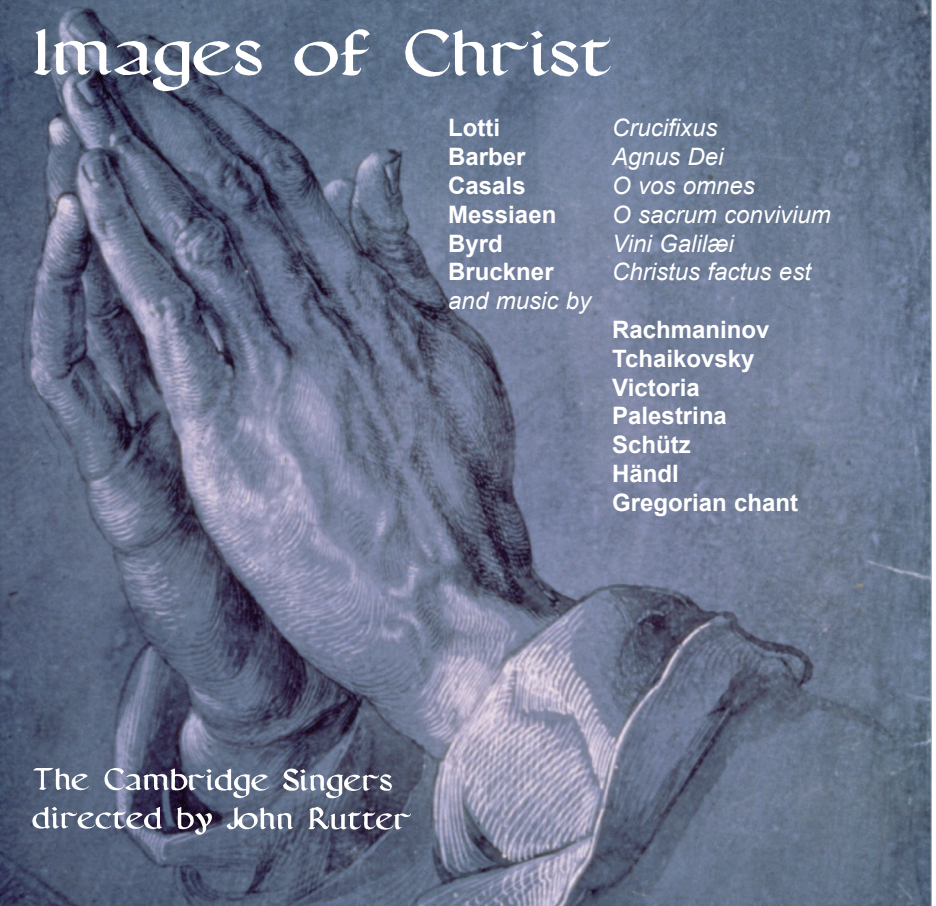

Images of Christ

The Cambridge Singers directed by John Rutter

The Cambridge Singers

Sopranos: Caroline Ashton, Libby Crabtree, Judith English, Ruth Gomme, Karen Kerslake, Simone Mace, Jocelyn Miles, Olive Simpson, Penelope Stow, Clare Wallace, Julia Wilson-James

Altos: Nicola Barber, Jane Bolam, Patrick Craig, Natanya Hadda, Mary Hitch, Melanie Marshall

Tenors: Paul Badley, Paul Gordon, Robert Graham-Campbell, Tom Phillips, Paul Sutton, Jeremy Taylor

Basses: Michael Chambers, Bruce Hamilton, James Mure, Daniel Pailthorpe, Benjamin Thompson, Julian Walker

Around the figure of Christ there has grown up over the centuries a body of choral literature that can only be described as among the most remarkable in western civilization. Generations of composers, inspired perhaps by the events of Christ's life, the words ascribed to him, prayers addressed to him, or his presence in the Eucharist to believers, have in many different ways added their personal contribution to our vision of the founder of the Christian faith, like tiles in a mosaic with an infinite number of facets. The music of this recording, all for a cappella choir, is grouped loosely according to the themes of its texts, drawing together composers as far apart in time and space as eleventh-century France and twentieth-century Russia and America. The aim is not a liturgical reconstruction, nor an historical survey, but rather a journey of the imagination.

