

Ave Regina Caelorum

**Ave, Regina Caelorum,
Ave, Domina Angelorum:
Salve, radix, salve, porta
Ex qua mundo lux est orta:
Gaude, Virgo gloriosa,
Super omnes speciosa,
Vale, o valde decora,
Et pro nobis Christum exora.**

*Hail, O Queen of Heaven.
Hail, O Lady of Angels
Hail! thou root, hail! thou gate
From whom unto the world, a light has arisen:
Rejoice, O glorious Virgin,
Lovely beyond all others,
Farewell, most beautiful maiden,
And pray for us to Christ.*

Pronunciation of vowel sounds

ah as in *Ave*

au as in *gaude*

ey as in *Ave*

eh as in *est*

ee as in *radix*

oh as in *gloriosa*

or as in *porta*

oo as in *lux*

♩ = 80

p *ppp*

Soprano
A - - - ve

pp *mf* *ppp*

Soprano
ah-ey-ah-ey-ah - ey - ah

p *pp*

Alto
A - - - ve

p

Alto
A - - -

p

Tenor
A - ve

Tenor

Bass

Bass

9

mp

S.
A - - - ve

mp *ppp* *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

S.
A - ve A - ve A -

p *mf* *p* *mf*

A.
A - - - ve A -

ppp *p* *mf* *p*

A.
- ve A - ve

mf *p*

T.
A - - - ve

mp *mf* *p*

T.
A - - - ve A -

mp *mf* *p*

B.
A - - - ve A - ve

p *mf*

B.
A - - - ve

16

mf *f* *ff* *subito* 3

S. A - - - - - ve A - ve A - - - - - ve

S. ve A - - - - - ve A - ve

A. - ve A - - - - - ve

A. A - - - - - ve

T. A - - - - - ve A - - - - - ve

T. ve A - - - - - ve A - ve

B. A - - - - - ve

B. A - - - - - ve A - - - - - ve

21

mf *pp* *pp* *p* *pp* *pp*

S. Re - gi - na cae - lo - rum

S. Re - gi - na cae - lo - rum eh

A. Re - gi - na cae - lo - rum eh

A. Re - gi - na cae - lo - rum Do - mi - na an - ge - lo - rum

T. Re - gi - na cae - lo - rum eh

T. Re - gi - na cae - lo - rum

B. Re - gi - na cae - lo - rum eh

B. Re - gi - na cae - lo - rum Do - mi - na an - ge - lo - rum

S. *p* Sal - - - ve *mp* (*) breathe if necessary *p*

S. *p* Sal - - - ve *pp* *mp* *p*

A. *p* Sal - ve *mp* (*) breathe if necessary *p*

A. *pp* 3 ra - dix, sal - ve, ra - dix *p* 3 3 por ta, sal - ve, por - ta

T. *pp* 3 ra - dix, sal - ve, ra - dix *p* 3 3 por ta, sal - ve, por - ta

B. *pp* 3 ra - dix, sal - ve, ra - dix *p* 3 3 por ta, sal - ve, por - ta

36 $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

S. *pp* 3 ra - dix, sal - ve, ra - dix *ppp* 3 3 por ta, sal - ve, por - ta

A. *p* (*) breathe if necessary *mp* *ppp*

A. *p* Sal - - - ve Sal - - - ve (*) breathe if necessary *ppp*

T. *p* Sal - ve *mp* (*) breathe if necessary *ppp*

T. *pp* (*) breathe if necessary ah - or - ah- *ppp*

B. *pp* 3 ra - dix, sal - ve, ra - dix *ppp* 3 3 por ta, sal - ve, por - ta *ppp*

B. *pp* 3 ra - dix, sal - ve, ra - dix *ppp* 3 3 por ta, sal - ve, por - ta

44

S. *f* or-ta, lux est or-ta

S. *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *ppp* *mf*
 ah gradual shift ee ah ah ee

A. *p* *f* or ta, lux est or-ta

A. *mf* *p* Ex qua mun - do lux est or-ta au - ey - au -

T. *p* or - ah - or - ah - or - ah - or - ah - or - ah - or - ah -

T. or - ah or - ah - or - ah - or - ah or-ta, lux est or-ta

B. *mp* *f* Eh ah oo oh oo eh

B. *mp* *f* Ex qua mun - do lux est

50

S. *ppp*

S. *ppp* ah

A. *ppp* *p* au - ey - au - ey - au - ey - au

A. *mf* *p* ey - au - ey Ex qua mun - do lux est or-ta

T. *f* *ppp* or - ah - or - ah - or - ah or-ta, lux est or-ta

T. *ppp* *p* or - ah - or - ah - or - ah - or - ah - or - ah - or - ah -

B. *f* *ppp* oh ah or-ta, lux est or-ta

B. *f* *ppp* or - ta or-ta, lux est or-ta

6

55

ppp *mf* *ppp* *pp*

S. *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *pp*

au-ey-au-ey-au-ey-au-ey - au-ey-au-ey-au-ey-au-ey - au-ey-au-ey-au-ey-au-ey

S. *p* *ppp*

ey - au - - - ey - - - au au - ey - au

A.

A.

T. *ppp*

or - ah or - ah - or - - ah - or - ah or - ah or - ah

T.

B.

B. *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *ppp*

ah gradual shift ee ah ah ee ah

60

$\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

S. *mf* (,)

Vir - - - go glo-ri-o - sa

S. *mf*

Vir -

A. *mp* *mf* *pp*

Gau - - - de Vir -

A. *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *mf*

au-ey - au-ey-au-ey-au-ey-au-ey-au-ey-au-ey - au-ey-au-ey Vir -

T. *mf*

Vir -

T. *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *mf*

au - ey-au - ey - au-ey-au - ey Vir -

B. *mp* *mf* *pp* *mf*

Gau - - - de Vir -

B. *mf*

Vir -

B. *mf*

Vir

67

S. *p* *mf* *p* 7
 Vir - go glo-ri-o - sa _____ Su - per om-nes spe-ci - o - sa _____ ah-ey-ah-ey - ah - ey - ah - ey - ah - ey - ah-ey

