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THE GRAMOPHONE (COR16006, BLEST CECILIA)

Blest Cecilia

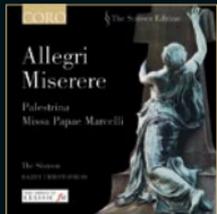
Britten Volume 1 COR16006



Hymn to the Virgin
Hymn to Saint Cecilia
Rejoice in the Lamb
Te Deum in C
Jubilate Deo
Festival Te Deum

Allegri Miserere

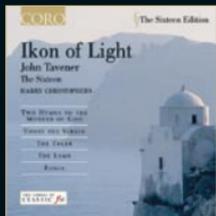
COR16014



Palestrina -
Missa Papae Marcelli,
Stabat Mater Dolorosa
Lotti - Crucifixus
Allegri - Miserere Mei

Ikon of Light

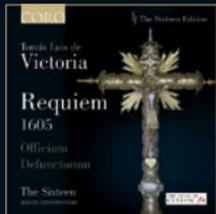
John Tavener COR16015



The Lamb
Two Hymns to
the Mother of God
Today the Virgin
The Tyger
Eonia

Victoria Requiem 1605

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Priest, scholar and
singer, this remarkable
Spaniard epitomised the
emotion and fervour
of Renaissance Europe.
Victoria's lavish Requiem
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famous and revered work.

CORO

§ The Sixteen Edition

A Ceremony of Carols Benjamin Britten

A BOY WAS BORN

A SHEPHERD'S CAROL

SWEET WAS THE SONG

The Sixteen
HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

THE VOICES OF
CLASSIC fm

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In December 1977, as a member of the choir of Westminster Abbey, I sang at Britten's memorial service; at that time, I was also a member of English Music Theatre, successor to English Opera Group and the brainchild of conductor Stuart Bedford and producer Colin Graham but with the blessing and support of Britten. Unfortunately, I never had the privilege of meeting Benjamin Britten but I felt I knew him through his music and working closely with not only Stuart and Colin but also Peter Pears.

It had taken England many centuries to produce

such a distinctive musical personality. Indeed there would be many that would agree with me that he was the first of such stature since Henry Purcell.

Having sung most of the works on this disc as a boy chorister and as a rather indifferent tenor, I found it most refreshing to look over these scores from a conductor's viewpoint. I am always astounded how years of misguided interpretation lead to the composer's intentions being flagrantly ignored and then termed "tradition" but I didn't really expect it in performances of more recent composers' works. And so it was doubly refreshing to attempt to be faithful to Britten's requests. His music is never easy but it is always challenging for performers, be they singers or instrumentalists. However, and take note all budding composers, he never sets impossible tasks!

Harry
Chimpen,

Britten Choral Works II: Benjamin Britten - 22 Nov 1913 - 4 Dec 1976

After three years in the United States, Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears returned to England in spring 1942, in the Swedish merchant ship M.S. *Axel Johnson*. On the way the ship stopped at Halifax, Nova Scotia, where they came across *The English Galaxy of Shorter Poems* in a bookshop. With this small book (he also had with him two harp manuals to study for an eventually unfulfilled concerto commission), working in a cabin Pears described as "miserable... the smell & heat were intolerable", Britten was able to create a musical language for the narrative of Christmas and the rebirth of spring, that would become *A Ceremony of Carols*; one which seems at once strange and far-off, and familiar and personal, archaic and precisely modern, with the verve and immediacy of response of youth.

The settings of five poems from the anthology, *There is no Rose, As Dew in Aprille* (both to 14th century anonymous poems), *This little Babe* and *In Freezing Winter Night* (Robert Southwell, 1561?-1595), and *Deo Gracias* (15th C anon.), as well as *Balulalow* (James, John and Robert Wedderburn, 16th C) and the music of *Wolcum Yole!* (14th C anon.), at first with the Latin words *Hodie Christus natus est*, were composed on board ship. After their arrival in England, Britten added the *Spring Carol* (William Cornish, 14?-1523), and most significantly decided to frame the

whole sequence with the plainsong antiphon from the *Vespers of the Nativity*, which has that Latin text. This version of the *Ceremony of Carols* was first performed, by women's voices, in the Library of Norwich Castle on 5th December 1942; shortly before publication the next year Britten added *That yongë Child* (14th C anon.), as a complement to *Balulalow*, and the solo harp interlude, marked *andante pastorale* - where the plainsong melody is heard again - and thus it received its first London performance in December 1943, and was recorded by the Morrision Boys' Choir.

