

# "Super flumina Babylonis,"

(Ps. 136. 1, 2) - (Offert. 20<sup>th</sup> Sun. after Pentecost.)

Palestrina  
(ed. Maxwell Perrie)

(Treat *ad no a Gregorian* "pressus")

mf Su - - - - per - - - - flu

mf Su - - - - per - - - - flu - mi - na - - , Ba - - - - by lo

(Andante)

mf Su - - - - per - - - - flu - mi - na Ba - - - - by - lo - - - - nis - , su - - - - (per

flu - mi - na Ba - - - - by - lo - - - - nis , su - per flu - - - - mi - na - - - - Ba - - - - by -

- lo - - - - nis , su - per flu - - - - mi - na Ba - - - - by lo

Su - - - - per - - - - flu - mi - na Ba - - - - by - lo.

- per - - - - flu - mi - na - - - - Ba - by - lo - - - - nis - - - - ,

rall. (r) lento

> lo - - - - nis , il - > - lic se - - - - di - mus , et - > - fle - - - - vi - mus , il - > - lic se

rall. (r) lento

- lo - - - - nis , il - > - lic se - - - - di - mus - - - - , et - > - fle - - - - vi - mus , il - > - lic se

rall. (r) lento

- lo - - - - nis - - - - , il - > - lic se - - - - di - mus , et fle - - - - vi - mus , il - > - lic se

rall. (r) lento

il - > - lic se - - - - di - mus - - - - , et - > - fle - - - - vi - mus - - - - ,



(*"Super flumina Babylonis" - Palestrina.*)

se-di-mus, et fle-vi-mus, dum re-cor-da-re

se-di-mus, et fle-vi-mus, dum re-cor-da-re

se-di-mus, et fle-vi-mus, dum re-cor-

ilic se-di-mus, et fle-vi-mus,

da-re-mur tu-i, Si-on, dum re-cor-da-re

da-re-mur tu-i, Si-on, dum re-

da-re-mur tu-i, Si-on, dum re-cor-da-re-mur tu-i, Si-on, dum

mf dum re-cor-da-re-mur tu-i Si-on,

re-cor-da-re-mur tu-i, Si-on, dum re-cor-da-re-mur tu-i, Si-on

re-cor-da-re-mur tu-i, Si-on, dum re-cor-da-re-mur

mf dum re-cor-da-re-mur tu-i Si-on

(*"Super flumina Babylonis" - Palestrina.*)

da-re-mur tu-i, Si-on, in sa-li-cibus in me-dio

da-re-mur tu-i, Si-on, in sa-li-cibus in me-dio

da-re-mur tu-i, Si-on, in sa-li-cibus in me-dio

on:

li-cibus in me-dio e-jus, in me-dio e-jus

o in sa-li-cibus in me-dio e-jus

e-jus in me-dio e-jus

e-jus,

in sa-li-cibus in me-dio e-jus, in me

in sa-li-cibus in me-dio e-jus, in me

mf in sa-li-cibus in me-dio e-jus, in me

li-cibus in me-dio e-jus



("Super flumina Babylonis" - Palestrina.)

Handwritten musical score for the first system of "Super flumina Babylonis" by Palestrina. It features four staves with vocal lines and a basso continuo line. The lyrics are: "- bus in < me-di-o - é - jus - sus-pen-di-mus or-ga-na no - me-di-o é - jus - sus-pen-di-mus or-ga-na no - me-di-o é - jus - sus-pen-di-mus or-ga-na no - me-di-o é - jus - sus-pen-di-mus or-ga-na no -". Performance markings include *rit.*, *animando*, *mf*, and *rit.* with various slurs and accents.

Handwritten musical score for the second system of "Super flumina Babylonis" by Palestrina. It features four staves with vocal lines and a basso continuo line. The lyrics are: "su-spen-di-mus or-ga-na no - stra, or-ga-na no - stra, su-spen-di-mus or-ga-na no - stra, or-ga-na no - stra, su-spen-di-mus or-ga-na no - stra, or-ga-na no - stra, su-spen-di-mus or-ga-na no -". Performance markings include *mf* and *rit.* with various slurs and accents.

Handwritten musical score for the third system of "Super flumina Babylonis" by Palestrina. It features four staves with vocal lines and a basso continuo line. The lyrics are: "no - stra, su-spen-di-mus or-ga-na no - stra, su-spen-di-mus or-ga-na no - stra, su-spen-di-mus or-ga-na no -". Performance markings include *ff*, *rall... (mesto)*, and *mf* with various slurs and accents.

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("Super flumina Babylonis" - Palestrina.)

Handwritten musical score for the fourth system of "Super flumina Babylonis" by Palestrina. It features four staves with vocal lines and a basso continuo line. The lyrics are: "ga-na no - stra, or-ga-na no - stra, or-ga-na no - stra, or-ga-na no - stra, su-spen-di-mus or-ga-na no -". Performance markings include *ff*, *lento*, and *mf* with various slurs and accents.

"Super flumina Babylonis, illic sedimus, et flevimus, dum recorderemur tui, Sion: in salicibus in medio ejus, suspendimus organa nostra." Ps. 136. 1, 2.

"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and wept when we remembered Thee, O Sion: There amongst the willows, we hung up our instruments."

This Motet is somewhat sorrowful and nostalgic. The exiles in Babylon, remembering in sadness their city Jerusalem and how it was oppressed by strangers during their exile, could not sing the much-loved songs of their race, - even though commanded to do so by their captors; - their zithers, they hung up amongst the willows.

After the usual fugal opening, Palestrina suddenly breaks his polyphonic web at the words "there we sat down" and writes solemn chordal music and proceeds to decorate "and wept". - The words "there we hung up our instruments" are artistically treated by the use of series of sad little descending suspensions recalling the words "and wept" and culminating in a climax. - One is tempted to dismiss as ill-informed verbiage much that has been written to the effect that Palestrina's polyphony is somewhat "coldly classical". Elevated, most certainly, but again and again he demonstrates a most sensitively human approach to the text in hand. - Mere "word-painting" would have been naive, - even base, but Palestrina's very sincerity whipped the strict polyphonic technique into submission to mould a perfect musical vehicle for the words. Not by any stretch of imagination can Palestrina be accused of aloofness or coldness, - indeed, very few composers have so diligently preserved such a delicate balance between appeal to the emotions and to the intellect.

A.M.F.

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