

The well-known *Ave Maria* by Charles Gounod originated in the art of improvisation, a technique that the composer mastered with remarkable skill. Starting from *Prelude No. 1 in C major* from *The Well-Tempered Clavier* by Johann Sebastian Bach, Gounod created a lyrical melodic line over the harmonic structure of Bach's prelude. This improvisation was later transcribed by his father-in-law, the composer and pianist Pierre-Joseph-Guillaume Zimmerman. Thus emerged one of the most famous pages of the Romantic sacred vocal repertoire — an inspired melody built upon the harmonic framework of Bach's prelude. The first version of the piece was published in 1853 in an arrangement for violin and piano, while the version that became widely known — the one for voice with the Latin text of the *Ave Maria* prayer — was published in 1859. Starting from this celebrated work, I created a set of variations for clarinet, from which several arrangements were later derived: for two clarinets and piano, as well as for soprano, B-flat clarinet, and piano. These versions were initially conceived in response to the pedagogical needs of the academic environment in which we carry out our activity. Subsequently, the work was orchestrated for chamber ensemble, motivated by the same practical and pedagogical considerations. The result is a series of arrangements in various vocal-instrumental and chamber configurations, intended to expand the interpretative possibilities of this remarkable musical piece.

We are pleased to present the arrangement for soprano, B-flat clarinet, and piano, while the chamber ensemble version will be available soon.