Britten had with him also on the *Axel Johnson* some poems by W. H. Auden, with whom they had stayed for a time in the US, and whom Britten had met when composing for the GPO Film Unit in 1935. These included parts of a Christmas Oratorio, of which in the end Britten set only two short sections, a *Chorale* (later withdrawn) and *A Shepherd's Carol*, included in the BBC programme *A Poet's Christmas*, in 1944. Auden's work was published, with the title *For the Time Being*, the same year, but without the carol, whose refrain the poet apparently feared might be misconstrued, and thus a mysterious, atmospheric poem, setting the transcendent sad calm of a shepherd's vision against the dramatic imagination and less glamorous reality of a poet's life, was saved from oblivion by Britten's lovely music.

Once back in England, Britten and Pears settled in Aldeburgh in Suffolk. *The Borough* of George Crabbe's poem which Britten had read in the US in 1941 and which had made him realise "where I belonged and what I lacked"; the poem would lead to the opera *Peter Grimes*. Britten rewrote his music for the traditional text *The Sycamore Tree*, which had begun life as *I saw three ships* in 1931 at a Lowestoft Musical Society concert, for the 1968 Aldeburgh Festival. Also dating from 1931, and rewritten for the 1966 festival, *Sweet was the song*, to words from William Ballet's 16th century Lute Book, was extracted from a Christmas suite *Thy King's Birthday*.

Organist and master of the choristers of Westminster Cathedral, George Malcolm had deliberately created in the boys of his choir a raw, 'continental' sound far removed from the soft roundness of Anglican tradition. Britten heard the choir in January 1959; they sang, he wrote, "with a brilliance & authority which was staggering." A commission for a Mass was discussed, and a little later, Malcolm related, he met Britten by chance and told him he would be leaving the Cathedral in the summer to go freelance. "He didn't say, as some of my friends kindly had, 'What a loss for English church music'. He just said, 'What about my Mass?' & 3 weeks later he delivered it..." The result is a work of fierce concision, with bright, sometimes even harsh, sounds from voices and organ, and yet enormous poignancy.

"Britten began his career with a rebirth, a work specifically called *A Boy was Born*,

written when he was still a boy himself" (Wilfrid Mellers). This was Britten's first choral publication and his first choral music to be broadcast, on 23rd February 1934 - the day of Elgar's death - and was thus a significant launching upon the world, for one still a student at the Royal College of Music. The music is a set of variations, on the motif at the beginning of the hymn-like opening theme, D-E-G-E; Edmund Rubbra wrote in a preview for the *Radio Times* that it contained "the best elements of Elizabethan choral writing"; it's true that except for some sections of the *War Requiem* he never wrote such elaborate vocal counterpoint again, and one can already hear that his gifts incline more to a dramatic, rhetorical stylization more akin to the 17th century, and his (later) much-beloved Purcell, than to the polyphony of Tallis (as in, say, Vaughan Williams).

A Boy was Born is also notable for Britten's precocious selection and understanding of poetic texts, which would be among his most consistent and valuable qualities. As well as anonymous 15th century sources, and the translation of the 16th century German title chorale, he gives fresh life to Christina Rossetti's hymn *In the bleak mid-winter*, not least by the breathtaking imaginative leap of bringing in the boys' voices above the slow-falling snow to sing the *Corpus Christi* carol. The sixth variation, *Finale*, incorporates poems by Thomas Tusser (1558) and Francis Quarles (1592-1644) in a rondo, with a moment of bell-like stasis on the word 'Glory', before the final peroration.

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A CEREMONY OF CAROLS

Harp: Sioned Williams

- | | | |
|----|---|------|
| 1 | Procession | 1.41 |
| 2 | Wolcum Yole! | 1.16 |
| 3 | There is no Rose | 2.16 |
| 4 | That yongë child
solo: Sally Dunkley | 1.39 |
| 5 | Balulalow
solo: Libby Crabtree | 1.15 |
| 6 | As dew in Aprile | 0.56 |
| 7 | This little Babe | 1.21 |
| 8 | Interlude
harp solo: Sioned Williams | 3.53 |
| 9 | In freezing winter night
solos: Libby Crabtree, Sally Dunkley | 3.08 |
| 10 | Spring Carol
solos: Libby Crabtree, Sally Dunkley | 1.02 |
| 11 | Deo Gracias! | 1.06 |
| 12 | Recession | 1.51 |
| 13 | A SHEPHERD'S CAROL
solos: Simon Birchall, Neil MacKenzie,
Deborah Miles-Johnson, Carys Lane | 3.29 |
| 14 | THE SYCAMORE TREE | 1.44 |
| 15 | SWEET WAS THE SONG | 2.27 |

