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A Bohemian Christmas

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
MEDIEVAL SCUPLTURE COURT
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A Bohemian Christmas

I		
Alleluia		Mikolaj Radomski, fl. 1420–30
Jesu Kriste, ščedý kněže		Czech, 13 th century
Ave regina caelorum		Codex Specialnik, before 1500
Vizmež pacholička		Czech, 13 th century
Flosculum amenitatis		Codex Specialnik
Svatý Václave		Czech, 13 th century
Náš milý Svatý Václave		Codex Specialnik
	II	
Magnificat anima mea Dominum		Radomski
	III	
“Minnelied” (instruments)		Neidhart von Reuenthal, c. 1190-c.1240
Omnia beneficia		Polish, late 12 th century
Ortus de Polonia		Polish, 13 th century
Gaude, mater Polonia		Polish, 13 th century
Breve regnum		Polish, early 15 th century
Angelus ad virginem missus		Polish, 15 th century
	IV	
Tant plus vos voye (instruments)		Czech, 14 th century
Sanctus – La Messe de Nostre Dame		Machaut
Agnus Dei – La Messe de Nostre Dame		Machaut
	V	
“Czaldy waldy “ (instruments)		Czech, late 14 th century
Vzdajmež chválu		Codex Specialnik
Nobis est natus hodie		Codex Specialnik

TEXTS

Jesu Kriste, šcedrý kněže,
s uocem, synem jeden bože,
tvoje šcedrost, naše zbožie,
Kyrie eleison.

Andělé jdú spivající,
svého tvórcě hledající,
chválu jemu vzdávající,
Kyrie eleison.

Svatá Máři porodila
svého syna, hospodina,
sedm radostí obnovila.
Kyrie eleison.

Svatá Máři, božie máti,
daj nám svého syna znáti;
s ním na věky přěbyvati.
Kyrie eleison.

Ave regina caelorum
ave domina angelorum
salve radix sancta
ex qua mundo lux est orta.

Ave virgo gloriosa
super omnes speciosa
vale valde decora
et pro nobis semper Christum exora.

Vizmež pacholička,
ant' v jesličkách leži,
jeho milost tak veliká,
ktož chce, tent' otieži.

TRANSLATIONS

Jesus Christ, gracious priest,
one with the Father and the Son, O God,
your graciousness is our treasure,
Lord have mercy.

Angels come, singing,
seeking their creator,
praising him,
Lord have mercy.

Holy Mary gave birth
to her son, our Lord,
she reaffirmed the seven joys.
Lord have mercy.

Holy Mary, mother of God,
grant us to know your son;
that we may be with him forever.
Lord have mercy.

Hail, queen of heaven,
hail, queen of angels,
we greet thee, holy root
from which light sprang forth to the world.

Hail, glorious virgin,
beautiful beyond all others;
farewell, most illustrious,
and pray ever to Christ for us.

Behold the baby boy
who lies in the crib,
his grace is so great,
whoever seeks will rejoice.

Refrain

Blaze, že sme dočekali
té milosti nové,
ještot jsú dávno žádali
starší prorokové.

Sobě věčne spasenie
jeho narozenie
a všem hriechóm odpuštěně
kolikrát pro viny.

Refrain:

Radujme se s anjely,
děkujíc z milosti,
zpievajíc: budiž chvála
bohu na výsosti.

Veselme se křest' ané,
buoh sě nám narodil,
což jest Adam byl zavadil,
Ježíš vysvobodil.

Refrain:

A lidem mír na zemi
budiž dobrého chtěnie,
pamatujíce s veselím
to anjelské peniě.

Maria božie matko
i panno přečistá,
okojiž nám své dět' átko,
boha Jezu Krista.

Refrain

Staviž těžká rozdělenie
v tvém svatém kostele,
pro tvé svaté narozenie
nemstiž se již viece.

Modlmež sě, křest' ané,
prosíc slitováni,
pane náš, milý Ježíši,
dajž nám již sjednáni.