Images of Christ

The Cambridge Singers directed by John Rutter

Total playing time: 72' 24"
Note: Words credits are given at the end of each text.

The coming of Christ

1 **Let all mortal flesh keep silence** (3' 16") E. C. Bairstow (1874–1946)
2 **Veni, Redemptor gentium** (2' 45") Sarum chant
3 **Hodie Christus natus est** (2' 08") G. P. da Palestrina (1525–94)
4 **Omnes de Saba venient** (1' 34") Jacob Händl (1550–91)

Words of Christ

5 **Ich bin ein rechter Weinstock** (3' 08") Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672)
6 **The crown of roses** (2' 10") P. I. Tchaikovsky (1840–93)
7 **Vo tsarstvii Tvoyem** (The Beatitudes) (4' 53") Sergei Rachmaninov (1873–1943)
8 **Pater noster** (1' 53") Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

The Passion of Christ

9 **Christus factus est** (4' 58") Anton Bruckner (1824–96)

10 **Good Friday Reproaches** (Improperia) (2' 53") G. P. da Palestrina
11 Eram quasi agnus (3' 50") T. L. de Victoria (1548–1611)
12 O vos omnes (3' 48") Pablo Casals (1876–1973)
13 Crucifixus (for eight voices) (3' 30") Antonio Lotti (*c.*1667–1740)

Resurrection and Ascension

14 Surgens Jesus (1' 56") Peter Philips (1561–1628)
15 Ascendo ad Patrem (4' 46") G. P. da Palestrina
16 Viri Galilaei (3' 40") William Byrd (1543–1623)

Christ in the Eucharist

17 Jesu, dulcis memoria (1' 40") T. L. de Victoria
18 Ave verum Corpus (3' 48") Richard Dering (*c.*1580–1630)
19 Pange lingua (3' 53") Gregorian chant
20 Agnus Dei (6' 26") Samuel Barber (1910–81)
21 O sacrum convivium (3' 30") Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992)

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The coming of Christ

1 **Let all mortal flesh keep silence** (E. C. Bairstow, 1874–1946)
(SATB)

Outwardly Sir Edward Bairstow typified the English organist-composer of the early twentieth century: conservative, craftsmanlike, gifted with a natural feeling for choral writing, and discriminating in his choice of texts. From 1913 until his death he was organist of York Minster, for the spacious acoustic of which building *Let all mortal flesh keep silence* was doubtless conceived. Yet this brief anthem, written in 1925, is filled with an awe-inspiring sense of mystery, majesty and power that is anything but conventional, evoking the solemn liturgical music of Russia rather than the aura of the English organ loft. One wonders what Bairstow might have achieved if he had been free to devote himself more fully to composition.

> Let all mortal flesh keep silence and stand with fear and trembling, and lift itself above all earthly thought. For the King of kings and Lord of lords, Christ our God, cometh forth to be our oblation and to be given for food to the faithful. Before him come the choirs of angels with every principality and power; the Cherubim with many eyes, and winged Seraphim, who veil their faces as they shout exultingly the hymn: Alleluia.
>
> *(from the Liturgy of St James)*

2 **Veni, Redemptor gentium** (Sarum chant)
(unison)

The text of this chant (proper to Christmas Eve Vespers) is one of the finest of the early Christian hymns, known in many translations including Luther's famous German version *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*. The music comes from the rich repertory of Sarum chants (that is, the chants used in the pre-Reformation liturgy at Salisbury Cathedral), and is also found in the Aberdeen, York and Mozarabic breviaries.

