

CARL ORFF

CARMINA BURANA

- [1] Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi - i: O Fortuna (2:43)
- [2] Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi - ii: Fortune plango vulnera (2:41)
- [3] I – Primo vere - iii: Veris leta facies (3:25)
- [4] I – Primo vere - iv: Omnia sol temperat (2:04)
- [5] I – Primo vere - v: Ecce gratum (2:35)
- [6] Uf dem Anger - vi: Tanz (1:47)
- [7] Uf dem Anger - vii: Floret Silva (3:13)
- [8] Uf dem Anger - viii: Chramer, gip die varwe mir (3:06)
- [9] Uf dem Anger - ix: Reie - Swaz hie gat umbe - Chume, chum, geselle min (4:22)
- [10] Uf dem Anger - x: Were diu werlt alle min (0:52)
- [11] II – In Taberna - xi: Estuans interius (2:25)
- [12] II – In Taberna - xii: Olim lacus colueram (3:11)
- [13] II – In Taberna - xiii: Ego sum abbas (1:34)
- [14] II – In Taberna - xiv: In taberna quando sumus (3:08)
- [15] III – Cour d'amours - xv: Amor volat undique (3:13)
- [16] III – Cour d'amours - xvi: Dies, nox et omnia (2:17)
- [17] III – Cour d'amours - xvii: Stetit puella (1:49)
- [18] III – Cour d'amours - xviii: Circa mea pectora (2:03)
- [19] III – Cour d'amours - xix: Si puer cum puellula (0:56)
- [20] III – Cour d'amours - xx: Veni, veni, venias (0:57)
- [21] III – Cour d'amours - xxi: In trutina (1:48)
- [22] III – Cour d'amours - xxii: Tempus est iocundum (2:06)
- [23] III – Cour d'amours - xxiii: Dulcissime (0:36)
- [24] Blanziflor et Helena - xxiv: Ave formosissima (1:42)
- [25] Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi - xxv: O Fortuna (reprise) (2:38)

Agnes Giebel, soprano
Marcel Cordes, baritone
Paul Kuén, tenor

Chorus of the Westdeutschen Rundfunk
Chorus-master: Bernhard Zimmerman

Cologne Rundfunk-Sinfonie-Orchester
conductor Wolfgang Sawallisch

Recorded in 1956 under the personal
supervision of Carl Orff

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WOLFGANG SAWALLISCH

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ORFF - CARMINA BURANA

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CHORUS OF THE WESTDEUTSCHEN RUNDfunk
COLOGEN RUNDfunk-SINFONIE-ORCHESTER

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CARMINA BURANA

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ORFF CARMINA BURANA
SAWALLISCH, COLOGNE RSO, SOLOISTS AND CHORUS

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Carmina Burana is a scenic cantata composed by Carl Orff in 1935 and 1936. It is based on 24 of the poems found in the medieval collection *Carmina Burana*. Its full Latin title is *Carmina Burana: Cantiones profanae cantoribus et choris cantandae comitantibus instrumentis atque imaginibus magicis* ("Songs of Beuern: Secular songs for singers and choruses to be sung together with instruments and magic images.") *Carmina Burana* is part of *Trionfi*, the musical triptych that also includes the cantata *Catulli Carmina* and *Trionfo di Afrodite*. The best-known movement is "*Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi (O Fortuna)*" that opens and closes the piece.

Orff first encountered the text in John Addington Symonds's 1884 publication *Wine, Women and Song*, which included English translations of 46 poems from the collection. Michel Hofmann, a young law student and Latin and Greek enthusiast, assisted Orff in the selection and organization of 24 of these poems into a libretto, mostly in Latin verse, with a small amount of Middle High German and Old Provençal. The selection covers a wide range of secular topics, as familiar in the 13th century as they are in the 21st century: the fickleness of fortune and wealth, the ephemeral nature of life, the joy of the return of Spring, and the pleasures and perils of drinking, gluttony, gambling and lust.

Carmina Burana was first staged in Frankfurt by the Frankfurt Opera on June 8, 1937 (Conductor: Bertil Wetzelsberger, Choir Cäcilienchor, staging by Oskar Walterlin and sets and costumes by Ludwig Sievert). Shortly after the greatly successful premiere, Orff wrote the following letter to his publisher, Schott Music:

"Everything I have written to date, and which you have, unfortunately, printed, can be destroyed. With *Carmina Burana*, my collected works begin."

Several performances were repeated elsewhere in Germany. The Nazi regime was at first nervous about the erotic tone of some of the poems, but eventually embraced the piece. It became the most famous piece of music composed in Germany at the time. The popularity of the work continued to rise after the war, and by the 1960s *Carmina Burana* was well established as part of the international classic repertory.

Alex Ross wrote that "the music itself commits no sins simply by being and remaining popular. That '*Carmina Burana*' has appeared in hundreds of films and television commercials is proof that it contains no diabolical message, indeed that it contains no message whatsoever."

In retrospect the desire he expressed in the letter to his publisher has by and large been fulfilled: No other composition of his approaches its renown, as evidenced in both pop culture's appropriation of *O Fortuna* and the classical world's persistent programming and recording of the work. In the United States, *Carmina Burana* represents one of the few box office certainties in 20th-century music.

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