

Keys to Heaven

Australian Chamber Choir

Directed by Douglas Lawrence OAM

Music by Josquin, Allegri and Palestrina aspired to give people an idea of how it would feel to be transported to heaven.

It still does!



Pietro Perugino painted *The Delivery of the Keys* (shown on the program cover) on the northern wall of the newly-constructed Sistine Chapel in 1481–1482. The fresco depicts Christ handing Peter the keys to the kingdom of heaven.

When Franco-Flemish composer Josquin des Prez joined the Sistine Chapel choir in 1489, Perugino's *Keys to Heaven* would have been one of the main focal points in the room. At that time, paintings on the north and south walls contrasted with a relatively unadorned ceiling, on which were depicted stars shining in a night sky.

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina became Master of the Capella Giulia in 1551. He was, no doubt, inspired by Perugino's fresco when he composed the motet *Tu es Petrus* (published 1572).

'... I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church ... And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven'

PROGRAM

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c.1525–1594)
Tu es Petrus (1572)

Josquin des Prez (c.1450–1521)
Ave Maria (c.1484)

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina
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INTERVAL

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PROGRAM NOTES

Tu es Petrus (1572)

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c.1525–1594)

'There are days when something of heaven seems to touch the earth,' said presenter Stefan Wegener of the ACC's first performance at Berlin's Kaiser Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche in 2007. Perhaps the rapturous concord of Palestrina's musical offerings acts as an ideal conduit between earthly and heavenly spheres. Indeed, one might enlist the words 'purity', 'clarity', and 'ringing' to describe Palestrina's rich musical language in the hands of capable musicians. Equal in popularity to the *Missa Papae Marcelli* and motet *Sicut cervus*, Palestrina's *Tu es Petrus* exhibits stylistic hallmarks of the 'Palestrina Style', characterised by forward momentum, scalic motion, alternating ensemble entries, and singable phrase lengths. The intelligibility of text is central to this music: natural word stresses, a steady pace of declamation, and interlinking poetic fragments serve to emphasise a central message rather than muddy the soundscape. In the motet, listen for clearly defined ascending lines to the text, 'and I will give you the keys to heaven' (et tibi dabo claves regni caelorum), perhaps pictorialising a hedonistic pursuit of heaven. Yet, this master's textual efficacy manifests not only in surface-level text expression, but equally through the thoughtful organisation of structural elements. Consider, for example, symbolism of the Holy Trinity through three iterations of a stanza, three overarching structural divisions, and three-part vocal sonorities. These intertwining three-voice clusters ultimately yield to a thicker six-voice texture in the closing phrases to represent heaven in all its splendour.

Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram
aedificabo ecclesiam meam,
et portae inferi non praevalebunt
adversus eam: et tibi dabo
claves regni caelorum.
Quodcumque ligaveris super terram,
erit ligatum et in caelis. Et quodcumque
solveris super terram, erit solutum et
in caelis.
Et tibi dabo claves
regni caelorum.

You are Peter, and on this rock I will
build my church,
and the gates of Hades shall not
prevail against it: and I will give you the
keys of the kingdom of heaven.
And whatever you bind on earth,
will be bound in heaven. And whatever
you loose on earth, will be loosed
in heaven.
And I will give you the keys
of the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 16: 18–19

Ave Maria (c.1484)

Josquin des Prez (c.1450–1521)

Josquin des Prez, who died four years before Palestrina was born, is widely acknowledged as a master of the High Renaissance style. The fact that Josquin was compared in his time to the Latin epic poet Virgil highlights a sixteenth-century trend to commend individual artistic accomplishment. Retrospectively, Josquin is credited with modelling characteristics of the late fifteenth-century motet, and for his production of a vast trove of sacred and secular vocal music across a lifetime. The *Ave Maria* is one of Josquin's best-known works alongside the *Missa Pange lingua* and chanson *Mille regretz*. This liturgical text celebrates the Blessed Virgin Mary across five major occurrences in her life; namely, the Immaculate Conception, her Nativity, Annunciation, Purification, and Assumption. Hallmarks of Josquin's style are ever-present in this compositional tour de force: structural symmetry; paired voices in call-and-response interplay; and utmost variety in melodic, rhythmic, and textural realms. An opening series of imitative entries perhaps symbolises the ethereal communication of Divine messages upon their earthly receivers. By contrast, the concluding prayer, 'O Mother of God, remember me' (*O Mater Dei, memento mei*), is conveyed through rich block chords, as if depicting Mary's glorious ascent into the highest echelon.

**Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Dominus tecum,
Virgo serena.**

**Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with you,
serene Virgin.**

**Ave, cuius conceptio
Solemni plena gaudio,
Caelestia, terrestria
Nova replet laetitia.**

**Hail to her whose conception
full of solemn jubilation,
fills heaven and earth
with new joy.**

**Ave, cuius nativitas
Nostra fuit solemnitas:
Ut lucifer,
lux oriens,
Verum solem preeveniens.**

**Hail to her whose birth
was our solemn feast:
like the morning star,
the light of day,
anticipating the true sun.**

Ave, pia humilitas, Sine viro fecunditas, Cuius annuntiatio Nostra fuit salvatio.	Hail, pious humility, fruitful without a man, whose annunciation was our salvation.
Ave, vera virginitas, Immaculata castitas, Cuius purificatio Nostra fuit purgatio.	Hail, true virginity, immaculate chastity, whose purification purged our sins.
Ave, praecclara omnibus Angellicis virtutibus, Cuius fuit assumptio Nostra glorificatio.	Hail, most excellent in all angelic virtues, whose assumption was our glorification.
O Mater Dei, Memento mei. Amen.	O Mother of God, remember me. Amen.

Missa Aeterna Christi Munera (c.1590) **Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c.1525–1594)**

Probably one of Palestrina's last works, this Mass is one of his most frequently performed, thanks in part to the modest forces it requires. Indeed, among Palestrina's 105 authentic mass settings, it ranks second in fame only to the much earlier *Missa Papae Marcelli*. It achieved the rare distinction of having been commercially recorded in the 1920s. Musicologist and choral conductor Bruno Turner observes that it 'has been a favourite of church choirs for good reasons: its classic simplicity, its brevity, its clear singability and its four voice parts (only the second Agnus Dei divides the tenors). It is based on three melodic strands taken from the tune which gives the Mass its title, the hymn for Matins of Apostles and Evangelists; the fourth line of the verses has a repeat of the first line's melody. Palestrina employs these themes in turn in the opening Kyrie-Christe-Kyrie sections, passing them from voice to voice, transforming and elaborating them. He uses them in the wordy Gloria and Credo in a less complicated way, alluding to them mainly in the top voice'.

Kyrie, eleison.
Christe, eleison.
Kyrie, eleison.

Gloria in excelsis Deo,
et in terra pax
hominibus bonae voluntatis.

Laudamus te,
benedicimus te,
adoramus te,
glorificamus te,
gratias agimus tibi
propter magnam gloriam tuam,
Domine Deus,
Rex caelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili unigenite,
Jesu Christe.

Domine Deus,
Agnus Dei,
Filius Patris.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis;
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipte deprecationem nostram;
Qui sedes
ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.

Quoniam tu solus sanctus,
tu solus Dominus,
tu solus altissimus,
Jesu Christe,
Cum Sancto Spiritu,
in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen.

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Glory to God on high,
And on earth peace
to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks
for your great glory,
Lord God,
heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.
Lord, the only begotten Son,
Jesus Christ.

Lord God,
Lamb of God,
Son of the Father.
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated
at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

Credo in unum Deum,
Patrem omnipotentem,
factorem coeli et terrae,
visibilium omnium et invisibilium.

Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum,
Filium Dei unigenitum,
Et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula.
Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,
Deum verum de Deo vero,
Genitum non factum,
consubstantiale Patri;
per quem omnia facta sunt.
Qui propter nos homines
et propter nostram salutem
descendit de coelis,
Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto
ex Maria Virgine,
et homo factus est.
Crucifixus etiam pro nobis
sub Pontio Pilato,
passus et sepultus est,
Et resurrexit tertia die
secundum Scripturas.
Et ascendit in coelum
sedet ad dexteram
Patris.
Et iterum venturus est cum gloria
judicare vivos et mortuos
cujus regni non erit finis.

Et in Spiritum Sanctum,
Dominum, et vivificantem,
qui ex Patre Filioque procedit,

Qui cum Patre et Filio
simul adoratur et conglorificatur,
qui locutus est per
Prophetas.

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men
and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit
was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified
under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand
of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and
the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the
prophets.

Et in unam sanctam,
catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam.
Confiteor unum baptisma
in remissionem peccatorum
Et expecto
resurrectionem mortuorum
et vitam venturi saeculi.
Amen.