S. _____ go glo-ri-o - sa _____ Su - per om-nes spe-ci - o - sa _____ Va - - - - - le_

A. _____ go glo-ri-o - sa _____ Su - per om-nes spe-ci - o - sa _____ Va - - - - - le_

A. _____ go glo-ri-o - sa _____ Su - per om-nes spe-ci - o - sa _____ ah - ey - ah - ey - ah - ey - ah - ey - ah

T. _____ go glo-ri-o - sa _____ va - le, _ o_ va - le

T. _____ go glo-ri-o - sa _____ ra - dix, sal - ve, ra - dix

B. _____ go glo-ri-o - sa _____

B. _____ go glo-ri-o - sa _____ ra - dix, sal - ve, ra - dix

75

S. *mp* _____ Val - - - - - de _____ *p* A - ve _____ A - - - - - ve

S. _____ ah _____ ey - ch - or - ah _____ *p* Sal - ve _____

A. _____ ah _____ ey - ch - or - ah _____ *p* Gau - de _____

A. _____ de-co-ra, val-de de-co - ra _____ *p* ah - ey - ah - ey - ah - ey

T. _____ ah - ey - ah - ey - ah - ey

T. _____ de-co-ra, val-de de-co - ra _____ *p* ah - ey - ah - ey - ah - ey

B. _____ ah - ey - ah - ey - ah - ey

B. _____ de-co-ra, val-de de-co - ra _____ *p* ah - ey - ah - ey - ah - ey

82

S. *f* or - ta *ff* de - co - ra *mf* Re - gi - na

S. *mf* spe - ci - o - sa *ff* por - ta *mf* Re - gi - na

A. *mf* glo - ri - o - sa *f* ex - o - ra *ff* *mf* Re - gi - na

A. *mf* oh - ah - oh - ah - oh - ah - oh - ah *ff* *mf* Re - gi - na

T. *mf* oh - ah - oh - ah - oh - ah - oh - ah *ff* *mf* Re - gi - na

T. *mf* oh - ah - oh - ah - oh - ah - oh - ah *ff* *mf* Re - gi - na

B. *mf* ah - oh - ah - oh - ah - oh - ah - oh *ff* *mf* Re - gi - na

B. *mf* oh - ah - oh - ah - oh - ah - oh - ah *ff* *mf* Re - gi - na



88

S. cae - lo - rum *ad libitum pp* Vir - go glo - ri - o - sa

S. cae - lo - rum *p* eh

A. cae - lo - rum *p* eh

A. cae - lo - rum *mp* Do - mi - na an - ge - lo - rum

T. cae - lo - rum *p* eh

T. cae - lo - rum

B. cae - lo - rum *p* eh

B. cae - lo - rum *mp* Do - mi - na an - ge - lo - rum

Notes and context

Many central symbols found across Christian denominations are widely considered to have significant pagan and pre-Christian antecedents and influences. These symbols are often natural or elemental; the Ichthys fish, dove with olive branch, palm leaves, acorns, water, fire, and the sun standing for the light of Christ are all evidence of Christian theology's historical ties to the natural world, and of the influence of polytheistic views of the supernatural in nature and the landscape.

Similarly un-Christian roots have also been argued for with regards to various significant figures in Christianity, in particular the Virgin Mary. During the Christianisation of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, numerous shrines depicting the ancient Egyptian goddess Isis, crowned with light and cradling her son Horus, were repurposed as images of a haloed Mary with baby Jesus; almost seamlessly, the pagan Mother of Nature became the Christian Mother of God. The veneration of Mary in Roman Catholic theology as a kind of semi-deity, along with the Church's elaborate iconography, has a storied history of criticism and controversy from other Christian denominations. Mary has remained a problematic and controversial feminine anomaly in the otherwise patriarchal structure of Christianity, not least because of the subversive shadow cast by goddesses such as Isis and other archetypal Mother Earth figures. She occupies several different (and potentially conflicting) female roles at once, partly as a result of her complex evolution as a figure; a meek, virginal maiden, a gracious, nurturing mother, and the resplendent Queen of Heaven, ascending 'clothed with the sun' (Revelation 12.1).