Refrain

Staviž těžká rozdělenie

Happy are we who have awaited
the coming of this new grace
that was called for so long ago
by the ancient prophets.

His birth is
our everlasting salvation
and forgiveness for all our sins,
for our many faults.

We rejoice with the angels,
with thanks and love,
singing: praise
God in the highest.

Christians rejoice!
God has been born for us,
What Adam brought on us
Christ has freed us from.

And peace to people on earth!
be of good will,
remembering with happiness
the angelic singing.

Mary, Mother of God
and virgin most pure,
nourish your child for us,
God and Jesus Christ.

Put an end to the painful discord
in your holy church,
for the sake of your holy birth,
do not punish us more.

We Christians pray,
pleading for compassion,
our Lord, beloved Jesus,
give us unity now.

Put an end to the painful discord

v tvém svatém kostele,
pro tvé svaté narození
nemstiž se již více.

Rač Ježíši staviti
všecky bůře škodné,
od zlého náš zde zbaviti,
daj časy pokojné.

Refrain

Všíchni božie vyvoleni
prostež hospodina,
ať nám po našem skončení
hřechův nezpomíná.

Abychom se vzdálili
již ode všie zlosti,
boha věčně již chválili
děkujíc z milosti.

Refrain

Přiviniž nás, hospodina
ažť před súdem stanem,
ty jsi útočište jisté,
chvála bohu. Amen.

Flosculum amenitatis

virgo singularis
tibi concinamus
modulum suavitatis
pro nobis Deum exora
mater pietatis
o mater semper pia.

[Náš milý] Svatý Václave

vévodo česke země
kněže náš,
pros za ny boha
svatého ducha
Christe eleison.

Spomoci my tvé zádáme,
smiluj se nad nami

in your holy church,
for the sake of your holy birth,
do not punish us more.

Jesus, put an end to
all harmful rebellion,
keep us from evil,
grant us peace.

All those called by God
beg the Lord
that after our death
our sins not be remembered.

So that we can remove ourselves
from all evil,
we praise God forever,
giving thanks for his grace.

Hold us, O Lord,
when we stand before the judgment,
you are our true refuge,
praise God. Amen.

Little flower of loveliness,
unique virgin,
let us sing to you
a melody of sweetness.
Pray God for us,
O pious mother,
O mother ever faithful.

[Our beloved] St. Wenceslas,
leader of the Czech land,
our priest,
intercede for us with God,
with the Holy Spirit.
Christ have mercy.

We beg your aid,
grant us your mercy,

utěš smutné,
zažeň vše zlé,
svatý Václave
Kyrie eleison.

Maria matko žádúci
tys královna všemohúci
pros za ny boha
svatého ducha
Christe eleison.

Nebeskét' jest dvorstvo krásné,
blaze jemu,
ktož tam ducjde:
život věčný,
oheň jasný
svatého ducha.
Kyrie eleison.

Ty jsi dědic české země,
rač pomieti
ma sve plémě,
nedejž zahynuti
nám i budúcím
svatý Václave
Christe eleison.

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

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

Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est
et sanctum nomen eius.

Et misericordia eius a progenie
in progenies timentibus eum.

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

console the despondent,
banish all evil,
St. Wenceslas.
Lord have mercy.

Beloved Mother Mary,
all-powerful queen,
intercede for us with God,
with the Holy Spirit.
Christ have mercy.

Heaven is a beautiful mansion,
happy is he
who gets there:
never-ending life,
the bright flame
of the Holy Spirit.
Lord have mercy.

You are heir of the Czech lands,
remember
your people,
keep us and those to come
from perishing,
St. Wenceslas!
Christ have mercy

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

For he hath regarded the lowliness
of his handmaiden, for behold from
henceforth all generations
shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath magnified
me, and holy is his name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him
throughout all generations.

He hath showed strength with his arm;
he hath scattered the proud in the

Deposuit potentes de sede

et exaltavit humiles.

Esurientes implevit bonis,
et divites dimisit inanes.