I believe in one holy,
Catholic and Apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism
for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the
resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt coeli et terra
gloria tua.
Osanna in excelsis.

Holy, Holy, Holy
Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of
your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

Benedictus qui venit
in nomine Domini.
Osanna in excelsis.

Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.
grant us peace.

INTERVAL

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Miserere (c.1630)

Gregorio Allegri (1582–1652)

Prior to becoming a singer in the papal choir in about 1630, Allegri studied in Rome. He is remembered today primarily for his famous Miserere. The text was customarily appended to the combined office of Matins and Lauds on the last three days of Holy Week, and from about 1666 Allegri's setting was performed annually by the papal choir. In its basic form, it consisted of a simple chant in five parts, transformed by the interpolation of ornamented passages for a second choir of soloists. The papacy kept the manuscript a closely guarded secret. The English music historian Charles Burney obtained a copy when he visited Rome in 1770 and published it on his return home in 1771, along with four other pieces performed by the papal choir in Holy Week. At about the same time, the fourteen-year-old Mozart heard a performance in the Sistine Chapel, after which he wrote out a score from memory. There are now so many conflicting sources of the music that it is difficult to determine precisely what Allegri originally wrote. For example, the soprano soloist's top C in the four-voiced verses has not been found in any performing edition earlier than 1951. Thanks to the survival of a pair of Vatican manuscripts dating from Allegri's time, it is possible to restore the Miserere to something like the original state – albeit without the vocal embellishments – but the altered 'patchwork' version has 'so firmly displaced the original as to have become a classic in its own right'. The English translation used here is the Book of Common Prayer translation of 1539 by Miles Coverdale – a version widely admired for its poetic beauty – and the version normally sung to Anglican chants.

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Miserere mei, Deus:
secundum magnum misericordiam
tuam.

Et secundum multitudinem
miserationum tuarum:
dele iniquitatem meam.

Have mercy upon me, O God:
after Thy great goodness.

According to the multitude of Thy
mercies:
do away mine offences.

Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea: et a peccato meo munda me.	Wash me throughly from my wickedness: and cleanse me from my sin.
Quoniam iniquitatem meam ego cognosco: et peccatum meum contra me est semper.	For I acknowledge my faults: and my sin is ever before me.
Tibi soli peccavi, et malum coram te feci: ut justiceris in sermonibus tuis, et vincas cum judicaris.	Against Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that Thou mightest be justified in Thy saying, and clear when Thou art judged.
Ecce enim in iniquitatibus conceptus sum: et in peccatis concepit me mater mea.	Behold, I was shapen in wickedness: and in sin hath my mother conceived me.
Ecce enim veritatem dilexisti: incerta et occulta sapientiae tuae manifestasti mihi.	But lo, Thou requirest truth in the inward parts: and shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly.
Asperges me hysopo, et mundabor: lavabis me, et super nivem dealbabor.	Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Audi tui meo dabis gaudium et laetitiam: et exsultabunt ossa humiliata.	Thou shalt make me hear of joy and gladness: that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice.
Averte faciem tuam a peccatis meis: et omnes iniquitates meas dele.	Turn Thy face from my sins: and put out all my misdeeds.
Cor mundum crea in me, Deus: et spiritum rectum innova in visceribus meis.	Make me a clean heart, O God: renew a right spirit within me.

Ne proicias me a facie tua:
et spiritum sanctum tuum ne auferas
a me.

Redde mihi laetitiam salutaris tui:
et spiritu principali confirma me.

Docebo iniquos vias tuas: et impii ad
te convertentur.

Libera me de sanguinibus,
Deus, Deus salutis meae:

et exsultabit lingua mea justitiam
tuam.
Domine, labia mea aperies:
et os meum annuntiabit laudem
tuam.

Quoniam si voluisses sacrificium,
dedissem utique:
holocaustis non delectaberis.

Sacrificium Deo spiritus
contribulatus: cor contritum, et
humiliatum, Deus, non despicies.

Benigne fac, Domine, in bona
voluntate tua Sion:
ut aedificantur muri Ierusalem.

Tunc acceptabis
sacrificium justitiae,
oblationes, et holocausta:

tunc imponent super altare tuum
vitulos.

Cast me not away from Thy presence:
and take not Thy Holy Spirit
from me.

O give me the comfort of Thy help
again:
and stablish me with Thy free Spirit.

Then shall I teach Thy ways unto the
wicked: and sinners shall be
converted unto Thee.