Veni, Redemptor gentium,	*Come, thou Redeemer of the earth,*
Ostende partum virginis.	*And manifest thy virgin birth.*
Miretur omne saeculum:	*Let every age adoring fall:*
Talis decet partus Deum.	*Such birth befits the God of all.*
Non ex virili semine	*Sprung from no seed of human race*
Sed mistico spiramine	*But by the Spirit's mystic grace,*
Verbum Dei factum caro,	*The promised fruit of Mary's womb,*
Fructusque ventris floruit.	*The Word of God, doth flesh assume.*
Egressus eius a Patre	*From God the Father he proceeds,*
Regressus eius ad Patrem;	*To God the Father back he speeds;*
Excursus usque ad inferos,	*His course he runs to death and hell,*
Recursus ad sedem Dei.	*Returning on God's throne to dwell.*
Praesepi iam fulget tuum,	*Thy cradle here shall glitter bright,*
Lumenque nox interpollet,	*And darkness breathe a newer light*
Quod nulla nox interpollet,	*Where endless faith shall shine serene*
Fideque iugi luceat.	*And twilight never intervene.*
Deo Patri sit gloria,	*All glory to the Father be;*
Eiusque soli Filio,	*Glory, eternal Son, to thee;*
Cum Spiritu Paraclito,	*All glory, as is ever meet,*
Et nunc et in perpetuum. Amen.	*To God the Holy Paraclete. Amen.*
(St Ambrose, c.340–97)	*(tr. J. M. Neale)*

3 **Hodie Christus natus est** (G. P. da Palestrina, 1525–94)

(double choir SSAT-ATBB)

Palestrina's resplendent, festive setting of this favourite Christmas text was published in his Third Book of Motets in 1575. The double choir medium affords him opportunities for effective antiphonal exchanges of the seasonal exclamation 'Noe' which replaces the more usual 'alleluia'.

3 **Hodie Christus natus est** (G. P. da Palestrina, 1525–94)

Hodie Christus natus est, noe, noe:	*Today Christ is born, nowell, nowell:*
Hodie Salvator apparuit, noe, noe:	*Today the Saviour has appeared, nowell, nowell:*
Hodie in terra canunt angeli,	*Today angels sing upon the earth,*
Laetantur archangeli, noe, noe:	*The archangels rejoice, nowell, nowell:*
Hodie exsultant justi dicentes:	*Today the righteous are glad and say:*
Gloria in excelsis Deo, noe, noe.	*Glory to God in the highest, nowell, nowell.*

(Magnificat Antiphon for Christmas Day Vespers)

4 **Omnes de Saba venient** (Jacob Händl, 1550–91)

(SATTB)

Jacob Händl (sometimes known by his nickname of Gallus) was born and lived for most of his life in what is now the Czech Republic. After working as a court singer in Vienna, he was appointed choirmaster to the Bishop of Olomouc in 1579, later taking up a church post in Prague, where he died. His compositions, highly regarded in his own time, were mostly Latin sacred pieces. *Omnes de Saba venient* (1586) comes from the first of four volumes of motets covering the church's year. Its opening, with a treading bass, seems to suggest the stately procession of the three kings.

Omnes de Saba venient, aurum et thus deferentes, et laudem Domino annunciantes. Alleluia.

(Gradual for the Feast of the Epiphany)

(All they from Saba shall come, they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord. Alleluia.)

Words of Christ

5 **Ich bin ein rechter Weinstock** (Heinrich Schütz, 1585–1672)
(SSATTB)

The greater part of Schütz's long career was spent in Dresden, as Kapellmeister to the Elector of Saxony. His reputation as the greatest German composer of his century rests on an impressive body of over 500 works, mostly sacred. *Ich bin ein rechter Weinstock* comes from a collection of his German motets, the *Geistliche Chor-Musik*, published in Dresden in 1648. In contrast to the colourful extravagance of much of his earlier work, these twenty-nine motets call for only modest forces (and indeed the present one is intended to be sung unaccompanied), probably a reflection of the depleted resources available during the troubled period of the Thirty Years' War. Despite Schütz's stern preface to the volume, urging younger composers to return to the old disciplines of counterpoint, *Ich bin ein rechter Weinstock*, though indeed polyphonic, wears its learning lightly: its mood is genial and sunny, almost madrigalian, shedding an unexpected light on Christ's words.

