

ONLINE AUDIO GUIDE 4.2

PLAINCHANT

title: Salve regina (Hail, Holy Queen)

performing forces: male choir, with one solo voice (Edmundite Novices, directed by Marie Pierik)

language: Latin

form: free, with some repetition of melodic ideas

function: to seek the blessing of the Virgin Mary

source: *Gregorian Chants Sung by the Edmundite Novices* (Smithsonian Folkways FR 8954 1961, 2007)

Listen for:

- monophonic texture
- one-octave range
- points of rest (cadences) throughout
- principally syllabic text-setting, although some melismas
- small intervals in melody, with some exceptions
- repetition or near repetition of certain patterns of notes, with the words marked in blue all using the same pitches and the words marked in red using nearly identical pitches
- free meter, with rhythmic structures approximating speech

Timing	Text	What happens
00:00	Salve regina, mater misericordiae <i>vita, dulcedo</i> , et spes nostra, salve.	flowing melody outlines range melody descends to point of rest
00:18	<i>Ad te clamamus exsules filii Hevae,</i>	melody ascends, descends
00:27	<i>Ad te suspiramus</i> , gementes et flentes in hac lacrimarum valle.	point of rest
00:37	<i>Eia, ergo, advocata nostra, illos tuos</i> <i>misericordis</i> oculos ad nos converte;	point of rest
1:02	Et Jesum, benedictum fructum, ventris tui, nobis . . .	Interval of a fifth (“No-bis”), which stands out against the smaller intervals throughout
1:14	post hoc exsilium ostende.	point of rest
1:15	O clemens, O pia, <i>O dulcis</i> . . .	Melismas on each successive “o”
1:40	Virgo Maria.	final point of rest

English translation:

Hail, holy queen, Mother of mercy
our life, our sweetness, and our hope, hail.
To you we cry, poor banished children of Eve
To you we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping.
Turn then, our advocate, your eyes of mercy toward us
And Jesus, blessed fruit of your womb.
Show him to us after our exile.
O clement, o loving, o sweet Virgin Mary.

Consider:

- Sing along with the recording a few times. Where are the high and low points of the melody? Do these ascents and descents seem balanced or do they strike you as largely arbitrary?
- Refer above to the melismas in the final phrase (from 1:15), which are exceptional in relation to the primarily syllabic text setting in the rest of the chant. What, if any, is their effect?