

## PREFACE

Jacob Handl, also known as Jacob Gallus, was born in Rybnica, Carniola, on July 31, 1550. He was a Cisterian monk who lived for several years in Austrian monasteries. In 1574 he became a member of the court chapel, in 1585 chapel master for the Bishop of Alomouc, and finally, until his death on July 18, 1591, choirmaster of the Church of St. Johannes in Vado in Prague.

Handl was an outstanding and prolific composer of both sacred and secular music. He composed 400 motets which were published from 1586-1690 in the Opus Musicum in four volumes, each in eight part books. These motets are arranged according to the liturgical year. O Magnum Mysterium is among the Christmas motets.

Handl's use of antiphonal choirs, his variety of sonority, and rich chromaticism show the influence of the 16th-century Venetian school. A very effective performance of this piece is possible by following Willaert's practice at San Marco Cathedral of placing the two choirs opposite each other. If possible, Chorus I should be placed in front of the audience and Chorus II behind the audience.

## EDITORIAL NOTES

Source: Musici Operis, Opus musicum, Mottenwerke für das ganze Kirchenjahr. Wien 1899-1919. Denkmaler der Tonkunst in Osterreich.

All metronome and dynamic markings are editorial. Accidentals are original except those enclosed in parentheses. Those essential to the proper harmony have been added and placed in parentheses. Where in the original a sharp was used to lower a flatted note, a natural sign is used and enclosed in parentheses.

The Altus and Tenor parts have been reversed to maintain a better tessitura.

The meter has been changed from  $\emptyset$  to 4/4 and the note values have been halved.

A few of many performance possibilities are:

1. All vocal parts may be performed a cappella. Chorus II should be smaller than Chorus I.
2. The vocal parts may be doubled by brass or woodwind instruments, either the same or contrasting groups for each chorus.
3. Recorders doubling Chorus I and strings and harpsichord doubling Chorus II.

# O Magnum Mysterium

For Double Chorus of Mixed Voices  
a cappella

Jacob Handl (1550-1591)  
Edited by Vahé Aslanian

**CHORUS I**

**CHORUS II**

**Piano (for rehearsal only)**

*f*  $\text{♩} = 69$   
O ma - gnum my - ste - ri - um

*f*  
O ma - gnum my - ste - ri - um

*f*  
O ma - gnum my - ste - ri - um

*f*  
O ma - gnum my - ste - ri - um

*p*  
O ma -

*p*  
O ma -

*p*  
O ma -

*p*  
O ma -

$\text{♩} = 69$

*mf* 10

et ad - mi - ra - bi - le sa - cra - men -

*mf*

et ad - mi - ra - bi - le sa - cra - men -

*mf*

et ad - mi - ra - bi - le sa - cra - men -

*mf*

et ad - mi - ra - bi - le sa - cra - men -

*mf*

gnum my - ste - ri - um

*mf*

gnum my - ste - ri - um

*mf*

gnum my - ste - ri - um

*mf*

gnum my - ste - ri - um

10



tum, et ad-mi-ra-bi-le

tum, et ad-mi-ra-bi-le

tum, et ad-mi-ra-bi-le

tum, et ad-mi-ra-bi-le sa-

et ad-mi-ra-bi-le sa-cra-men-tum, et

et ad-mi-ra-bi-le sa-cra-men-tum, et

et ad-mi-ra-bi-le sa-cra-men-tum, et

et ad-mi-ra-bi-le sa-cra-men-tum, et

20

sa - cra - men - tum, *f* Ut a - ni - ma - li - a vi - *mf*

sa - cra - men - tum, sa - cra - men - tum, *f* Ut a - ni - ma - li - a vi - *mf*

sa - cra - men - tum, *f* Ut a - ni - ma - li - a vi - *mf*

- cra - men - - tum, *f* Ut a - ni - ma - li - a vi - *mf*

ad - mi - ra - bi - le sa - cra - men - tum,

ad mi ra - bi - le sa - cra - men - - tum,

ad - mi - ra - bi - le sa - cra - men - tum,

ad - mi - ra - bi - le sa - cra - men - - tum,

20

de - rent Do - mi-num na - tum,

de - rent Do - mi-num na - tum,

de - rent Do mi-num na - tum,

de - rent Do - mi-mun na - tum,

Ut a - ni - ma - li - a vi - de - rent

Ut a ni - ma - li - a vi - de - rent

Ut a - ni - ma - li - a vi - de - rent

Ut a - ni - ma - li - a vi - de - rent

30

*p* *mf*

Ja - cen - tem, ja - cen-tem in prae - se - pi -

*p* *mf*

Ja - cen - tem, ja - cen-tem in prae - se - pi -

*p* *mf*

Ja - cen - tem, ja - cen-tem in prae - se - pi -

*p* *mf*

Ja - cen - tem, ja - cen-tem in prae - se - pi -

*pp*

Do - mi-num na - tum, Ja - cen - tem,

*pp*

Do - mi-num na - tum, Ja - cen - tem,

*pp*

Do - mi-num na - tum, Ja - cen - tem,

*pp*

Do - mi-num na - tum, Ja - cen - tem,

30

o: *f* No - e, No - e, *mf* No - e, No -

o: *f* No - e, No - e, *mf* No - e, No -

o: *f* No - e, No - e, *mf* No - e, No -

o: *f* No - e, No - e, *mf* No - e, No -

*pp* Ja - cen - tem in prae - se - pi - o: *pp* No - e, No - e,

*pp* Ja - cen - tem in prae - se - pi - o: *pp* No - e, No - e,

*pp* Ja - cen - tem in prae - se - pi - o: *pp* No - e, No - e,

*pp* Ja - cen - tem in prae - se - pi - o: *pp* No - e, No - e,

The piano accompaniment for the second system consists of two staves. The right hand plays a series of chords, primarily triads and dyads, in a steady rhythm. The left hand provides a harmonic foundation with chords and single notes, often moving in parallel motion with the right hand.



**ff** 40 **f**

e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e,

e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e,

e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e,

e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e,

**pp** **p** **pp**

No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e,

**pp** **p** **pp**

No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e,

**pp** **p** **pp**

No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e,

**pp** **p** **pp**

No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e,

**40**



50

e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e. *p* *rit.* *f* *ff*  
 e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e. *p* *ff*  
 e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e. *p* *ff*  
 e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e. *p* *ff*

No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e. *p* *pp* *rit.* *mf* *f* *ff*  
 No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e. *p* *pp* *mf* *f* *ff*  
 No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e. *p* *pp* *mf* *mf* *f* *ff*  
 No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e, No - e. *p* *pp* *mf* *mf* *f* *ff*

50

*rit.*