> Ich bin ein rechter Weinstock, mein Vater ein Weingärtner. Einen jeglichen Reben an mir der nicht Frucht bringet wird er wegnehmen, und einen jeglichen der da Frucht bringet wird er reinigen, dass er mehr Frucht bringe. Ich bin der Weinstock, ihr seid die Reben; bleibet in mir und ich in euch. Gleich wie der Reben kann keine Frucht bringen von ihm selber, er bleibe denn am Weinstock, also auch ihr nicht; ihr bleibet denn in mir.
>
> *(John 15, vv. 1, 2, 4)*

(I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit: I am the vine, ye are the branches: abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me; abide therefore in me.)

6 **The crown of roses** (P. I. Tchaikovsky, 1840–93)
(SATB)

Originally a song for voice and piano in Tchaikovsky's *Sixteen Children's Songs* of 1884, the composer later reworked *The crown of roses* (which actually bore the title *Legend*) for unaccompanied mixed choir. The text, by Pleshcheyev, was stated to be 'from an English source'. The popularity of the choral version in English-speaking countries stems from its inclusion in the Oxford Book of Carols in 1928 – though the piece is not by any stretch of the imagination a carol.

> When Jesus Christ was yet a child
> He had a garden small and wild,
> Wherein he cherished roses fair,
> And wove them into garlands there.
>
> Now once, as summertime drew nigh,
> There came a troop of children by,
> And seeing roses on the tree,
> With shouts they plucked them merrily.
>
> 'Do you bind roses in your hair?'
> They cried, in scorn, to Jesus there.
> The boy said humbly: 'Take, I pray,
> All but the naked thorns away.'
>
> Then of the thorns they made a crown,
> And with rough fingers pressed it down,
> Till on his forehead fair and young
> Red drops of blood like roses sprung.
>
> *(Pleshcheyev, tr. G. Dearmer)*

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7 **Vo tsarstvii Tvoyem** (The Beatitudes) (Sergei Rachmaninov, 1873–1943)
(SATB)

This is the fourth of the twenty choral movements comprising Rachmaninov's impressive and colourful *Liturgy of St John Chrystostom* which he wrote in 1910 following a close study of Tchaikovsky's setting of 1879. Unlike Tchaikovsky's setting, which had been well received by the authorities of the Orthodox church, Rachmaninov's setting was not sanctioned for liturgical use, perhaps because the music appeared too prominent in its own right; the first performance was given by the chorus of the Maryinsky Theatre in St Petersburg, conducted by the composer. No traditional chants are used: the music is freely composed, unlike the Vespers of 1915, which did incorporate traditional liturgical melodies.

Vo tsarstvii Tvoyem pomyani nas, Gospodi, yegda priidyeshi vo tsarstvii Tvoyem. Blazheni nishchii dukhom, yako tyekhyest' tsarstvo nyebyesnoye. Blazheni plachushchii yako tii utyeshatsya. Blazheni krotsii yako tii naslyedyat zyemlyu. Blazheni alchushchii i zhazhdushchii pravdï, yako tii nas_tyatsya. Blazheni milostivii yako tii pomilovani budut. Blazheni chistii syerdtsem yako tii Boga uzryat. Blazheni mirotvortsï, yako tii Sïnovye Bozhii naryekutsya. Blazheni izgnani pravdï radi, yako tyekh yest' tsarstvo nyebyesnoye. Blazheni yestye, yegda ponosyat vam i izhdyenut, i ryekut fsyak zol glagol na vïl zhushche Menye radi, Raduityesya i vyesyelityesya yakom zda vasham nogana, nyebyesyekh. Slava Otsu i Sïnu, i Svyatomu Dukhu i ninye i prisno i vo vyeki vyekof. Amin.

