Our Heart's Joy* and generally disseminate the Chanticleer name through Hinshaw's normal marketing and distribution networks.¹⁰⁹

Coincidentally, sometime in the late 1980s, Eph Ehly asked the students in his graduate choral literature class at UMKC to “find a composer that was not well known, that was still living, and to find out all they could about them and all about their music.”¹¹⁰ One student, Jan Klieber, whose father was a choir director himself, brought in a copy of the male chorus version of the *Ave Maria*. Ehly thought it was an extraordinary find and was eager for his student to learn more about the unknown composer. Then, as now, information was scarce, and the student couldn't complete the assignment due to lack of available resources. It was learned that Biebl lived in Munich and, when Ehly went to Germany on sabbatical in 1990, he decided to contact Biebl to try and arrange a meeting. Plans were made, and Ehly took the train to Munich where Biebl met him on the platform. Ehly described him as a short, quiet, studious man who spoke no English. (Ehly is fluent in German, so that was not a problem.) They walked to Biebl's apartment where Biebl's wife had prepared them hors d'oeuvres, desserts, and things to drink, but stayed

¹⁰⁹ Fischer, letter to Donald Hinshaw, January 31, 1992.

¹¹⁰ Ehly, telephone interview by the author, March 30, 2017.

sequestered in the kitchen throughout their meeting. The conversation turned to Biebl's music, and Ehly admitted the only piece of Biebl's that he knew was the *Ave Maria*. Biebl asked if Ehly had ever performed it, but Ehly had not, due to the lack of a men's chorus at UMKC. Biebl told Ehly about a version for mixed choir, quietly went upstairs, rummaged around, and returned with the SSA/TTBB voicing that had been published by Wildt's Musikverlag in 1985. Over the course of the afternoon, Biebl gave him several more pieces and the two parted friends.¹¹¹

At this time, Ehly was in close contact with Don Hinshaw who was trying to persuade Ehly to write a book. At one of their meetings, Ehly was showing Hinshaw the music he was currently performing, one selection being the mixed chorus version of the *Ave Maria*.¹¹² Owing to a lack of records at Hinshaw Music and a fire that destroyed Ehly's home along with all his music, letters, diaries, etc., it is impossible to reconstruct a precise timeline, but this all occurred around the same time Fischer was negotiating with Wildt for the rights to publish the *Ave Maria* in both the male chorus version *and* the mixed chorus version—a version Fischer had never seen. Fischer admits that he can't recall how he first heard about the mixed chorus version.¹¹³ It may have been that Don Hinshaw was the critical link as he was in conversations with both Fischer and Ehly around the same time. Given the timing of events, perhaps it was Hinshaw who first mentioned the existence of a mixed chorus version to Fischer, having first learned about it himself from Ehly.

¹¹¹ Biebl had a tradition of sending out Christmas cards to friends and colleagues that contained a small original melody or round. Ehly was a grateful recipient of these cards for many years.

¹¹² Ehly, telephone interview by the author, March 30, 2017.

¹¹³ Fischer, telephone interview by the author, March 20, 2017.

Hinshaw passed away in 1996 without leaving a record of his continued conversations with Wildt and Biebl, but by June of 1992, he had secured the rights to publish the male chorus version and both mixed chorus versions of the *Ave Maria* throughout the United States, Canada, Australia, Great Britain and the British Commonwealth.¹¹⁴ Fischer suspects that Hinshaw's experience in negotiating publishing contracts enabled the veteran of the industry to seal the deal that had eluded him and Botto.¹¹⁵ Roberta Whittington, who took over as president of Hinshaw Music following Hinshaw's death, gives additional credit to his mixture of Southern charm and face-to-face communication style.¹¹⁶ By the time the 1993 American Choral Directors Association National Convention was held in San Antonio, Texas, Hinshaw Music was able to supply the American choral music market with the piece that was to become ubiquitous on choral programs at the turn of the twenty-first century.

Between its first appearance in the Hinshaw catalog in 1992 and the date of Hinshaw's most recent audit (July 31, 2016), the four versions of the *Ave Maria* have sold approximately 670,000 copies, making them some of the most successful pieces in Hinshaw's entire catalog.¹¹⁷ Due to the *Ave Maria*, *Our Heart's Joy* is Chanticleer's best-selling recording of all time, and approximately 60,000 copies have been sold as of the end of 2015.¹¹⁸ As of May 2017, the number of You Tube views of various recordings and live performances of Chanticleer singing the *Ave Maria* have approached 3,000,000.

¹¹⁴ Roberta Whittington, current president of Hinshaw Music, e-mail message to the author, May 15, 2017.

¹¹⁵ Fischer, telephone interview by the author, March 20, 2017.

¹¹⁶ Whittington, e-mail message to the author, May 15, 2017.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Bullin, e-mail message to the author, March 23, 2017.

While impossible to quantify, it is commonly believed that more people have been introduced to Chanticleer because of the *Ave Maria* than by any other means. It is a remarkable success story, considering the number of coincidental meetings, chance conversations, and unexpected turns of events that resulted in unearthing Biebl's "gem."

CHAPTER 6

THE *AVE MARIA* AND THE SUPREME COURT

Instrumentalists, too, have admired the *Ave Maria*. There are two published arrangements for seven-part trombone choir, one each by Mark Manduca and Royce Lumpkin. There is an arrangement for brass band by JD Shaw that is frequently performed by the renowned Phantom Regiment Drum & Bugle Corps,¹²⁰ and a wind band arrangement by Robert Cameron. This last arrangement has the distinction of being involved in a First Amendment court battle that was appealed all the way to the Supreme Court.

