

General information

The project week is intended for both singers and singing instrumentalists – students, professional musicians and advanced amateurs.

Participants should be open to an aural, modal and language-oriented training.

Solmization is used as a basic tool. Participants are expected to sing directly from facsimiles of the original sources. This approach helps to open the ears and develop a flexible and transparent voice.

For more information please visit:

<http://www.erhardt-martin.de/nusmido.html>

Organization

Participants are expected to be well prepared. Material for study will be sent out at the end of July.

Location: Johanneskirche, Halle (Saale), 06110 Germany.

The course begins on **Fri, 15 August, at 9:30 a.m. If traveling, please arrive by Thu, 14 August.**

Daily instruction: 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. & 2:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Additional rehearsals on demand in the evenings.

Final concert for all participants: Wed, 20 August, 7:30 p.m., Johanneskirche.

If traveling, plan to leave on Thu, 21 August.

Languages of instruction: German, English, French and Dutch.

Course fee: Standard fee €250. For students and low-income earners (proof required) €190.

Accommodation: free sleeping accommodation is available for up to 8 persons, at An der Johanneskirche 2, across the street from the church. A kitchen, a shower and toilets are available. Please bring your own (air) mattress and bed linen or sleeping-bag.

Private accommodations (single or double beds) are also available in the area for a reasonable fee. Please contact Martin if you need any help with lodging.

Application deadline: 17 July.

Application and contact: erhardt.martin@web.de

Teachers

The ensemble *Nusmido* was founded in 2008, crucially inspired by their common teacher and mentor Dr. Rebecca Stewart. The group strives towards a specifically modal interpretation of early music, and seeks out authentic venues for its performances. Their repertoire spans several centuries, from early Gregorian chant to 16th century polyphony. *Nusmido*'s first CD recording was released in 2015 (J. Ockeghem: *Missa l'homme armé*). Under the name "SCHOLA NUSMIDO", the ensemble wishes to share its vision and experience during week-long training courses.

Martin Erhardt teaches at the University of Music in Leipzig (HMT) and at the Konservatorium in Halle. As a recorder player, harpsichordist, organist, organetto player and singer, he performs with several ensembles specializing in medieval, renaissance and baroque music. He is the director of the Leipzig improvisation festival EX TEMPORE and the author of the textbook *Upon a Ground – Improvisation on Ostinato Bases*.

Milo Machover studied in Paris and Freiburg. He specializes in early music as a singer and a flute player. He has worked with the ensembles *Non Papa*, *Cantus Modalis* and *Schola Stralsundensis* and is a founding member of *Nusmido*. Since 2011, he teaches early ensemble music at the University of Music in Frankfurt and as a guest lecturer at the HMT Leipzig.

Ivo Berg was awarded a doctorate for his work on the phenomenon of musical tension. Alongside his scientific research, his interests include active music-making and the challenges of music education. Having previously taught in Lübeck and Vienna, he was awarded in 2018 a professorship for music pedagogy at the University of the Arts, Berlin.

Modal Interpretation Project Week

15 – 20 August 2025
in Halle (Saale), Germany

MATER DOLOROSA

THE SEVEN SORROWS OF MARY

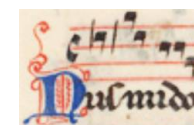
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B-BR MS 215-216

SCHOLA NUSMIDO



Milo Machover

Martin Erhardt

Ivo Berg

The Burgundian court in the 1490s: Duke Philip I is coming of age. His mother, Mary of Burgundy, died several years back. No one could yet foresee that only a decade later Philip's father, Maximilian of Austria, would have to mourn the death of his son.

In the New Testament, it is a mother who experiences the death of her only son. In an ironic twist of fate, this story of Mary mourning the death of Jesus suddenly became the focus of religious devotion in Burgundy, in the last decade of the 15th century.

The image of the compassionate Mother of God was symbolically stylized by the number seven. The life of Christ was thus described through the eyes of Mary in seven episodes, known as the Seven Sorrows of Mary:

1. *Primus dolor*: Mary and Joseph with the baby Jesus meet Simeon in the temple. Simeon had received the prophecy that he would not die until his eyes had seen the Savior. He immediately recognizes the fulfillment of this prophecy, but he also becomes a prophet himself, for he says to Mary: 'A sword will pierce your own soul.' (Luke 2:35)

2. *Secundus dolor*: The arduous flight to Egypt. The Holy Family escapes the wrath of Herod under cover of night, but he slaughters the innocent newborns of Bethlehem.