(Matthew 5, vv.3–12)

(Remember us, O Lord, in Thy Kingdom, pray for us, when Thou dost come into Thy Kingdom, O Lord. How blest the poor in spirit, they shall have the Kingdom of heaven. How blest are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. How blest the meek, for they shall receive the earth, How blest are those who thirst and hunger for righteousness and justice, for their prayers shall be fulfilled. How blessed are the merciful, for the merciful shall be given mercy. How blest are they who have pure hearts, for they shall see their God, How blest are they who bring peace, for they shall be called the sons of God. How blest are the persecuted for righteousness' sake; theirs shall be the kingdom of heaven. And blessed are ye when men shall persecute you, and revile you and curse your name as evil unjustly for My name's sake, Be ye then glad and let your hearts rejoice, for behold your reward in heaven shall be great. Praise to the Father, Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and forever and to ages of ages. Amen.)

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8 **Pater noster** (Igor Stravinsky, 1882–1971)
(SATB)

In 1926 Stravinsky returned to the Russian Orthodox Church, from which he had been estranged for some time. The main musical fruit of his reconversion was the *Symphony of Psalms*, but he also wrote three short unaccompanied sacred choruses, Pater noster being the first of them. Originally in Slavonic, it was adapted by the composer to the Latin text in 1949.

Pater noster qui es in coelis, sanctificetur nomen tuum: adveniat regnum tuum: fiat voluntas tua, sicut in coelo et in terra: panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie: et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris: et ne nos inducas in tentationem: sed libera nos a malo. Amen.

(Luke 11, vv. 2–4)

(Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil. Amen.)

The Passion of Christ

9 **Christus factus est** (Anton Bruckner, 1824–96)
(SATB)

Born to a devout Austrian family, the son of an organist and a distinguished organist himself, Bruckner not unexpectedly wrote a significant amount of sacred choral music, though most of it belongs to his earlier years before symphonic composition took him over. *Christus factus est* is an exception: it dates from 1884, the period of the Seventh Symphony and the Te Deum. A product of its composer's late maturity, it must be counted as the finest and most concentrated of his smaller liturgical pieces, devotional and intense in its setting of the Holy Week text.

> Christus factus est pro nobis obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.
> Propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum et dedit illi nomen, quod est super omne nomen.
> *(Gradual for Maundy Thursday: Philippians 2, vv. 8–9)*

> *(Christ became obedient for us unto death, even the death of the cross.*
> *Wherefore God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above every name.)*

10 **Good Friday Reproaches** (Improperia) (G. P. da Palestrina)
(double choir SATB-SATB)

The *Improperia* texts (assembled from various biblical and liturgical sources including the prophets) are chanted during the Veneration of the Cross at Good Friday Mass in the Catholic church, a custom dating back to around 1200 in the Roman church but believed to be a vestige of the earlier, suppressed Gallican rite. Palestrina's essentially very simple setting for double choir is stated by the Italian musicologist Bianchi to date from 1573, the year of the death of his son. Its manuscript is preserved in the archives of the church of St John Lateran in Rome.

Popule meus, quid feci tibi?	*O my people, what have I done unto thee?*
Aut in quo contristavi te?	*Or wherein have I wearied thee?*
Responde mihi.	*Give me answer.*
Quia eduxi te de terra Aegypti:	*Because I have led thee out of the land of Egypt:*
Parasti crucem Salvatori tuo.	*Thou hast prepared a cross for thy Saviour.*
Hagios, O Theos.	*Holy God.*
Sanctus Deus.	*Holy God.*
Hagios ischyros.	*Holy and mighty.*
Sanctus fortis.	*Holy and mighty.*
Hagios athanatos, eleison imas.	*Holy and immortal God, have mercy on us.*
Sanctus et immortalis,	*Holy and immortal God,*
Miserere nobis.	*Have mercy on us.*
Popule meus, &c.	*O my people, &c.*

11 **Eram quasi agnus** (T. L. de Victoria, 1548–1611)
(SATB)

This is the fourth of Victoria's eighteen Tenebrae Responsories—polyphonic settings of texts used at Tenebrae, the office replacing Matins and Lauds on Thursday, Friday and Saturday of Holy Week, during which candles are progressively extinguished. The Responsories form part of his complete Music for Holy Week, published in 1585.