The practical need for repetition when setting relatively brief sacred texts has the potential to take on greater meaning in the context of a setting of a Marian hymn that looks back to Christianity's pagan antecedents. The repetition can become ritualistic and incantation-like, and the assonance and internal rhymes that echo through the text of the hymn (*ave/salve/vale/valde; port/orta/decora/exora*) can be emphasised. Popular notions of pre-Christian pagan religions as mystically feminine and nature-bound are, of course, partly a romanticisation and oversimplification of the diverse and largely unrelated belief systems present before Christianisation. However, if societies pre-Christianity are thought of as broadly more feminised, and as primarily oral rather than literate, and Christian societies are conversely masculine and literate, then the clear significance of the *sound* of the text of *Ave Regina Caelorum* is striking; it cannot fail to conjure up, in some way, a semi-fictional, pre-literate pagan world dominated by female deities.

British composers who were writing folk-song-inspired programmatic music at the turn of the twentieth century, such as Vaughan Williams, Holst or Elgar, are sometimes grouped into a loose 'English pastoral school'; works such as *In The Fen Country*, *Somerset Rhapsody* or the *Pastoral Symphony* nostalgically depict disappearing landscapes and ways of life. These works construct England as an ancient homeland that its people are physically connected to. Their tone is generally mellow and wistful; only tacitly, if at all, do they attempt to draw divine or supernatural meaning out of their depictions of man's reckoning with the grandeur and physicality of the natural world. Vaughan Williams' *Flos Campi (Flowers of the Field)* is a striking exception among the composer's works and the wider English pastoral tradition; the movements are headed with quotations from the Book of Solomon, which brim over with sensuality and natural imagery: "As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters... Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples; for I am sick with love... For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of pruning has come, and the voice of the turtle dove is heard in our land". The musical language is similarly striking; it makes use of modal and folk-inflected melodies and harmonies, but to far more dark, dissonant and melancholic effect than other pastoral works. It seemed appropriate to take on certain elements of this musical style (semi-modal melodies; thick polyphony; rich, dissonant harmony; parallel movement; wordless or semi-wordless chorus) for a setting of *Ave Regina Caelorum* that acknowledges the polytheistic and naturalistic roots of the figure of Mary, and of Christianity in general.