In May of 2006, senior members of the Jackson High School Wind Ensemble in Mill Creek, Washington were asked to choose a piece from their repertoire to play at graduation. The students voted to perform Cameron's wind band arrangement of the *Ave Maria*. However, because of an earlier incident at the school involving a piece of sacred music that had drawn criticism, music for Jackson High School's graduation ceremony required vetting by the district administration. Based primarily on the title, Superintendent Carole Whitehead felt that the *Ave Maria* had overly religious connotations and should not be performed at the event.¹²¹

To counter the actions of the school district, one of the graduating seniors, Kathryn Nurre, filed a lawsuit against Whitehead claiming that she "had violated her

¹²⁰ For a recording of a live performance, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PVPuOtyiKX8>.

¹²¹ William M. Perrine, "Religious Music and Free Speech: Philosophical Issues in *Nurre v. Whitehead*," *Philosophy of Music Education* 21, no. 2 (Fall 2013): 180-181.

rights under both the Free Speech and Establishment Clauses of the First Amendment and the Equal Protection Clause under the Fourteenth Amendment.”¹²² The United States District Court for the Western District of Washington ruled in favor of Whitehead in 2007, and the decision was upheld by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in 2009. The court’s rationale was that the graduation ceremony was a “limited public forum” and that the school’s decision to avoid sacred music was an allowable form of “content discrimination” because it was instituted to avoid controversy and give the appearance of religious neutrality.¹²³ The court also decided that Nurre lacked evidence that the school district discriminated against her based on religion. Its opinion noted that “the district’s actions had a secular purpose and were motivated by an effort to ‘avoid unwanted future litigation’.”¹²⁴

Nurre appealed the decision to the Supreme Court, but her writ of certiorari was denied in 2010.¹²⁵ Justice Samuel Alito disagreed with this denial and made two arguments against the ruling of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in his dissent. First, he wrote that the lower court’s decision was made without regard to the students’ motivation for choosing the piece, pointing out that it would have arrived at the same outcome if the students’ choice of the *Ave Maria* had been made on religious rather than artistic grounds. Second, the school district “did not veto the Biebl piece on view-point neutral grounds. On the contrary, the district banned that piece precisely because of its perceived

¹²² *Ibid.*, 181.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 181-182.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 182.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 182.

religious message.”¹²⁶ He noted that while the controversial piece from the prior year’s graduation ceremony, *Up Above My Head*, was sung by the choir and contained references to “God,” “heaven,” and “angels,” the arrangement of the *Ave Maria* that the band wished to play would have been performed without lyrics, and that the school district officials made their decision based on the religious connotation of the title alone.¹²⁷ He also made a point of explaining that

many composers, including Schubert, Gounod, Verdi, Mozart, Elgar, Saint-Saëns, Rossini, Brahms, Stravinsky, Bruckner and Rachmaninoff, composed music for the *Ave Maria*...Some of these compositions are well known, but Biebl’s, which was brought to the United States in 1970 by the Cornell University Glee Club...is relatively obscure.”¹²⁸

Justice Alito warned that the 9th Circuit Court’s ruling could have far-reaching implications, especially if the decision led some communities “to avoid ‘controversy’ by banishing all musical pieces with ‘religious connotations’.”¹²⁹ In his article, “Religious Music and Free Speech: Philosophical Issues in *Nurre v. Whitehead*,” William Perrine examines this concern. His main point is that the distinction between sacred music and secular music is not as distinct as the state’s definitions of religious and secular. Bach, Beethoven and Bernstein, he explains, all wrote masses intended for concert performance while the sonata developed as a form “through patronage of and for performance within the church.”¹³⁰ He focuses on Elgar’s *Pomp and Circumstance*, which was performed at the Jackson High School graduation ceremony in question, as an example of the difficulty

¹²⁶ Kathryn *Nurre v. Carol Whitehead, Individually and in Her Official Capacity as the Superintendent of Everett School District NO. 2*, 559 US _____ (2010), 5.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1n.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹³⁰ Perrine, 184.

of categorization. The tradition of performing the Trio section as a stand-alone piece began with the coronation of Edward VII as both King and Head of the Church of England. With lyrics that include “Land of Hope and Glory, Mother of the Free...God who made thee mighty, Make thee mightier yet,” Perrine uses this piece to argue that delineations between sacred and secular music can be difficult to make if based solely on associated text or historical tradition. Instead, he suggests “interpreting works in the Western canon within a formalist or aesthetic framework.”¹³¹ “Franz Biebl’s *Ave Maria*,” he concludes, “falls within a cultural tradition in which musical works can function aesthetically within both a secular and religious context. This cultural precedent should be respected by the courts.”¹³²

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 186.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 193.

CHAPTER 7

THE CONTINUING LEGACY OF THE *AVE MARIA*

Biebl claimed that the *Ave Maria* “has been received very well by the singers and the audience” when it debuted in 1959.¹³³ The Cornell Glee Club also found that their audiences responded positively when the *Ave Maria* was included on domestic and foreign tour programs.¹³⁴ Jameson Marvin recalls that members of the Harvard Glee Club were “high with emotion” during their first read-through of the piece. “The guys wanted to do it all the time. We did it a lot in the first many years.” If Marvin left the *Ave Maria* out of the Glee Club’s repertoire for too long, the members would ask, “Can’t we sing it this year?’ It was one of the great favorites.”¹³⁵ Some choirs have adopted it as their theme song and made its performance a regular tradition for their singers and audiences. Gary Schwartzhoff, who followed Bruce McInnes as director of the Singing Statesmen in 1991, performed the *Ave Maria* with the choir “about every four years” during his twenty-five-year tenure at UWEC “so that the membership would always have this unique experience.”¹³⁶

After only two years of performing the *Ave Maria* on all their tour concerts, Joseph Jennings decided to limit Chanticleer’s performances to their Christmas concerts. These consisted of approximately twenty-four appearances between Thanksgiving and December 23 in major venues around the country and in the Bay Area. For several years,

¹³³ Letter from Biebl to Wildt dated October 24, 1961.