> Eram quasi agnus innocens: ductus sum ad immolandum, et nesciebam: consilium fecerunt inimici mei adversum me, dicentes: Venite mittamus lignum in panem eius, et eradamus eum de terra viventium. Omnes inimici mei adversum me cogitabant mala mihi: verbum iniquum, mandaverunt adversum me, dicentes:
> Venite, &c.
> *(Responsory at Third Nocturn, Maundy Thursday)*
> *(I was like an innocent lamb: I was led to be sacrificed and I knew it not: my enemies conspired against me, saying: Come, let us put wood into his bread, and root him out of the land of the living. All my enemies contrived mischief against me, They uttered evil speech against me, saying: Come, let us, &c.)*

12 **O vos omnes** (Pablo Casals, 1876–1973)
(SATB)

Although he is remembered principally as the foremost cellist of his generation, Casals was active throughout his life as a composer, though his output was small. *O vos omnes*, believed to date from 1932, is one of a number of sacred pieces he wrote for the Benedictine monks of Montserrat, an abbey near his native city of Barcelona. Originally for tenors and basses, it was recast by the composer for mixed choir and published in that form in 1965 in New York. Perhaps because of this circumstance of publication, Casals' deeply-felt motet is little-known in Europe despite having become a cornerstone of the sacred choral repertory in the United States.

> O vos omnes, qui transitis per viam, attendite, et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus.
>
> *(from the Office of Tenebrae for Maundy Thursday: Lamentations of Jeremiah 1, vv. 12–14)*

> *(Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.)*

13 **Crucifixus** (for eight voices) (Antonio Lotti, *c.*1667–1740)
(SSAATTBB)

Lotti, believed to have been born in Venice, lived and worked for most of his life there, gaining the prestigious position of *Maestro di cappella* at St Mark's in 1736. Among his prolific output there is a large quantity of church music that was admired for its contrapuntal mastery and the elegance of its voice writing. Nevertheless it is his fate to be remembered today mainly for a single composition, this eight-voiced *Crucifixus*, which is actually an extract from a *Credo* written during a period of employment at the court of Dresden in 1717–19 (two other of Lotti's *Crucifixus* settings, for six and ten voices respectively, are also occasionally performed). Although the piece is customarily sung unaccompanied and works well thus, this practice is anachronistic: Lotti wrote a figured bass part, and accompaniment at least by organ would have been expected.

> Crucifixus, etiam pro nobis: sub Pontio Pilato passus, et sepultus est.
>
> *(from the Ordinary of the Mass)*

> *(He was crucified even for us: he suffered under Pontius Pilate, and was buried.)*

Resurrection and Ascension

14 **Surgens Jesus** (Peter Philips, 1561–1628)
(SSATB)

Peter Philips, like Richard Dering, stands apart from his illustrious English contemporaries by reason of exile. After childhood and youth in London as a choirboy at St Paul's Cathedral, Philips (who was firmly Catholic) fled to the continent in 1582. After various travels, he settled in Antwerp, where he enjoyed a successful career as composer and teacher, later moving to Brussels. *Surgens Jesus*, from his published *Cantiones Sacrae* of 1612, strikingly dramatizes Christ's words 'pax vobis' by setting them to three simple, block chords, like islands of peace in a sea of joyful polyphony.

> Surgens Jesus, Dominus noster: stans in medio discipulorum suorum, dixit: 'Pax vobis'. Alleluia. Gavisi sunt discipuli viso Domino. Alleluia.
>
> *(Easter Antiphon)*

> *(Christ our Lord, rising again, stood in the midst of his disciples and said: 'Peace be unto you'. Alleluia. The disciples rejoiced at the sight of their Lord. Alleluia.)*

15 **Ascendo ad Patrem** (G. P. da Palestrina)
(SSATB)

This joyful Ascension motet, from Palestrina's Second Book of Motets (1572), falls into two parts, the second (beginning at the words 'Ego rogabo Patrem') being more tranquil in character. Both parts end with a vivid refrain to the words 'et gaudebit cor vestrum, alleluia'.