Deliver me from blood-guiltiness,
O God, Thou that art the God of my
health:
and my tongue shall sing of Thy
righteousness.
Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord:
and my mouth shall show
Thy praise.

For Thou desirest no sacrifice,
else would I give it Thee:
but Thou delightest not in burnt-
offerings.

The sacrifice of God is a troubled
spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O
God, shalt Thou not despise.

O be favourable and gracious unto
Sion:
build Thou the walls of Jerusalem.

Then shalt Thou be pleased with the
sacrifice of righteousness,
with the burnt-offerings and
oblations:
then shall they lay calves upon Thy
altar.

O magnum mysterium (c.1570)

Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548–1611)

Another gem of the High Renaissance vocal repertory – and staple of choirs globally – is Victoria’s setting of ‘O magnum mysterium’. Victoria was evidently influenced by ideals of the so-called ‘Palestrina Style’, such as a predilection for soaring phrases, orderly text declamation, and interchangeability of light and heavy ensemble textures. That said, Victoria’s stylistic individuality can be detected through an extensive harmonic palette, persistent cadential thrust, and emphasis on musical variety, which – it ought to be noted – are emblematic of the Spanish school. Filled with chromatic twists and turns, *O magnum mysterium* conveys the mystery and awe of Christmastide. Like Palestrina and Josquin, Victoria’s textual manoeuvres on surface and structural levels are exemplary: within the first phrase alone, a descending perfect fifth aligns with the keyword ‘great’ (*magnum*), whereas a semitone ascent on ‘mystery’ (*mysterium*) instils a sense of wonder, as if voyaging through the mists of time. The longest melismas are reserved for ‘Lord’ (*Dominum*), the fullest textures for ‘blessed Virgin’ (*beata Virgo*), and triple-time buoyancy for a flurry of ‘Alleluia’ exclamations. Victoria’s compositional strategies, in their totality, create a vibrant sonic spectrum, brought to life by an expressive vocal consort like the one before you today.

O magnum mysterium

et admirabile sacramentum
ut animalia
viderent Dominum natum,
iacentem in praesepio.

O great mystery

and awesome sacrament
that the animals
should see the Lord, newly born,
lying in the manger.

O beata Virgo,

cuius viscera meruerunt portare
Dominum Jesum Christum.
Alleluia.

O blessed Virgin,

Whose womb was worthy of bearing
the Lord Jesus Christ.
Alleluia.

Three Madrigals

Luca Marenzio (c.1553–1599)

Crudel, perché mi fuggi? (1587)

Scaldava il sol (1582)

Non vidi mai dopo notturna pioggia (1585)

Marenzio, remembered as one of the foremost madrigalists of his generation, produced a stellar collection of secular songs in the Italian vernacular. Not only does Marenzio represent the epoch of the Italian madrigal genre, but his musical creativity coincides with the advent of the so-called ‘hybrid madrigal’ – a new incarnation of this form which championed richness in harmonic construction and virtuosity of vocal execution. A common thread throughout an impressive catalogue of over 500 secular works is Marenzio’s skill in vivid word-painting – or ‘madrigalisms’ – for keywords and phrases, eloquently mirrored by rapid changes in mood on the macro level. Marenzio’s secular songs became increasingly chromatic and experimental during the 1590s; today we hear three madrigals from the decade prior, for which he is best known. *Crudel, perché mi fuggi?* or *Heartless woman, why do you avoid me?* visits the all-too-common plight of unrequited love. Here, the protagonist complains that his sincere efforts to woo a ‘heartless woman’ are in vain, and that love ‘cannot die without pain’. Note that the word ‘die’ (*morire*) is probably loaded with the usual risqué double entendre. Pointed figures on ‘cruel’ (*crudel*) and the exclamation, ‘ah’, provide superb contrast with subsequent chains of suspensions to suggest the narrator’s breaking heart.

Crudel, perché

mi fuggi?

S’hai della morte mia tanto desio?

Tu sei pur il cor mio?

Credi tu, per fuggire, crudel, farmi morire?

Ah! Non si può morir senza dolore,
e doler non si può, chi non ha core.

**Heartless woman, why do you
avoid me?**

If so strongly you desire my death?

Aren’t you, after all, my heart?

Do you think, cruel one, that by avoiding me you’ll make me die?

Ah! One cannot die without pain,
and he who has no heart, can feel no pain.