¹³⁴ Slon. *Songs from the Hill*.

¹³⁵ Marvin, telephone interview by the author, April 3, 2017.

¹³⁶ Gary Schwartzhoff, e-mail message to the author, March 4, 2017.

Chanticleer had participated in a concert called “A Renaissance Christmas” that included performances by several Bay Area choral groups. At one of these concerts, Chanticleer sang from an unused second balcony high above the rear of the nave in San Francisco’s St. Ignatius Church, the space later used to record *Our Heart’s Joy*. With the choir out of sight, Jennings recalled that the acoustic of the building created an other-worldly,



Figure 7.1. Rear balconies at St. Ignatius Church, San Francisco. Chanticleer traditionally sings the *Ave Maria* from the top-most balcony at the start of the second half of their annual Christmas concerts. Photo by an anonymous blogger.¹³⁷

angelic experience for the audience below. In the early 1990s, At Chanticleer’s first solo Christmas performance in the space, Jennings decided to begin the second half of the concert by singing the *Ave Maria* from that same upper balcony—a tradition that

¹³⁷ “Stepping into Church, One at a Time,” *Catholicnyc* (Blog), April 13, 2013, accessed June 3, 2017, <http://catholicnyc.blogspot.com/2013/04/st-ignatius-san-francisco-ca.html>.

continues to this day.¹³⁸ The singers usually perform one more piece from the upper balcony, then quickly make their way back to ground level at the rear of the church where they begin a set of popular carols, weaving their way through the audience and back to the front of the church, evoking the image of carolers going door-to-door.

Since the first performances and recording by the Harvard Glee Club, the *Ave Maria* is often associated with the Christmas season. Jennings speculates this might have something to do with the references to the Annunciation provided by the verses.¹³⁹ It may also be a coincidental result of Schubert's setting of the *Ave Maria* becoming a staple on radio stations at Christmastime. A third theory is that since the Christmas season is a time of year when people tend to listen to more choral music than normal, the inclusion of the *Ave Maria* at Chanticleer's live Christmas concerts and on their Christmas album *Our Heart's Joy* meant that its exposure was greater at Christmas than at any other time of the year. For many of Chanticleer's regular patrons, the performance of the Biebl marks the beginning of their Christmas Season. "For some, it's a big tradition. More than any other time of year, they have their favorite Christmas songs—songs that symbolize Christmas for them and start the Christmas season for them...People say, 'Christmas can start for me now that I've heard the Biebl'."¹⁴⁰ One year, Jennings decided not to include the *Ave Maria* on the program proper, but rather planned to sing it as an encore. The Chanticleer office received numerous complaints from audience members who claimed their Christmas had been ruined. The fact that the *Ave Maria* was sung as an encore was no consolation. Thinking the piece was omitted

¹³⁸ Jennings, telephone interview by the author, March 31, 2017.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

had made them so upset that they were unable to enjoy the concert at all.¹⁴¹ The next year, Jennings retuned the *Ave Maria* to its place as the opener to the second half of the concert.

Many choirs throughout the world have developed their own traditions around the *Ave Maria*. It is still in the permanent repertoire of the choir at Biebl's former church in Fürstenfeldbruck,¹⁴² and recordings made by various choirs are frequently broadcast on Bayerischer Rundfunk.¹⁴³ A request for stories about memorable performances and special traditions relating to the *Ave Maria* was posted by the author on several choral-related internet forums in March of 2017. It drew many interesting responses:

“Every Christmas morning the men sing it at St James in LA. It's a killer, tired after being up for Midnight Mass, but of course it's always worth it.” – Joe Twist

“The Pacific Youth Choir's Men's Chorus Tsunami had a tradition of singing this song at the winter concert and inviting Alumni up to sing it with the current chorus.” – Forrest Gamba

“We at Peninsula Women's Chorus have been performing the SSAA version surrounding the audience at the end of our concerts.” – Martin Benvenuto

“The Compline Choir at St John's Episcopal in Tallahassee ends each semester with the TTB/TTBB version, and it's usually one of the largest congregations of the season.” – John Martin

“The University of Tennessee Men's Chorale, which I now conduct, has performed it every winter concert for years. I hear comments from students like, ‘It's the reason my family comes to the concert,’ ‘Get ready to see my mother bawl,’ and ‘My grandmother would start a mutiny if we did not sing it.’ – Jaclyn Johnson

There were many personal stories as well.

“My most vivid memory, besides singing the premiere of this glorious work, was the final time I sang it with members of Chanticleer at the service for Louis Botto. What made it poignant for me was that Louis and I sang the same part... even

¹⁴¹ Ibid. The author also remembers these letters.

¹⁴² Hauser, e-mail message to the author, April 6, 2017.