Suscepit Israel puerum suum,
recordatus misericordiae suae,

sicut locutus est ad patres nostros,
Abraham et semini eius in saecula.

Gloria patri, et filio,
et spiritui sancto. [Amen]

Omnia beneficia
gaudia generantia
variaque dat gratia,
dulcia movens studia
Laudare Deum
qui salvat reum
data venia.

Sapui, sicut fatui,
nam ut potui,
ita posui [sed] inuitui
renui prout potui.
Si nunc regiro
non est pro miro,
quia sonui.

Ortus de Polonia
Stanislaus studia
legit puerilia
studiosa mente,
tandem Christi vernula
sublimates infula
fit virtutum formula
Domino favente. Alleluia.

imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their
seat
and hath exalted the humble and meek.

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

He, remembering his mercy, has helped
his servant Israel,

as he promised to our forefathers,
Abraham and his seed, forever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit. [Amen]

All benefits,
which bring forth all kinds of joys,
are given by grace,
and inspire sweet eagerness
to praise God,
who saves the sinner
with forgiveness of sin.

I grew wise, as I bore witness;
for where I could,
I set it down; at the outset
I declined as much as I was able.
If I now govern,
it is no wonder,
for I have proclaimed it.

Born in Poland,
Stanislaus read
his boyhood lessons
with very great care;
then our native, raising up the glories
of Christ's passion,
became the model of virtues,
pleasing to God. Alleluia.

Gaude, mater Polonia,
prole fecunda nobili,
summi Regis magnalia
laude frequenta vigili.

Cuius benigna gratia,
Stanislai pontificis,
passionis insignia
signis fulgent mirificis.

Hic certans pro iustitia
Regis non cedit furiae,
stat pro plebis iniuria
Christi miles in acie.

Breve regnum erigitur,
sublimatum deprimitur
et depressum elabitur
transmutato tempore.

Puerilem militiam,
perargutam peritiam,
regentium industriam,
hanc eduxit in opere.

Cracoviensem filium,
fulgentem velut liliam
ac de numero milium
cunctis preferendum.

Octo dierum spatium
hoc sustinet solacium,
post hoc regis palatium
plagis feriendum.

Namque regis electio
fit studii neglectio
ac desolatur lectio
tota septimana.

Angelus ad virginem

Rejoice, O mother Poland,
rich with such noble offspring; you keep
the great deeds of the most high king
in your vigil and praise.

His blessed graces shine forth,
of Stanislas the great bishop,
and of the insignia of his passion,
in wondrous signs.

Fighting for justice, he does not yield
to the fury of the king,
soldier of Christ, he stands up in the line
of battle against injuries done to the people.

A brief reign is established:
that which is elevated is brought down
and that which is pressed down slips out
from under in this transformed period.

Our boyish army,
our very obvious skills,
and our governors' industry,
this reign sets each of these things in motion.

[See] our son of Kraków,
as beautiful as the lily,
and chosen above all,
even amongst a group of thousands.

Our relief lasts for
a period of eight days;
afterward our king's palace
will be struck apart with blows.

For at the election of the king
we neglect our studies,
and abandon our readings
the whole week long.

When the angel who had been sent

missus dum intravit,
reverenter inclinans
eam salutavit;
"Ave," inquit, "Maria,
gratia plena,
estque tecum Dominus,
o virgo serena."

Beata haec audiens
Maria turbatur,
quae sit salutatio
quoque meditatur,
sed angelus Domini
eam consolatur,
secretum consilii
divi sibi fatur.

"Concipies filium,
gignes Dei natum,
Jesus nomen ipsius
erit nominatum,
patris David solium
erit sibi datum,
erit regnum ipsius
nunquam terminatum."

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus
Dominus Deus sabaoth.
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Osanna in excelsis.
Benedictus qui venit
in nomine Domini.
Osanna in excelsis.

