

PALESTRINA - PRINCE OF MUSIC
(Palestrina - or the Liberation of Music)

ITALY, 52', HD, colour, Production: Brintrup Filmproduktion/ LICHTSPIEL ENTERTAINMENT / ZDF / ARTE

*For more than a thousand years
Music had been the servant of the word.
Until someone came to liberate it ...*

During the time when Protestant Northern Europe separates from the Catholic Church of Rome and when Rome is no longer the center of power, the young Giovanni Pietro Aloysi, later called Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, is trained as a choir-boy in the circle of the „Roman School“ of polyphony founded by Costanzo Festa. Already in the middle of the 16th century, the talented musician - at only 25 - becomes the head of the Cappella Giulia at St. Peters. He is both artistically and economically dependent on the clergy and is subject to the grace and envy of the potent Popes.

Since Pope Giulio III nominates him *cantore pontificio* for life, the highest position in Rome for a musician at that time, Palestrina feels that he, at the age of thirty, is at the height of his career. However, the envy of the next Pope, Paul IV, and that of his singer-colleagues lead to him losing the title and he is dismissed. He is deeply shocked and realizes that the greedy Roman clergy is more interested in secular politics than in the spirituality of music.



This realization obsesses the musician and causes his artistic counterreaction. Within a few years he develops a new style in polyphonic art, the *genus novus*. A balance between word and sound and the equivalence of all voices are prominent. Music becomes freer than ever. In this style he composes the famous *Missa Papae Marcelli*, which becomes after the Council of Trent the model for sacred music. This composition corresponds to the ecclesiastic musical challenges for verbal comprehension.

Suddenly Palestrina is back on top. The Jesuits, eager to win back Protestant Northern Europe for the Roman Church, become very attentive to Palestrina's music and call him to be the first music teacher at the *Collegium Germanicum* in Rome. These „Spanish Priests“, as they were called, know that music can reach people much deeper than words, directly to their souls, and that music can bring people back to the „true faith“. They are very successful in this endeavour. Princes, Kings and even the Emperor want Palestrina as

the choir-master of their courts. However, experience has taught him not to become a pawn in the hands of the powerful.



As all the other great Renaissance artists, Palestrina wants to take his destiny into his own hands and maintain his artistic independency. He demands enormous salaries for these positions, since he intends on staying in Rome. In fact, he soon becomes the head of the Cappella Giulia. And he is the first and only musician to receive the title of composer of the Cappella Pontificia "*modulator pontificus*". Palestrina becomes the most important musician of the country.

At the peak of his career, he receives a heavy stroke of fate. The plague and an influenza epidemic take away his two oldest sons and his wife. He is desperate and falls into a deep depression. He wants to give up composing and become a member of clergy. Again, however, he takes fate into his own hands. Strenuousness, ambition and the desire to secularity allow him to take another very pragmatic decision. He marries the rich widow of a fur merchant and finally has enough money to publish his scores. At least his work shall be immortal. Within a few years sixteen books are published with numerous compositions, Palestrina's „musical descendants“ which still fascinate us today.

starring

Domenico Galasso - *Iginio*
Stefano Oppedisano - *Annibale*
Claudio Marchione - *Cristoforo*
Renato Scarpa - *Mons. Cotta*
Achille Brugnini - *Gioacchino*
Remo Remotti - *Filippo Neri*
Giorgio Colangeli - *L. Barré*
Pasquale di Filippo - *G. Severini*

special guest

Franco Nero - *D. Ferrabosco*

with

Bartolomeo Giusti - *der alte Palestrina*
Daniele Giuliani - *der junge Palestrina*
Patrizia Bellezza - *Virginia Dormuli*
Francesca Catenacci - *Lucrezia Gori*

Jobst Grapow, Alberto Bianco, Francesco Cantone,
Marco Celestini, Silvano Silvan

dancers "Corti in Festa"
coreography - Gloria Giordano

musicians
Ensemble Seicentonovecento
Cappella Musicale di San Giacomo
Coro di Voci bianche "J. J. Winckelmann"

Flavio Colusso - *director*
Donatella Casa - *director of the children's choir*

music production
MUSICAIMMAGINE, Roma
Silvia De Palma - *Produktionsleitung*
Johann Herczog - *musikologische Beratung*

singers / instruments
Antonio Giovannini - *Alt*
Jean Nirouët - *Alt*
Maurizio Dalena - *Tenor*
Renato Moro - *Tenor*
Raimundo Pereira - *Tenor*
Luigi Petroni - *Tenor*
Aurio Tomicich - *Bass*
Andrea Damiani - *Liuto*
Andrea Coen - *Organ and flute*
Elisabetta Di Filippo - *Tamburin*

and
Radu Marian - *Sopranist*

technical crew
sound - Francesco Sardella
camera - Benny Hasenclever, Paolo Scarfó, Piergiorgio Mangiarotti, Oliver Kochs, Jorge Alvis
costumes - Raffaele Golino
scenography - Änne Schanz-Kölsch
graphic - Carmine de Lillo
3D FX - Piero Perilli
location manager - Jorge Alvis, Peter Naguschewski

written by

Georg Brintrup, Mario Di Desidero

thanks to

Francesco Zimei

Patricia Di Risio

Rita Errico

Antonella Lattanzi

Sextantio srl - albergo diffuso - S.Stefano di Sessanio

Azienda Agrituristica „Sapori di Campagna“

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Institutum Romanum Finlandiae

Villa Lante al Gianicolo

Mons. Venier Chiesa S. Eligio de' Ferrari, Roma

Accademia dell'Immagine, L'Aquila

Regione Abruzzo

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Christopher Janssen

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