¹⁴³ Bulla, e-mail to the author, May 15, 2017.

after performing that work probably more than 100 times (many more times!) singing it with Louis remains a high point.” – Neal Rogers, former member of Chanticleer

“I took my first high school choir trip as a teacher to Washington D.C., and the [*Ave Maria*] was part of our tour repertoire. A couple was having their wedding photos taken on the Ellipse (essentially the south lawn of the White House), and one of my students approached them and asked if they would like our choir to sing a song for them. It wasn't a performance day for us, and D.C. was experiencing a 90-degree-plus heat wave (unusual for April) - the kids were beyond casually dressed in whatever T-shirts, shorts, etc. they had, and were scattered around the area in small groups. The bride said, "OK, sure," and she, her new husband, and her wedding party were shocked to see 60+ students come running to form up. (It was essentially a flash mob before that was a thing.) The kids asked me for a starting note from the pitch pipe [for the *Ave Maria*], and they took care of the rest, to the amazement and delight of the crowd. Following the performance (during which a sizable crowd had gathered), the students lined up to shake the bride & groom's hands and wish them well. The bride spoke to me afterward and said "when that kid came up, I figured maybe he and a few friends were going to sing their school fight song or something - those guys are real musicians, though! That was incredible!" – Christopher Andrade, Music Teacher, Darien High School, CT

“I first heard the Biebl many years ago at a concert in San Francisco of the two Japanese performance artists, Eiko and Koma. The stage was a pool of water, no more than two inches deep, in which the naked performers moved in slow motion on their hands and knees, creating a myriad of shapes and forms. Around the perimeter of the pool were the men of Chanticleer, dressed in hooded robes. I remember how stunning was the combination of the slowly moving dancers and the monastic quality of Chanticleer's "Ave Maria" accompaniment.” – Nancy La Bash, Dance Instructor, San Francisco, CA

“Upon entering the vast, tour filled nave of St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague, GMCLA - Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles [director] Jon Bailey placed the some 100 of us in a great ring in the middle of the crossing without a word. He then pointed to Misha who intoned the *Ave Maria* which sounded just above the noise of the tours. Within seconds everything in the cathedral stood still to catch the moment when heaven and earth were joined in spontaneous surprise! And an American couple, hearing those strains underneath in the crypt came up from under us and held each other with tears in their eyes. They then changed their tour plans and heard us in concert in Vienna. Truth...” – David Dehner, former Organist at Misson Dolores Basilica, San Francisco, CA

“My Mother, Elizabeth Rich Bell, died only three days before her 87th birthday in early March, 1999... Completely by chance, I discovered that Chanticleer was to sing a concert only fifteen miles from Harrisburg the night before my Mother's

service... Immediately I began to consider the possibilities. [After several phone calls and emails], Lori [then Chanticleer's tour manager] called me at home to say the group had agreed to sing... I had meditated during the Biebl by trying to control my breathing. Under even ordinary circumstances, tears well up in me at the beginning of the "Sancta Maria." My family and I will always be grateful to Chanticleer for playing such a significant part at my Mother's memorial service. – Rob Bell, founding member of Chanticleer

CONCLUSIONS

The intent of this study is to fill in significant gaps in the knowledge and understanding of Franz Biebl as a composer, the events surrounding the composition of his *Ave Maria*, and its reception in the nearly sixty years since its premier. I also sought to investigate how a relatively simple and originally obscure piece has had such a big impact on singers and audiences. Harmonic and formal analyses uncover economic and uncomplicated craftsmanship. A look at its publishing, recording and performance history reveal a lineage of choral artists who championed it with loyalty and resolve. Personal testimonies attest to its ability to affect performers and listeners in meaningful ways. But, none of these areas of research provides a concise explanation.

Adrian Fischer postulates:

It benefits from the best of both being familiar and being surprising. To start with the fact that it's an *Ave Maria* means that a significant percent of the audience kind of knows what they're going to hear, at least subject matter-wise. They're familiar with the words; there is some familiarity with which they can latch onto. I have to believe that helps the brain set aside the cerebral processes because you don't have to think about it too much. You let yourself emotionally get taken away by it—get moved by it. It takes you on a very satisfying emotional journey that does go somewhere and then resolves. This notion of an emotional journey through storytelling is really important. In a kind of way, it tells a story in a non-literal sense. It creates an emotional arc that brings you to a climactic moment and then resolves, and that kind of journey is very emotionally satisfying.¹⁴⁴

Eph Ehly attributes the phenomena to a higher power:

Sometimes I think the Lord just gives a person the talent to write one great piece, like [Peter] Wilhousky's *Battle Hymn* arrangement, and it's really outstanding, like Willy Richter's *Creation* or Biebl's *Ave Maria*, and then nothing else works.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Fischer, telephone interview by the author, March 20, 2017.

¹⁴⁵ Ehly, telephone interview by the author, March 30, 2017.

David Dehner, who contributed one of the anecdotes presented in the previous chapter, proposes a theological metaphor:

[Biebl] reminds us that music requires memory—short term memory. Every time we return to the texture of voices repeating and slightly altering the intention of "Ave Maria..." we are inside the conversation not just with Maria while pregnant. It was that God chose to reconcile us through our nature, through the birth of a child and a woman conceived without sin (that spotless rose we also sing about). And the phrases grow from that simple Biebl original harmony, like a child growing inside a woman and ends with our own plea to the "Mater Dei" to bring us back to God. And like *Messiah*, Biebl has to end his masterwork in another "Amen" or 'let it so be' to bring us back into the real world through awe and surprise in the harmonic twist at the end. It is a quintessential "mystery work" as is the role of a virgin birth...¹⁴⁶

Believer or not, humans respond to that organic growth—they recognize patterns and repetition. When organization progresses from the simpler to the more complicated, we are naturally engaged and perceptive.