Agnus Dei, (*twofold*)
qui tollis peccata mundi:
miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi:
dona nobis pacem.

to the virgin came in,
reverently bowing to her,
he saluted her.
"Hail, Mary," he said,
"you are filled with grace,
the Lord is with you,
O serene virgin."

When blessed Mary heard these things
she was disturbed as to
what kind of salutation this might be,
and fell into thought,
but the angel of the Lord
consoled her, and she realized it was
the hidden counsel
of the divine.

"You will conceive a son,
you will bring forth the offspring of God.
His name will be Jesus,
that very name,
the throne of his father David
will be given to him,
and of his kingdom
there will never be an end."

Holy, holy, holy
Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he that cometh
in the name of the lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

O lamb of God
who takes away the sins of the world:
have mercy upon us.
O lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world:
grant us thy peace.

Vzdajmež chválu bohu Israhelskému
nade všechny bohy bohu na jvzssimu
prosic za dar mir a pokoj lidu českému.

Ustavični jsúce bez rozpačení
neb nám to písmo svédčí i svaté čtenie
kto se pokřtí a uvěří ten spasen bude.

Nobis est natus hodie
de pura virgine
rex victorie,

Cui sol et aethera,
luna et sidera,
vernant per tempora.

Ideo nos terrigenae,
laudemus hodie
regem potentiae.

Ob hoc pangamus ei,
Omnes et singuli,
voce choralis.

Laudetur sancta trinitas
Simplex et unitas,
dicendo gratias.

Give praise to the God of Israel,
to the highest God of all gods,
grant peace to the Czech people.

Eternal and unhesitating,
as witnessed for us in Holy Scripture,
he who is baptized and believes will be
saved.

Today is born to us
from a pure virgin
the victorious king,

for whom the air and sun,
the moon and stars
flourish through the ages.

Therefore, let us earth-dwellers
praise this day
the king of power.

Let us sing of this to him,
each and every one,
with a voice of singing.

Praise to the Holy Trinity,
and one-fold unity,
we all give thanks.

NOTES

I. Bohemia and Moravia

Bohemia, situated in central Europe, occupying the western and middle thirds of the present-day Czech Republic, has nurtured so many heterogeneous cultural elements that its history reveals periods in which no one type of music can be singled out as particularly characteristic. Foreign influences, easily assimilated by the Bohemians, have helped to mold the culture of their country; the final result is a combination of the cultural elements of foreign influences and those of the various indigenous national groups.

St. Wenceslas (Václave), prince and martyr (ca. 907–929), is the patron saint of the Czech lands, Bohemia and Moravia. The baptism of Wenceslas's grandfather, the ruler of Bohemia, along with (St.) Ludmilla, his grandmother, was not followed by the conversion of all their subjects, and many of the powerful Czech families were strongly opposed to the new religion. Ludmilla's religious and political influence over her first grandson angered a semi-pagan party among the nobility, and in 921 Ludmilla was murdered. A few years later Wenceslas took over power; he set himself to promote Christianity and good order among his subjects and pursued a conciliatory policy toward his German neighbors. The opposition became more bitter, with Wenceslas's younger brother Boleslav taking the lead in it. In 929, Boleslav picked a quarrel with Wenceslas and, in the ensuing fracas, Wenceslas was killed by Boleslav's supporters. Immediately the people claimed young prince Wenceslas and his grandmother Ludmilla as martyrs. According to the story of his life, he had an intuition that he was to be murdered, and on the eve of his assassination he toasted St. Michael the Archangel, the guide of souls after death.

Early period, though the mid-14th century

The 12th and 13th centuries in Bohemia were periods of great upheaval. During the famous Czech dynasty of the Přemyslids, German colonists were invited into the country and German cultural influence became widespread. Minnesinger and trouvères brought their music to the court at Prague. The Bohemian composers took over the German Minnelied without significant change.