Text by Giovanni Battista Guarini (1538–1612), translation by Campelli

Scaldava il sol or *The midday sun* is a charming madrigal of pastoral simplicity in a noticeably brighter mood than *Crudel, perché mi fuggi*. Marenzio juxtaposes the lively activity of wildlife with the stillness of evening. Listen, in particular, for the winding vocal lines employed to depict the unrestricted scurry of ‘wild creatures’.

Scaldava il sol di mezzo

giorno l’arco
Nel dorso del Leon
suo albergo caro,
sotto ’l boschetto
più di frondi carco
dormia ’l pastor
con le sue greggi a paro;
giaceva il villanel de l’opra
scarco,
vie più di posa che di spighe
avarò;
gl’augei, le fere,
ogn’huom s’asconde
e tace;
sol la Cicala
non si sente in pace.

The midday sun was
warming his arch
on the back of Leo,
his favorite abode,
in the woods
heavily burdened with branches
the shepherd slept
with his flock nearby;
the peasant was stretched out
tired from work,
more greedy for rest than for corn;

the birds, the wild creatures,
every man hides himself
and falls silent;
only the cicada
does not feel at peace.

Text by Luigi Alamanni (1495–1556), translation by Robert Worth

Non vidi mai dopo notturna pioggia, or *I never see the wandering stars* – first published in 1585 – is both melancholic and cathartic. As if lost in a lackadaisical daydream, the protagonist reflects upon the realisation that his love is indeed as illusive as the ‘wandering stars’. Delicate and meandering vocal lines, clearly portraying a state of calm, perhaps disguise the intensity suggested by ‘burn forever’.

Non vidi mai dopo notturna pioggia
gir per l’aere sereno stelle erranti,

et fiammeggiar fra la
rugiada e'l gielo,

I never see the wandering stars
move through the calm air after
night rain,
flaming more brightly among the
dew and frost,

ch'i' non avesse i begli occhi davanti,
ove la stancha mia vita s'appoggia,

quali io gli vidi a l'ombra di un
bel velo:
et sí come di lor bellezze il cielo
splendea quel dí, cosí bagnati
anchora
li veggio sfavillare,
ond'io sempre ardo.

without seeing her eyes before me,
where the weariness of my life is
soothed,
as I've seen them in the shadow of
a lovely veil:
and as I saw the sky ablaze that day
with their beauty, so I see them
still
sparkling through tears,
so that I burn forever.

Text by Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374)

Translation © Anthony S Kline

Christus resurgens (c.1640)

Gregorio Allegri

When the name 'Allegri' is uttered, it is almost always followed in quick succession by 'Miserere'. Like so many composers of the classical canon, Allegri is remembered chiefly for a single work, while other works receive no more than a passing glance. To challenge the prevailing view of Allegri as a 'one-hit wonder', today we present his magnificent *Christus resurgens*. This setting is typical of the High Renaissance polychoral idiom and, like Victoria's *O magnum mysterium*, it takes its cues from the 'Palestrina Style'. Allegri summons a glorious cacophony of voices, befitting the glory of Christ's triumph over death, as contemplated in the text of Romans (6:9–10, 4:25). Lush harmonies dart back and forth between two alternating choirs, culminating in a joyous outpouring, 'Alleluia'. Conceived for the lavish interior of the Sistine Chapel, this work draws a splendid connection between earth and heaven.

Christus resurgens ex mortuis,
jam non moritur,
mors illi ultra
non dominabitur.
Quod enim mortuus est peccato,
mortuus est semel,
quod autem vivit,
vivit Deo,
Alleluia.

Mortuus est enim propter delicta
nostra:
et resurrexit propter
justificationem nostram,
Quod autem vivit, vivit Deo,
Alleluia.

Christ, rising again from the dead,
dieth now no more,
Death shall no more
have dominion over him.
For in that he died to sin,
he died once,
but in that he liveth,
he liveth unto God,
Alleluia.

He died for
our sins:
and rose again
for our justification,
who liveth unto God,
Alleluia.

Romans 6:9–10, 4:25

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The AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER CHOIR was established by its Artistic Director, Douglas Lawrence in 2007. As of 2019, the choir has undertaken seven concert tours of Europe and given more than 250 performances, many of which were recorded for national radio broadcast. Wherever they perform, the ACC is met with accolades from audiences and critics alike.

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Douglas Lawrence OAM

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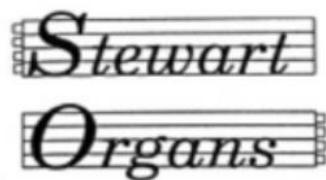
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