

**GAMBA
MUSIC CLUB**

**GIOVANNI PIERLUIGI
da PALESTRINA**

c1525 - 1594

TWO MOTETS
Exaudi Domine
Congratulamini mihi

Tr T T B

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Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, c1525 - 1594

Italian composer. It is thought that as a child Palestrina was a chorister at the Cathedral of Saint Agapit in his hometown. He is thought to have been a chorister at Santa Maria Maggiore from 1537 and remained there even after his voice broke. In 1544 he accepted the post of *organista e maestro di canto* at the cathedral where his duties included playing the organ on feast days, instructing the canons in singing and teaching the junior boys of the choir. He remained at the cathedral until 1551 by which time he was married to Lucrezia Gori. This was a good marriage for which he received a dowry that included a vineyard, meadows, a house and some cash. They had two sons, Rudolfo and Angelo.

In 1551 Pope Julius III, appointed Palestrina the master of Capella Juliana, the choir responsible for the services at St Peters. Palestrina repaid the Popes patronage by composing a mass in his honour. However on the death of Pope Julius, Pope Marellus was appointed and he believed that church music should be purged of all sensual, secular and impure elements. In Palestrina's second book of masses he states that he 'endeavoured to adorn the mass with music of the new order'.

The death of Pope Marellus in 1555 bought a radical change of fortune for Palestrina due to the succeeding Pope ordering that any married men in the choir should be pensioned off. He found a job as musical director at St John Lateran, but it was not a satisfactory situation so in 1560 he returned to Santa Maria Maggiore where circumstances were more favourable. In 1578 he was appointed Master of Music at the Vatican Basilica.

Then tragedy beset Palestrina and his family. Two of his sons, his wife and two brothers all died in sweeping epidemics. Palestrina as overcome by grief and decided to become a priest, which as granted in 1580. However he soon met a well-to-do widow, Virginia Dormuli, and secretly married her in 1581. In 1593 Palestrina prepared to leave for his hometown, but he fell ill and died in 1594.

Motets

Translations

Exaudi Domine:

Hearken, O Lord, to the prayers of thy servant, reveal thy presence above thy temple, and look with favour upon the people over whom thy name of God has been pronounced.

Congratulamini mihi:

(Mary speaking?) Rejoice with me, all ye who love the Lord, for when I was a maiden I found favour with him on high and from my flesh I gave birth to God and man.