Tropes, or text and melodic interpolations in a pre-existent composition, mostly to the Kyrie (**Jesu Kriste, Svatý Václave**), Sanctus, and Agnus of the Mass Ordinary (the parts of the Mass that remain the same from day to day) were very popular in Bohemia. The first manuscript in Bohemian notation is a *troparium* of the year 1235. The influence of folk music on tropes was so great that Jan Huss later claimed they were more an inducement to dancing than to worship.

The 14th century was a period of great prosperity and cultural development. The dynasty of the Luxembourgs came to the throne in 1310, and under John of Luxembourg (1310–1340) (also known as John of Bohemia) and especially his son, Emperor Charles IV, Prague became the cultural center of the Holy Roman Empire.

John was a true representative of the age of chivalry, but he was more a man of war than of art. Unfortunately, his many travels abroad and his cultural contacts with foreign nations, especially France, never greatly benefited his kingdom, because he seldom stayed in Bohemia for more than a few months at a time. Although **Guillaume de Machaut** spent many years as secretary to King John, French influence became widespread only under Charles, who was educated in France.

Documentary evidence of Guillaume de Machaut's existence dates from a series of papal bulls of 1330 that identify him as a "clerk, secretary, and familiar" (i.e., in the household) of John of Luxembourg, having been in the king's service from about 1323. At the request of King John, these bulls granted Machaut various Church benefices and canonicates with the expectation of a resident position when a vacancy occurred. By this common medieval practice, popes sought to gain the loyalty and support of powerful noblemen who, in turn, found it a convenient means of providing supplemental income and future social security for their protégés. Machaut was installed as a canon of Reims Cathedral in 1337. In theory, canons were to be in residence at all times, but Machaut's position as secretary to John of Luxembourg permitted him to be absent at the king's pleasure and perhaps also at his own.

The theme of the familiar Christmas carol "Good King Wenceslas" is imaginary. On the other hand, the famous Czech song **Svatý Václav** ("St. Wenceslas"), probably originating from the beginning of the 14th century, is an invocation of this beloved saint. It became a national song, and during the Hussite Wars, it was used as a battle song of the Catholic side.

The development of the first Bohemian school of composition takes place during this century. The external circumstances were conducive to such a development, since Charles IV greatly furthered all artistic activity. Four factors influenced this school of composition: the art music of France, that of Germany, native secular folk music, and, underlying these three factors, the potent influence of the liturgical folk song (based on Gregorian chant), which was the spontaneous expression of a religious people.

During the reign of Charles IV, liturgical music in Bohemia displayed variety and richness. In addition to the Prague Cathedral choir of twelve boys (*boninfantes*) established in 1255, there were twenty-four men (*mansionarii*). The type of song used at this time was the *koleda* (**Vizmež pacholička**), sung in Bohemia since the early Middle Ages. At first, it was an incantation song but, by the 14th century, it had become more of a beggar's song – students went about singing for money. There were *koledy* for all feasts – Christmas, Easter, etc.; and they may be compared to western carols.

It is recorded in the chronicle of the town of Königssaal (ca.1338) that people everywhere, not only accomplished musicians, extemporized polyphonically in sixths, thus somewhat approximating *fauxbourdon* practice (as formally illustrated here in Radomski's **Magnificat**).

Jan Hus and the Reformation

In Bohemia, the Middle Ages flowed directly into the Reformation, and the Renaissance itself is hardly perceptible. The Reformation took on an attitude unfriendly to music, as well as to painting and sculpture, and the flowering of the arts found elsewhere in the Renaissance was here nipped in the bud.

With the coming of Jan Hus (1372/3–1415) a new era starts in Czech history in general, and also in the history of Czech music. The pre-Reformation, with Hus at its head, sought to abolish the alleged abuses of the Church and to recapture the simplicity and sincerity of early Christianity. The futility of pleasures of the world and the luxuries of life were automatically banned. In the history of Czech music, Hus was an historical catastrophe.

Jan Hus was born at Husinetz in southern Bohemia. At an early age he went to Prague, where he supported himself by singing and serving in the churches. His conduct was exemplary and his devotion to study remarkable. In 1393, he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from the University of Prague and in 1396 the master's degree. He was ordained a priest in 1400 and soon thereafter became rector of the university.