Perhaps Taylor Brorby, a writer living in Ames, Iowa, comes closest to an answer by contextualizing the *Ave Maria* with respect to events dominating the news in March of 2015—the race riots in Ferguson, Missouri. He submitted this article to the classicalMPR website:

Recently, in a first-year composition course I teach, our discussion veered into the timely topic of Ferguson, Missouri. The room was graveyard silent. None of us dared tread out into the world of deep conversation. We listened to the silence. After a moment, I rose and turned on Franz Biebl's *Ave Maria*.

Biebl, who was a prisoner of war in Michigan during World War II, knew something about heartache, about feeling disquieted about modern life. The text, though sacred, transports the listener to an ethereal realm: we float above the detritus of modern life for only a few minutes.

We listened. We closed our eyes and breathed in and out while Chanticleer sang with clarity and emotion. No one moved. Many of my students are not religious

¹⁴⁶ David Dehner, Facebook Instant Messenger conversation with the author, April 25, 2017.

— and yet there is something soaring, comforting, something that nests inside the listener during Biebl's piece. Maybe there is an element of grace.

When the piece ended, when the male choir lilted and flowed, singing "Ave Maria," I rose and turned off the music. I do not know if the piece was successful — or what that even means in the context of our national discussion. A few students dabbed their eyes.

I did not tell my students that Biebl was drafted in World War II, that he fought with the German army. Perhaps it was because, as a teacher, I didn't have the answer, didn't know what to say. I lived in my own silence, in my own wrestling with the issue. Our world is so very complex, so fraught with fear and tension. I listen to Biebl at home, sinking into his harmonies, into the text that is solace and support for those in pain, those in need, wondering where the quick and easy answer is. I cannot find it.

In choosing to listen to Biebl maybe it was my attempt, as a teacher, to be vulnerable, to let my students know that as we prepared for a winter break from school there is deep pain and deep suffering in the world — perhaps it was my desire to listen with my students to something of beauty in a busy and confusing world.

I simply rose and said, "Class dismissed."¹⁴⁷

As I mentioned in the introduction to this paper, I first encountered the *Ave Maria* when Weston Noble selected it as one of the pieces for the Iowa All-State Chorus in 1990. My memories of those rehearsals and that performance are still vivid. It might as well have been the only song on the program; the experience of singing it eclipsed all else. While earning my undergraduate degree in vocal performance from Simpson College, my friends and I would huddle in my room, turn out the lights, put *Our Heart's Joy* into the CD player and listen to the *Ave Maria* during study breaks on nights before big tests. During my decade as a singer in Chanticleer, I always looked forward to the Christmas season with a mixture of excitement and dread. I was never able to diminish

¹⁴⁷ Taylor Brorby, "Biebl's *Ave Maria*: Music for Contemplation in Troubled Times," classicalMPR, March 23, 2015, accessed May 17, 2017, <http://www.classicalmpr.org/story/2015/02/03/biebl-ave-maria>.

the palpable weight of expectation I felt from the audience at every performance. When PBS recorded the *Ave Maria* for the national broadcast of *A Chanticleer Christmas* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, I had to grapple with the awesome responsibility of “getting it right,” knowing that my performance would either be revered or panned by current and future lovers of the piece.¹⁴⁸

In all my years living with the *Ave Maria*, I never cease to revel in the sheer sound of the simple, soaring melodic lines and the sumptuous, comforting harmonies. My most memorable experience of the *Ave Maria* was a joint performance I conducted with Chanticleer and the US Naval Academy Men’s Glee Club on March 10, 2010.¹⁴⁹ The Glee Club’s director, Aaron Smith, reached out to me to say that the choir would be stopping in San Francisco on tour the same night that Chanticleer was performing at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. He asked if there was any chance of collaborating in some way and mentioned that they had the *Ave Maria* in their repertoire. Chanticleer normally did not accept requests like this, but something about Smith’s email caused us to consider the possibilities. After some thought, we agreed that the members of the Glee Club would sit in the audience in their uniforms for the concert, undoubtedly gaining attention from the audience. Then, when the concert was finished and Chanticleer made their final bows, I would come out on stage to introduce them and invite them to come up and join us.

We had a very successful pre-concert rehearsal of the *Ave Maria*, making the necessary alterations from our normal practices so that the Glee Club sang Choir I and

¹⁴⁸ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVyCJIPiHFg>.

¹⁴⁹ For a recording of this performance, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rby62ZghBWg>.

Chanticleer sang Choir II. The members of the Glee Club demonstrated high levels of musicianship and a polite seriousness that belied their youth. Before we left the stage, Smith asked if the singers in Chanticleer would introduce themselves and say a little about their musical training. When they had finished, I asked if we could know more about some of their members, and Smith suggested that the seniors, or “First Mid-Shipmen,” introduce themselves by stating their name, hometown, major, and assignment after graduation. One after one, with perfect military decorum, these young musicians stepped forward and told us, without fear or hesitation, that they were specialists in mechanics, navigation, gunnery and the like and would soon be deployed to the Persian Gulf, Iraq or Afghanistan. The realization that these musicians, who had just sung with such emotion and sensitivity, were about to sail off to areas of armed conflict was shocking. Later, as we performed the *Ave Maria* together during the concert, I looked at each of their faces as their voices rose and fell with the swell and ebb of Biebl’s music. I couldn’t help but imagine how dramatically their lives were about to change. I worried about the pain and suffering they were likely to encounter, not to mention the serious peril in which they were choosing to put themselves for the sake of our country. When their humanity was tested and when they felt most isolated and far from home, I hoped that they could think back to this moment and remember the feelings of camaraderie, unity and brotherhood that the *Ave Maria* evoked in us.