Ascendo ad Patrem meum, et Patrem vestrum, alleluia: Deum meum et Deum vestrum, alleluia: et dum assumptus fuero a vobis, mittam vobis Spiritum veritatis, et gaudebit cor vestrum. Alleluia.
Ego rogabo Patrem, et alium Paracletum dabit vobis Spiritum veritatis, et gaudebit cor vestrum. Alleluia.

(Antiphon for Ascension Day)

(I am going to my Father, and your Father, alleluia: my God and your God, alleluia: And when I have been taken from you, I shall send you the Spirit of truth, and your heart will rejoice. Alleluia.
I will pray to the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, the Spirit of truth, and your heart will rejoice. Alleluia.)

16 **Viri Galilaei** (William Byrd, 1543–1623)
(SSATB)

This setting of the Introit text from the Mass of the Ascension comes from Book 2 of Byrd's monumental *Gradualia* (1607). It falls naturally into two contrasting halves, the first half radiating tranquillity and reassurance, the second half (beginning at the words 'Omnes gentes') of a more fanfare-like character.

Viri Galilaei, quid admiramini aspicientes in caelum? Alleluia.
Quemadmodum vidistis eum ascendentem in caelum, ita veniet. Alleluia.
(Acts 1, v.11)
Omnes gentes plaudite manibus: jubilate Deo in voce exsultationis.
(Psalm 47, v.1)
Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto: Sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

(Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? Alleluia.
This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Alleluia.

O clap your hands together, all ye people: O sing unto God with the voice of melody.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.)

Christ in the Eucharist

17 **Jesu, dulcis memoria** (T. L. de Victoria)
(SATB)

This brief eucharistic motet—technically not a motet but a polyphonic setting of the first verse of a hymn text—has long been a favourite, though since its publication in Pedrell's complete edition of Victoria's work early in the twentieth century the scholar von May has asserted that it is not in fact by Victoria. Despite its doubtful authorship it stands as a perfect little example of the art of Renaissance polyphony.

Jesu dulcis memoria,
Dans vera cordis gaudia:
Sed super mel et omnia,
Eius dulcis praesentia.

(St Bernard, *c.*1150)

Jesu!—the very thought is sweet!
In that dear name all heart-joys meet;
But sweeter than the honey far
The glimpses of his presence are.

(tr. J. M. Neale)

18 **Ave verum Corpus** (Richard Dering, *c.*1580–1630)
(SATTB)

Like Philips, Dering was an English Catholic exile who worked and published his music on the continent, becoming organist to the convent of English nuns in Brussels around 1617. *Ave verum Corpus* comes from his first published volume of music, the *Cantiones Sacrae* of 1617. It is a tribute to Dering's compositional gifts that his setting of this familiar text can withstand comparison with Byrd's. As with Byrd's setting, the music breathes an air of mystery and devotion, tinged with the pain of the Crucifixion.

Ave verum corpus, natum de Maria Virgine:
Vere passum, immolatum in cruce pro homine:
Cuius latus perforatum unda fluxit sanguine:
Esto nobis praegustatum in mortis examine.
O dulcis, O pie, O Jesu Fili Mariae,
Miserere mei.

(Sequence hymn for the Feast of Corpus Christi)

(All hail, O true Body, of the blessed Virgin born,
Which in anguish to redeem us did'st suffer upon the cross;
From whose side, when pierced by spear, there came forth both water and blood:
Be to us at our last hour the source of consolation.
O loving, O holy, O Jesu, thou Son of Mary,
O have mercy on me.)

19 **Pange lingua** (Gregorian chant)
(unison)

This hymn is one of the most beautiful and renowned in the repertory of Gregorian chant. St Thomas Aquinas, the Italian scholar-priest, wrote the words in 1263 at the request of the Pope, to fit an earlier hymn tune.

Pange lingua gloriosi
Corporis mysterium,
Sanguinisque pretiosi,
Quem in mundi pretium
Fructus ventris generosi
Rex effudit gentium.

Of the glorious Body telling,
O my tongue, its mysteries sing,
And the Blood, all price excelling,
Which the world's eternal King,
In a noble womb once dwelling,
Shed for this world's ransoming.