3. *Tertius dolor*: Jesus, 12 years old, goes missing from his parents. It takes three days of desperate searching before they find him in the temple.

4. *Quartus dolor*: Mary encounters Jesus on the way of the cross. (Note that this is not mentioned in any of the Gospels.)

5. *Quintus dolor*: Mary stands at the cross and sees her son hanging and dying.

6. *Sextus dolor*: Following the descent from the cross, Mary takes her dead son in her lap and weeps over him (Pietà).

7. *Septimus dolor*: Jesus' grieving mother is also present at his burial.

By the mid-1490s, devotion to the Seven Sorrows of Mary had reached such proportions at the Burgundian court that Philip I and his advisors sponsored a competition to find texts and music for a new liturgy of the *Mater dolorosa*. It was decided that the texts written for this purpose by Peter Verhoeven, *alias* Petrus de Manso (d. 1523), would be entrusted to composers for setting. The winner of the competition was the court singer Pierre Duwez (d. 1508).

These new plainchant compositions for 1st and 2nd Vespers and for Mass have survived in at least three early 16th-century manuscripts (B-Br Ms. 215-16, B-Br 21123 and A-Wn 3787) – but they all use different melodies for the same text! There is no way of knowing in which, if any, of the manuscripts Duwez's melodies are preserved.

Our project will be focusing on the slim volume B-Br 215-16, a manuscript entirely dedicated to the *Mater dolorosa*. It was made between 1512 and 1516, some 20 years after the birth of the Seven Sorrows devotional movement, in the workshop of Petrus Alamire. In addition to the aforementioned monophonic chants, it contains four major polyphonic works:

- *Missa quinque vocum de septem doloribus beatissime Marie virginis* by **Pierre de la Rue**, a mainstay of the Burgundian court chapel. The text of a sequence on the Seven Sorrows is added in red ink in the tenor, sounding at the same time as the Ordinary text in the other voices. (The melody doesn't seem to match any of the known monophonic sources, so it may have been composed specifically for this mass). The *Kyrie* describes the prophecy of the *Primus dolor* with the symbol of the sword. The *Et in terra pax* accompanies the flight to Egypt, while in the *Qui tollis* Mary finds her missing son in the temple. The Way of the Cross is commemorated in the *Patrem*, and in the *Crucifixus* Mary experiences the crucifixion of her son. The *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei* are associated with the last two Sorrows.

- *Missa de septem doloribus dulcissime Mariae virginis*: This **anonymous** four-part mass is a *unicum*; the tenor is based on the same sequence text, but with a completely different melody and with a different distribution of the *septem dolores* among the movements of the Ordinary.

- **Mathaeus Pipelare's** *Memorare mater* is also unique to this manuscript. In this impressive piece, the seven (!) voices are labeled *Primus dolor*, *Secundus dolor*, etc. **Juan de Urrede's** famous secular song *Nunca fue pena mayor* ('Never was there greater pain') is used as the cantus firmus, stretched in quadruple augmentation. Pipelare died in 1515, presumably while the manuscript was still being compiled in Alamire's workshop. Consequently, the scribe added the postscript 'pie memorie ⁊' after the composer's name. Finally, a 'classic' known from numerous other sources completes the series of polyphonic works, namely:

- *Stabat mater dolorosa* a 5 by **Josquin Desprez**, which sets the well-known sequence text by Jacopone da Todi, and uses another secular song as cantus firmus, **Gilles Binchois'** famous *rondeau Comme femme desconfortée*, seen here in the Chansonnier Cordiforme:



F-Pn Coll. Roths, MS 297 fol. 38v-39

Alongside the Brussels manuscript (B-Br 215-16), this song about a woman in distress is the second recurring theme of the *Mater dolorosa* tradition (and the other common thread of our project week), for its text, though secular, is perfectly suited to the suffering of Mary.

In addition to Josquin, many other masters used Binchois's tenor in their Marian motets, e.g. **Johannes Ghiselin** in his four-part *Inviolata, integra et casta*. **Heinrich Isaac's** opulent motet *Angeli archangeli* is written for six voices. For his part, **Pierre de la Rue** set his *Credo Angeli archangeli*, based on Isaac's motet, for no fewer than eight voices!

The circle is completed by another Marian motet by **Josquin Desprez**, in which the number 7 is symbolically prominent: in his *Salve regina* a 5, the head motif of the Gregorian hymn (la-sol-la-re) is repeated 24 times as an ostinato in the quinta vox, beginning alternately on g' and on d'. Each motif is preceded by three breve rests, resulting in a *talea* of seven breves.

Ensemble Nusmido