Hus became one of the most famous preachers in Prague. The extraordinary suggestiveness of his sermons responded to the sensitivity of the masses. This gift allowed him to influence his listeners, the simple folk as well as aristocrats and the bourgeoisie who inhabited the capital city.

Hus's anti-artistic tendencies were based on purely religious grounds. Too much luxury had brought about those conditions in the Church of which the Hussites complained, and therefore they declared that art had to be banned, because in a way it was a luxury too. The use of instruments in church was forbidden; organs were destroyed, and only bells were retained. In 1435, musicians, looked upon as ungodly people, were denied the right to take Communion. All music was banned in the 15th century, except monophonic song, which was the typical art of the Hussites. Hus believed in the devotional value of singing and, driven by the burning ardor of religion, the whole of Bohemia sang.

The Hussite song was neither secular nor liturgical. The life of the people was permeated by one religious idea, and the barriers between secular and liturgical music fell, a development that had, in fact, already started in pre-Hussite times. The Hussite song was human and simple, national and social and, we might say, democratic. Folk song and liturgical song form its basis, with many tunes derived from Gregorian sources.

There were two main parties among the Hussites; the radical Taborite reformers, and the conservative faction called the Utraquists. Since the more radical reformers (Taborites) were against all embellishments, polyphony, which they considered one, was absolutely forbidden, except in the *koledy*, which were sometimes even accompanied by instruments. In Hus's day, the singing of these songs was restricted to Christmastime. These Hussites generally considered monophony more effective than polyphony and more powerful, since, as they said, unison makes all men equal in their

worship. They also returned to the early policy of the Church in pointing out that the words are more important than the music and that polyphonic singing obscures the words. Thus polyphonic song became an exception and a sign of conservatism. A great battle was fought over the admission of polyphony into the Church throughout the 15th and 16th centuries until polyphony emerged victorious.

The Codex Specialnik

Perhaps written to meet the needs of the Utraquist Literary Brotherhood, the **Codex Specialnik** is a liturgical but undefined manuscript, a *codex mixtus*, and therefore in its own way a “special” source dating around the last quarter of the 15th century.

The Codex Specialnik is one of the oldest surviving collections of Czech Renaissance polyphony, and it originated in the Utraquist Protestant congregations of around 1500. If 1500 seems rather late for Renaissance music to have reached Prague, it should be remembered that the Hussite Wars of 1419–1434 had divided the “nation of heretics” from the rest of Catholic Europe, and it was only in the last quarter of the 15th century that there was a significant inflow of cultural and artistic ideas.

Not the first Czech collection of Renaissance polyphony, many of the Codex Specialnik pieces had clearly been in circulation for some time. The manuscript is currently in the Hradec Králové Museum, which acquired it from a Prague antique dealer in 1901. Its oldest part, the “corpus,” was written on paper made in Italy and southern Germany in the 1480s and 90s, and it was probably finished some time before 1500, loosely bound and with an index of its contents. The Codex Specialnik is then a large anthology of polyphony that flourished in Bohemia from the 14th century onward. The oldest pieces can be described as the remnants of the Czech *Ars antiqua* and *Ars nova*, or the styles of musical composition from the 13th and 14th centuries, respectively. The Codex contains some fifty pieces whose roots reach back to around 1300, corresponding to compositions found in dozens of 14th- to 16th-century sources in Western Europe.

There are some 150 Renaissance compositions in the manuscript, and only about one third of these are by composers who can be identified. Many of the anonymous works are based on Czech melodies current at the time (**Svatý Václave, Vzdajmež chválu**). Equally interesting are the imported compositions attributed to thirty foremost European musicians, among them the Englishmen Frye and Morton, and the Franco-Flemish composers Tinctoris, Josquin, Compère, Obrecht, Isaac, and Agricola. The Codex also contains a number of secular chansons that the Prague brethren furnished with sacred Latin texts.