Perhaps that is the secret to Biebl’s “little song”—its ability to connect people by a shared musical experience that is simple yet eloquent, direct yet transcendent, and immediate yet timeless.

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APPENDIX A

BIOGRAPHY OF FRANZ BIEBL

Among Hinshaw Music's archive of correspondence and contract agreements relating to the *Ave Maria* is a biography of Biebl's life purportedly written by Biebl himself. A translator is mentioned but not named. The date is also unknown, but in it, Biebl mentions that he currently works at "the Town Parish in Fürstenfeldbruck." This means that the biography was written sometime prior to 1959, an assumption supported by the fact that he doesn't name Wildt's Musikverlag as one of his publishers and that he mentions his "long-time connection" to Bayerischer Rundfunk but does not say he works there. The full text of the biography is provided here:

BIOGRAPHY

Written by Franz Biebl

(italics are translator's personal notes)

I was born on September 1, 1906, the eleventh child of principal teacher Johann Biebl, in Pursruck, County Amberg, Oberpfalz, Germany. After a few years of elementary school, I attended the Humanistic Gymnasium in Amberg from 1916 to 1925.

In 1917 I lost my oldest brother to the war; in 1921, another brother and my father died. Under these circumstances I could not expect any financial support from my family to attend the University. After graduating in 1925 (*from the Humanistic Gymnasium, I assume*), I worked until the fall of 1926 when I began my studies at the State Music Academy in Munich.

I studied composition (Prof. Joseph Haas) and directing (Prof. Dr. Heinrich Knappe), receiving a Master's Degree in both categories. Furthermore, I studied Catholic Church Music (Prof. Ludwig Berberich) and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree.

From 1932 to 1939 I worked as Chorus Director at the parish of Munich-Thalkirchen. In 1939 I accepted a teaching position in Music Theory and Chorus Singing at the music academy and youth music school, The Mozarteum, in Salzburg, Austria.

In 1943 I was drafted, and in 1944 was captured by the American army. When I was released in 1946 I returned to Austria.

Since my wife was a native Austrian, she and our two children were able to remain in Austria during my absence. At first I tried to regain my teaching position at the Mozarteum but, because of my German nationality, my application was refused, even though I was politically clean (*untainted?*). We left Austria in 1947, living for several weeks in a refugee camp outside Munich. Finally I managed to find us two furnished rooms in Munich. By this time the Music Academy had already hired all their staff, unfortunately. Through the recommendation of Church Music Director Prof. Heinrich Wiesmeyer, I received a position as Church Director of the Town Parish in Furstenfeldbruck [sic.], a position which I still hold today (*what year? – no date on* [The last line is cut off.]

In those years I had to focus on the well-being of my family, trying to over-come my precarious financial situation and, therefore, I had to postpone all personal ambition of composing my own work. I gave private music lessons to Germans and many Americans. With a mixed chorus of over 100 persons, I was able to stage the second performance (and the premiere in South Germany) of the oratorium, “Das Jahr im Lied” (The Year in Song) by Joseph Haas. Through several stations of the Bavarian State Radio, with whom I have had a long-time connection, older existing compositions of mine (songs and instrumental works), as well as more recent works, found their way to the public. About three years ago (*same problem: no dates*) I was able to compose my own music again.

The following editors have published both small and large works of mine: Bohm & Sohn, Braun-Perette, Hochstein, Hohner, Holzschuh, Kistner & Siegel, Leuckart, Moseler, Schott, Simrock, Tonger and Boggenreiter.

My talent and dedication belongs to the song: therefore, I create works mainly for children’s, male, and mixed choruses. Well-known chorus and song-school directors like Waldemar Kling and Prof. Joseph Lautenbacher have engaged themselves for my work and have brought recognition to it through orchestrating performances.

Long-time experience as a chorus director has given me an intimate knowledge of choral music in general and the folk song in particular. An inherited pedagogic talent led not only to a successful teaching career, but enhanced a good relationship between teacher and student.

Franz Biebl

APPENDIX B

NEW EDITIONS OF FRANZ BIEBL'S *AVE MARIA*

The purpose of these new editions is to correct obvious errors, point out discrepancies, and normalize formatting. All changes to the editions published by Wildt's Musikverlag and Hinshaw Music are in brackets and/or noted with an asterisk. The four voicings are provided in the following order:

	PAGE
1. TTB/TTBB	64
2. SAT/SATB	68
3. SAA/SSAA	72
4. SSA/SSAA	76

Ave Maria (Angelus Domini)

Two Male Choruses, TTB/TTBB or
Solo Trio TTB and 4 part Male Chorus TTBB, a cappella

Ancient Liturgical

FRANZ BIEBL (1906-2001)

Newly edited by MATTHEW OLTMAN (2017)

Chanter
mp

Bass solo

An - ge - lus Do - mi - ni nun - ti - a - vit Ma - ri - ae

et con - ce - pit de Spi - ri - tu sanc - to.

