

Hans Sachs, *Silberweise* (1513)

Abstract

Hans Sachs (1494-1576), a shoemaker from Nuremberg, learned the art of the *Meistersinger* [master singers and songwriters] during his travels as a journeyman and became one of the most famous master singers in Germany. He wrote more than 4,000 songs, the best known of which, the *Silberweise* [Silver Melody], can be heard here. The *Meistersinger* were bourgeois poets and singers organized in a guild and regularly gathered for performances. Their songs were based on the tradition of medieval *minnesong* and followed strictly defined rules. To earn the title “master,” a singer-poet had to invent a new melody and perform it flawlessly. Augsburg, Strasbourg, and Frankfurt am Main also emerged as early modern centers of the *Meistersinger*. Richard Wagner created a musical tribute to the *Meistersinger* with his opera *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* in 1868.

Source

Salve, I greet Thee, respectfully,
Rex Christe, upon His throne.
Who wears the crown *misericordiae*,
of all mercy.
As Saviour Thou wast sighted,
when our last hour had come
Thou stoodst helpfully by us.
Vitae dulcedo, Thou art indeed
life's source and fountain,
et spes nostra,
directed towards You,
guide all our hope.
Salve Christe, we greet Thee,
the Lord in Heaven and on earth's realm,
very high within the hierarchy,
ad te, to Thee, Christ
quite freely *clamamus*,
we are crying out all the time,
help us out of all our woes.

Source: Hans Sachs, *Silberweise*, 1513. Recording: Hugues Cuenod Sings German Songs of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Westminster (XWN 18848), 1959. Internet Archive
https://archive.org/details/lp_german-songs-of-the-middle-ages-and-the_hugues-cuenod-hermann-lee/disc1/02.03.+Hans+Sachs%3A+Silberweise.mp3

Internet Archive

Recommended Citation: Hans Sachs, Silberweise (1513), published in: German History in Documents and Images,
<<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/from-the-reformations-to-the-thirty-years-war-1500-1648/ghdi:audio-5054>> [April 03, 2025].