

Ludwig Senfl, *O Herr, ich ruf Dein'n Namen an* (c. 1518)

Abstract

Ludwig Senfl (ca. 1490-1543), a Swiss composer and singer, joined the court orchestra of the Habsburg king and future Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I in 1498 at the age of eight. Senfl succeeded his mentor, court composer Heinrich Isaac after his death in 1517. This motet for multiple voices asks for God's help in the fight against the Turks, which suggests that Senfl may have composed it in 1518 when Maximilian I and Pope Leo X proclaimed a crusade against the Turks at the Diet of Augsburg.

Source

O Lord, I call on your name,
for no one else can help me
in these difficult times.
Look how the Turk rages so cruelly!
Protect us from him, dear Lord,
and help us to fight him!
Otherwise we are completely lost;
even though we have hardly
incurred your wrath upon us;
but remember that we have been baptized
bought with the blood of Christ:
therefore, have mercy on us!

And quickly come to our aid,
Lord, let the matter be yours,
because it concerns your holy faith
among the Christian people:
the enemy, who causes all the misery,
wants to rob us of it altogether.
And if you allow such suffering,
your divine honor
and all praise for you will disappear;
I do not in my heart trust you would allow this !
Therefore I ask you through Jesus,
please relieve us of this burden!

Since now the Turk rages so painfully,
and no one praises you among the dead,
who descend into Hell,
do not allow that he eradicates us
and make your Christian people his prey;
we can never remain silent;
we must remind you earnestly and with patience
of Christ's great innocence,
which he has borne for us.
Therefore I cry out to you for comfort,

help my people, and likewise me!
I know no one else to call on.

Otherwise you would be unknown to us:
Jesus' name would no more be mentioned;
because the heathens hate him;
and the Holy Ghost would be mocked,
saying: Where is the God of the Christians?
He has abandoned them completely!
Dear Lord, consider this
and help us with all Your might
to preserve Your honor and praise,
and remain with us, day and night,
so that the Turk and all his hordes
will never be able to separate us from You.

Source: Ludwig Senfl, *O Herr, Ich ruf Dein'n Namen an*, c. 1518. Recording: *The Triumph of Maximilian I. Music of the 15th and 16th Centuries* by Heinrich Isaac, Paul Hofhaimer & Ludwig Senfl. The London Ambrosian Singers, John McCarthy, director. The Vienna Renaissance Players. Nonesuch (HB-73016), 1966. Internet Archive
https://archive.org/details/lp_the-triumph-of-maximilian-i_the-ambrosian-singers-john-mccarthy-the-vi/disc1/02.01.%2BO%2BHerr%2C%2BIch%2BR%C3%BCf%2BDein%27n%2BNamen%2BAn.mp3

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