1 *Quietly flowing* *p*

Tenor 1&2

CHOIR 2
(or solo trio)

Baritone

A - ve Ma - ri - a gra - ti - a

Tenor 1&2

CHOIR 1

Bass 1&2

A - ve Ma - ri - a gra - ti - a ple -

5

ple - na, Do - mi - nus te - cum, be - ne -

na, Do - mi - nus te - cum, be - ne - dic - ta

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JUNE, 2017

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9

dic - ta tu in mu - li - e - ri -
tu in mu - li - e - ri - bus

13

bus et be - ne - dic - tus fruc - tus ven - tris
et be - ne - dic - tus fruc - tus ven - tris tu -

17

tu - i, Je - sus, Je - sus.
i, Je - sus, Je - sus.

1. Chanter

Tenor II Solo

Ma - ri - a di - xit: Ec - ce an - cil - la Do - mi - ni,
fi - at mi - hi se - cun - dum ver - bum tu - um.

Return to measure 1

2. *Chanter*

Tenor I
Solo

Et ver-bum ca-ro fac - tum est et ha-bi-ta - vit in no - bis. *Return to measure 1*

22 3. *mp* [*cresc. poco a poco*] *mp* [*cresc. poco a poco*]
sus. Sanc - ta Ma - ri - a, ma - ter

p [*cresc. poco a poco*] *p* [*cresc. poco a poco*]
sus. Sanc - ta Ma - ri - a, ma - ter De - i,

26 De - i, o - ra pro no - bis pec - ca - to - ri -
pec - ca - to - ri - bus
o - ra pro no - bis pec - ca - to - ri - bus
pec - ca - to - ri - bus

30 bus, Sanc - ta Ma - ri - a, o - ra pro
Sanc - ta Ma - ri - a, o - ra pro - no - bis

*This is the only voicing that includes tenuto markings.
**Only the SSA/SSAA voicing has *f* marked here.

34

no - bis nunc et in ho - ra mor - tis

nunc et in ho - ra mor - tis no -

39

no - strae. *mp cresc.* A - men, —

— strae. *p cresc.* A - men, — A - men,

A - men, A - men,

44

più cresc. A - men, — A - men.

più cresc. A - men, — A - men.

più cresc. A - men, — A - men, — A - men.

A - men, — A - men, A - men.

Ave Maria (Angelus Domini)

Two Mixed Choruses, SAT/SATB or
Solo Trio SAT* and 4 part Mixed Chorus SATB, a cappella

Ancient Liturgical

FRANZ BIEBL (1906-2001)

Newly edited by MATTHEW OLTMAN (2017)

Chanter
mp

Bass solo

An - ge - lus Do - mi - ni nun - ti - a - vit Ma - ri - ae
et con - ce - pit de Spi - ri - tu sanc - to.

1 *Quietly flowing* *p*

Soprano
Alto

CHOIR 2
(or solo trio)

Tenor*

A - ve Ma - ri - a, gra - ti - a
A - ve Ma - ri - a, gra - ti - a ple -

Soprano
Alto

CHOIR 1

Tenor
Bass

pp

A - ve Ma - ri - a, gra - ti - a ple -

5

ple - na, Do - mi - nus te - cum, be - ne -
na, Do - mi - nus te - cum, be - ne - dic - ta

*In the original publication of this voicing, this line is in bass clef and is labeled Tenor (or Baritone).

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9

dic - ta tu in mu - li - e - ri -

tu in mu - li - e - ri - bus

13

[p] bus et be - ne - dic - tus fruc - tus ven - tris -

[p] et be - ne - dic - tus fruc - tus ven - tris tu -

17

tu - i, Je - sus, Je - sus.

i, Je - sus, Je - sus.

1. + 2.

1. Chanter

Alto Solo *mp* Ma - ri - a di - xit: Ec - ce an - cil - la Do - mi - ni,

fi - at mi - hi se - cun - dum ver - bum tu - um. *Return to measure 1*

2. *Chant*

Soprano Solo Return to measure 1

Et ver-bum ca-ro fac - tum est et ha-bi-ta - vit in no - bis.

22 3. *mp* [*cresc. poco a poco*] *mp* [*cresc. poco a poco*]
 sus. Sanc - ta Ma - ri - a, ma - ter —

p [*cresc. poco a poco*] *p* [*cresc. poco a poco*]
 sus. Sanc - ta Ma - ri - a, ma - ter De - i,

26 De - i, o - ra pro no - bis pec - ca - to - ri -
 pec - ca - to - ri - bus
 o - ra pro no - bis pec - ca - to - ri - bus
 pec - ca - to - ri - bus

30 *mf* *mf* *mf*
 bus, Sanc - ta Ma - ri - a, o - ra pro
 Sanc - ta Ma - ri - a, o - ra pro - no - bis

*The original publication of this voicing has two half notes on "De-i." The other 3 voicings have the note values suggested here.

**Only the SSA/SSAA voicing has *f* marked here.

***In the original publication of this voicing, this note is an E flat. This is obviously an error.

34

no - bis nunc et in ho - ra mor - tis

nunc et in ho - ra mor - tis no -

39

mp cresc. no - strae. A - men,

mp cresc. A - men,

p cresc. A - men,

p cresc. A - men, A - men,

A - men, A - men,

44

più cresc. A - men, A - men.

più cresc. A - men, A - men.

più cresc. A - men, A - men.

più cresc. A - men, A - men, A - men.

A - men, A - men, A - men.

*This chord is handled differently in each of the four voicings. The dissonance caused by this D might be a printing error.