II. Poland

Polish Middle Ages and Renaissance

In the development of its native language and literature Poland lagged behind many countries of Western Europe. Latin played the dominant role here longer than elsewhere. It was only with the rapid development of Polish literature in the second half of the 16th century that the native language came to hold an equal place, although it did not replace Latin completely.

In the 13th century, Polish Latin poetry was enriched chiefly by the introduction of lyrics to religious themes. This reflected the luxuriant flowering of the religious Latin lyric in the countries of Western Europe, which arrived in Poland on the occasion of the canonization of St. Stanisław in 1253, when it became necessary to compose a separate liturgical office for the new saint.

Pope Innocent IV canonized St. Stanisław of Kraków (bishop and martyr) in 1253. The patron saint is greatly revered in Poland but there is uncertainty about the events that led to the violent death for which he is venerated as a martyr. Stanisław was elected bishop of Kraków in 1072 and the story commonly told is that he came into conflict with the vigorous King Bolesław II on account of the vagaries of the king's private life. The bishop fearlessly rebuked his sovereign several times and finally excommunicated him, whereupon Bolesław himself attacked and murdered Stanisław while he was celebrating Mass.

Ortus de Polonia is a 13th-century antiphon and **Gaude, mater Polonia** is a 13th-century hymn. Both are from a breviary office fragment, the *Historia gloriosissimi Stanislai*. **Breve regnum** is a two-voice "student song" from the early 15th century, with the title "Cantilena de regno scholarium Cracoviensium" and no doubt celebrates the Feast of Fools, where a student elected by his peers plays the role of King of Misrule, a ritual practiced at the feast of the Circumcision on New Year's Day. **Omnia beneficia** is the oldest polyphonic composition discovered in the territories of Poland, a *conductus* that dates from the end of the 13th century. **Angelus ad virginem missus** was composed at the end of the 15th century and is one of the cycle of five rhymed rosary mysteries *Angelica salutatio*.

Nicholas of Radom (Mikolaj Radomski) is the central figure among the composers contained in 15th-century manuscripts in Poland. He is also the most important composer of the late *ars nova* in central Europe. Although there are but nine compositions extant attributed to him, their nature permits one to reconstruct his artistic personality and, to a certain degree, the sphere of his musical activity. He came from the city of Radom, which now is located in the heart of present-day Poland. There is a reference in the year 1422 to "Nicolaus clavicymbalista Regine Zophie," and one can

conclude that Radomski was a composer and musician at the royal court at Kraków at least from 1422 onward.

His extant works, which represent only a small part of his output, exhibit a great diversity of types and forms. His compositions include liturgical as well as secular music with all the various techniques and tendencies developed during that period. Among the liturgical compositions, we find settings of the Mass as well as a polyphonic setting of the **Magnificat**. In this composition, one can clearly see the transition from the *ars nova* period to the new style, which was so copiously developed by Dufay and the Burgundian school. The use of *fauxbourdon* is the most important such indication of the period.

That Radomski was familiar with the works of Guillaume Dufay is evidenced by his **Alleluia** paraphrase of Dufay's chanson "Bon jour, bon mois, bon an." As the text of Dufay's chanson can be interpreted as a New Year greeting, it is conceivable that Radomski's Alleluia is meant to serve the same purpose.

III. Messe de Notre Dame (Machaut)

Machaut's **Messe de Notre Dame** is unique for a number of reasons. It is his largest single musical work and the only one with a strictly liturgical function. It is the first complete setting of the Ordinary believed to be composed as an entity by one composer. In length it far exceeds any of the compilations of individual movements that make up other Masses in the 14th century. His Mass was the only one of its kind, and not until some fifty years after his death did complete Mass Ordinaries begin to appear in the works of early Renaissance composers.

We do not know for what occasion Machaut composed his one great liturgical work. It is generally agreed that it is one of the composer's later works. A dedicatory title in honor of the Virgin Mary may be Machaut's own memorial to his years of service in the Church of Our Lady of Reims.

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