Nobis datus, nobis natus
Ex intacta Virgine,
Et in mundo conversatus,
Sparso verbi semine,

Given for us, for us descending,
Of a Virgin to proceed,
Man with man in converse blending,
Scattered he the Gospel seed,

Sui moras incolatus
Miro clausit ordine.

Till his sojourn drew to ending,
Which he closed in wondrous deed.

In supremae nocte cenae
Recumbens cum fratribus,
Observata lege plene
Cibis in legalibus
Cibum turbae duodenae
Se dat suis manibus.

At the last great Supper lying,
Circled by his brethren's band,
Meekly with the law complying,
First he finished its command,
Then, immortal Food supplying,
Gave himself with his own hand.

Verbum caro, panem verum
Verbo carnem efficit:
Fitque sanguis Christi merum
Et si sensus deficit,
Ad firmandum cor sincerum
Sola fides sufficit.

Word made Flesh, by word he maketh
Very bread his Flesh to be;
Man in wine Christ's blood partaketh:
And if senses fail to see,
Faith alone the true heart waketh
To behold the mystery.

Tantum ergo sacramentum
Veneremur cernui,
Et antiquum documentum
Novo cedat ritui;
Praestet fides supplementum
Sensuum defectui.

Therefore we, before him bending,
This great Sacrament revere;
Types and shadows have their ending,
For the newer rite is here;
Faith, our outward sense befriending,
Makes the outward vision clear.

Genitori, Genitoque
Laus et jubilatio,
Salus, honor, virtus quoque
Sit et benedictio:
Procedenti ab utroque
Compar sit laudatio. Amen.

(St Thomas Aquinas)

Glory let us give, and blessing
To the Father and the Son;
Honour, might and praise addressing,
While eternal ages run;
Ever too his love confessing,
Who, from both, with both is one. Amen.

(tr. J. M. Neale and others)

20 **Agnus Dei** (Samuel Barber, 1910–81)
(SSAATTBB)

This is a choral arrangement of Barber's celebrated *Adagio for Strings*, itself an arrangement of the second movement of his String Quartet in B minor written in 1936. The string quartet version was written during an idyllic summer spent in Switzerland; perhaps aware that he had just composed the piece that would bring him fame and fortune, Barber wrote to a friend: 'I have just finished the slow movement of my quartet today—it is a knockout!' He shortly afterwards made the orchestral string version and offered it to Toscanini, who premièred it in one of his national broadcasts in the USA in 1938 and thereafter performed it often, making a recording in 1942. The fame of the *Adagio* prompted many requests for rearranged versions. Barber himself made the choral arrangement in 1967. Although it is unlikely that the *Agnus Dei* text had been in his mind when he wrote the string version, there is no doubt that its devotional character fits the music well.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Dona nobis pacem.

(from the Ordinary of the Mass)

(Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.
Grant us thy peace.)

21 **O sacrum convivium** (Olivier Messiaen, 1908–1992)
(SATB)

Given that Messiaen was a composer whose religious faith lay at the heart of his creative life, it is perhaps surprising that *O sacrum convivium* is his only liturgical motet. He wrote it in Paris in 1937 at the request of the Abbé Brun as an offertory motet and it has become much treasured and often performed outside France. Cast in the 'transcendental' key of F sharp major, it seems to float outside of time and space, a microcosm of Messiaen's style.

O sacrum convivium in quo Christus sumitur: recolitur memoria passionis eius: mens impletur gratia, et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur, alleluia.

(Antiphon at the Feast of Corpus Christi)

(O sacred feast in which Christ is given for food: memorial of his Passion: our hearts are filled with grace, and a token of the glory to come is given to us, alleluia.)

COLCD124
Stereo/digital
Made in USA

Recording produced by Jillian White
Balance engineer: Campbell Hughes, assisted by Simon Weir
Recorded in the Great Hall of University College School, London, May 1993

Cover picture: Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), Hands of an Apostle
(Study for an altarpiece commissioned by Jacob Heller)
Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna/Bridgeman Art Library, London
Cover design: Richard Craddock
Layout: Nick Findell

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