

## Gallus Dressler: *Unam petii a Domino*

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This setting of two verses of Psalm 27 [Vulgate 26] comes from the composer's *XC. Cantiones quatuor, quinque et plurimum vocum*, printed in 1570 by the Magdeburg publisher, Wolfgang Kirchner. There were five partbooks: Discant, Altus, Tenor, Bassus and Quinta vox. There are 49 pieces in four parts, 38 in five (23 for SSATB, 13 for SATTB and two for SAATB), one in six and two in eight. The texts chosen by the composer range from psalm verses to extracts from books by the reformer, Philipp Melancthon, and from Biblical quotations to odes in praise of the ruling family of Ascania, the Duchy of Anhalt.

After studies in Jena, Dressler succeeded Martin Agricola as Cantor and director of music at the Latin School in Magdeburg in 1556; while there, he gave a series of lectures on the history and techniques of composition (published in 1563 as *Praecepta musicae poeticae*), and he found time to study at the University of Wittenberg. Apparently unhappy in an environment of religious discord, he moved to Zerbst in 1574, where he remained for the rest of his life as deacon at the church of St Nicholas.

Dressler's music was already known in Zerbst by that time. Amongst the holdings of the historical library at the city's Franciscum (now a secondary school, but originally set up in 1582 as the *Gymnasium illustre*, a university for Anhalt) are copies of the *XC. Cantiones*, as well as his [16] *Geseng mit vier und mehr Stimmen*, also published by Kirchner in 1570. While the former is dedicated to the Archbishop of Magdeburg, the latter volume was printed in tribute to Joachim Ernst of Anhalt (1536–1586), a well-known patron of the arts (two surviving portraits are the work of Lucas Cranach the younger). They were bound with three volumes of Lassus and one of Wert,<sup>1</sup> dating from 1567–1569, for use in the Bartolomaikirche in Zerbst, which is where most court services were held.

Given the clefs in the original part-books, I have opted to transpose the piece down a minor third from G dorian (one flat) to E dorian (two sharps). By retaining the old style of key signature, it is possible for performers to see those notes that were chromatically altered in the original. Added accidentals are printed in brackets. The only barlines in the part-books were at the ends of sections. The underlaid text follows the original. Idem marks ("ij", which tell singers to repeat the words they just sang) are reflected in the use of italics. The text is given in the King James Authorized Version thus:

<sup>4</sup> *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.*

<sup>5</sup> *For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.*

No editorial changes were required.

Brian Clark  
20th October 2014

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<sup>1</sup>Lassus: *Selectissimæ cantiones... sex et pluribus vocibus*, <sup>2</sup>Lassus: *Cantiones... quinque et quatuor vocibus*, (both 1568), <sup>3</sup>Wert: *Musici suavissimi* (1569), <sup>4</sup>Lassus: *Neue Teütsche Liedlein* (1567) D-Z

## Gallus Dressler: Unam petii a Domino

Soprano 1  
(G2)

Soprano 2  
(G2)

Alto  
(C2)

Tenor  
(C3)

Bass  
(F3)

U - nam

U - nam pe - ti - i a Do - mi - no, u - nam

U - nam pe - ti - i a

5

pe - ti - i a Do - mi - no, u - nam

pe - ti - i, u - nam pe - ti - i a Do - mi - no,

Do - mi - no, u - nam pe - ti - i a Do - mi - no, u - nam

U - nam pe - ti - i a Do - mi - no, u - nam

U - nam

9

pe - ti - i, u - nam pe - ti - i, u - nam

u - nam pe - ti - i a Do - mi - no,

pe - ti - i a Do - mi - no, u - nam pe - ti - i,

pe - ti - i a Do - mi - no, u - nam pe - ti - i a

pe - ti - i a Do - mi - no, u - nam