Ave Maria (Angelus Domini)

7 part Mixed Chorus SAATBB, a cappella

Ancient Liturgical

FRANZ BIEBL (1906-2001)

Newly edited by MATTHEW OTLMAN (2017)

Chanter
mp

Bass solo

An - ge - lus Do - mi - ni nun - ti - a - vit Ma - ri - ae
et con - ce - pit de Spi - ri - tu sanc - to.

1 *Quietly flowing* *p*

Soprano

Alto
1* & 2

Tenor
1 & 2

Bass
1 & 2

A - ve Ma - ri - a gra - ti - a
A - ve Ma - ri - a gra - ti - a ple -

5

ple - na, Do - mi - nus te - cum, be - ne -
na, Do - mi - nus te - cum, be - ne - dic - ta

*Soprano 2 may sing Alto 1 for best balance.

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9

dic - ta tu in mu - li - e - ri -
tu in mu - li - e - ri - bus

13

bus et be - ne - dic - tus fruc - tus ven - tris
et be - ne - dic - tus fruc - tus ven - tris tu -

17

tu - i, Je - sus, Je - sus.
i, Je - sus, Je - sus.

1. Chanter
Tenor Solo *mp*

Ma - ri - a di - xit: Ec - ce an - cil - la Do - mi - ni,

fi - at mi - hi se - cun - dum ver - bum tu - um.

Return to measure 1

*This is the only version to have voices moving from E to C in three different octaves. Biebl likely chose to have the Altos remain on the E to avoid parallel motion with either the Sopranos or the Baritone.

2. *Chant*

Tenor Solo *Return to measure 1*

Et ver-bum ca-ro fac - tum est et ha-bi-ta - vit in no - bis.

22 3. *mp* [*cresc. poco a poco*]
 sus. Sanc - ta Ma - ri - a, ma - ter —

p [*cresc. poco a poco*]
 sus. Sanc - ta Ma - ri - a, ma - ter De - i,

26 De - i, o - ra pro no - bis pec - ca - to - ri -
 pec - ca - to - ri - bus
 o - ra pro no - bis pec - ca - to - ri - bus
 pec - ca - to - ri - bus

30 [*f*]
 bus, Sanc - ta Ma - ri - a, o - ra pro
 Sanc - ta Ma - ri - a, o - ra pro - no - bis

* Only the the SSA/SSAA voicing has *f* marked here.

34

no - bis nunc — et in ho - ra mor - tis

nunc — et — in — ho - ra mor - tis no -

39

no - stiae. A - men, —

mp cresc.

A - men, —

p cresc.

no - stiae. A - men, A - men,

p cresc.

A - men, A - men,

44

A - men, — A - men.

p più cresc.

A - men, —

p più cresc.

A - men, A - men.

p più cresc.

A - men, — A - men, A - men.

Ave Maria (Angelus Domini)

Two Treble Choruses, SSA/SSAA or
Solo Trio SSA and 4 part Treble Chorus SSAA, a cappella

Ancient Liturgical

FRANZ BIEBL (1906-2001)

Newly edited by MATTHEW OLTMAN (2017)

Chanter
mp

Alto solo

An - ge - lus Do - mi - ni nun - ti - a - vit Ma - ri - ae
et con - ce - pit de Spi - ri - tu sanc - to.

1 *Quietly flowing* *p*

Soprano 1&2

CHOIR 2
(or solo trio)

Alto

Soprano 1&2

CHOIR 1

Alto 1&2

A - ve Ma - ri - a gra - ti - a
A - ve Ma - ri - a gra - ti - a ple -
na, Do - mi - nus te - cum, be - ne -
na, Do - mi - nus te - cum, be - ne - dic - ta

5

ple - na, Do - mi - nus te - cum, be - ne -
na, Do - mi - nus te - cum, be - ne - dic - ta

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9

dic - ta tu in mu - li - e - ri -
tu in mu - li - e - ri - bus

13

bus et be - ne - dic - tus fruc - tus ven - tris
et be - ne - dic - tus fruc - tus ven - tris tu -

17

tu - i, Je - sus, Je - sus.
i, Je - sus, Je - sus.

Soprano II Solo

1. Chanter
mp

Ma - ri - a di - xit: Ec - ce an - cil - la Do - mi - ni,
fi - at mi - hi se - cun - dum ver - bum tu - um.

Return to
measure 1

2. Chanter

Soprano I Solo Return to measure 1

Et ver-bum ca-ro fac - tum est et ha-bi-ta - vit in no - bis.

22 3. [*mp*]* [*cresc. poco a poco*]
 sus. Sanc - ta Ma - ri - a, ma - ter —

[*p*]* [*cresc. poco a poco*]
 sus. Sanc - ta Ma - ri - a, ma - ter De - i,

[*p*]* [*cresc. poco a poco*]

26 De - i, o - ra pro no - bis pec - ca - to - ri -
 pec - ca - to - ri - bus
 o - ra pro no - bis pec - ca - to - ri - bus
 pec - ca - to - ri - bus

30 bus, Sanc - ta Ma - ri - a, o - ra pro
 Sanc - ta Ma - ri - a, o - ra pro - no - bis

* The original publication of this voicing has *mf* in both choirs. The other 3 voicings have *p* and *mp* as suggested here.

34

no - bis nunc et in ho - ra mor - tis

nunc et in ho - ra mor - tis no -

39 *mp cresc.*

no - stae. A - men, —

p cresc. A - men, —

stae. A - men, A - men,

p cresc. A - men, — A - men,

44 *più cresc.*

A - men, — A - men.

più cresc. A - men, — A - men.

più cresc. A - men, — A - men.

più cresc. A - men, — A - men.

A - men, — A - men, A - men.