MISSA BREVIS IN D

solos: Carys Lane, Rebecca Outram,
Deborah Miles-Johnson

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|------|
| 16 | Kyrie | 1.57 |
| 17 | Gloria | 2.33 |
| 18 | Sanctus/Benedictus | 3.00 |
| 19 | Agnus Dei | 2.06 |

A BOY WAS BORN

with the Choristers of St. Paul's Cathedral
(Director: John Scott) solo: Jamie Hopkins

- | | | |
|--------------------|---|-------|
| 20 | Theme | 2.21 |
| 21 | Variation I: Lullay, Jesu | 4.23 |
| 22 | Variation II: Herod | 2.12 |
| 23 | Variation III: Jesu, as Thou art | 2.50 |
| 24 | Variation IV: The Three Kings | 3.29 |
| 25 | Variation V:
In the Bleak Mid-Winter | 5.07 |
| 26 | Variation VI: Noel! | 9.10 |
| Total playing time | | 69.37 |

THE SIXTEEN



SOPRANO

Fiona Clarke, Libby Crabtree, Ruth Dean,
Micaela Haslam, Carys Lane, Rebecca Outram

ALTO

Deborah Miles-Johnson, Philip Newton
Christopher Royall, Nigel Short

HARP

Sioned Williams

ORGAN

Margaret Phillips

TENOR

Simon Berridge, Philip Daggett,
Neil MacKenzie, Matthew Vine

BASS

Simon Birchall, Robert Evans
Timothy Jones, Jeremy White

PIANO

Stephen Westrop

MISSA BREVIS

- I Fiona Clarke, Libby Crabtree
Ruth Dean, Carys Lane
- II Sally Dunkley, Michaela Haslam
Nicola-Jane Kemp, Rebecca Outram
- III Deborah Miles-Johnson, Philip Newton
Christopher Royall, Nigel Short

A CEREMONY OF CAROLS

- I Libby Crabtree, Ruth Dean
Micaela Haslam, Rosemary Hattrell
- II Fiona Clarke, Sally Dunkley
Lucinda Houghton, Nicola-Jane Kemp
- III Sarah Connolly, Philip Newton
Christopher Royall, Nigel Short

A CEREMONY OF CAROLS

1 Procession

*Hodie Christus natus est:
hodie Salvator apparuit:
hodie in terra canunt angeli:
laetantur archangeli:
hodie exultant justi dicentes:
gloria in excelsis Deo. Alleluia!*

2 Wolcum Yole!

Wolcum, Wolcum,
Wolcum be thou hevenè king,
Wolcum Yole!
Wolcum, born in one morning,
Wolcum for whom we sall sing!

Wolcum be ye, Stevne and Jon,
Wolcum Innocentes every one,
Wolcum Thomas marter one,
Wolcum be ye, good Newe Yere,
Wolcum Twelfth Day both in fere,
Wolcum, seintes lefe and dere,
Wolcum Yole, Wolcum Yole, Wolcum!

Candelmesse, Quene of bliss,
Wolcum bothe to more and lesse.

Wolcum, Wolcum,
Wolcum be ye that are here,
Wolcum Yole!
Wolcum alle and make good cheer.
Wolcum alle and another yere,
Wolcum Yole. Wolcum!

3 There is no Rose

There is no rose of such vertu
As is the rose that bare Jesu.
Alleluia.

For in this rose containèd was
Heaven and eart in litel space,
Res miranda.

By that rose we may well see
There be one God in persons three,
Pares forma.

The aungels sungen the shepherds to:
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gaudeamus.

Leave we all this werldly mirth,
and follow we this joyful birth.
Transeamus.

4 That yongë child

That yongë child when it gan weep
With song she lulled him asleep:
That was so sweet a melody
It passèd alle minstrelsy.
The nightingalë sang also:
Her song is hoarse and nought thereto:
Whoso attendeth to her song
And leaveth the first then doth he wrong.

5 Balulalow

O my deare hert, young Jesus sweet,
Prepare thy creddil in my spreit,
And I sall rock thee to my hert,
And never mair from thee depart.

But I sall praise thee evermoir
With sangës sweet unto thy gloir;
The knees of my hert sall I bow,
And sing that richt Balulalow!

6 As dew in Aprille

I sing of a maiden That is makèles:
King of all kings To her son she ches.

He came al so stille There his moder was,
As dew in Aprille That falleth on the grass.

He came al so stille There his moder's bour,
As dew in Aprille That falleth on the flour.

He came al so stille There his moder lay,
As dew in Aprille That falleth on the spray.

Moder and mayden was never none but she:
Well may such a lady Goddes moder be.

7 This little Babe

This little Baby so few days old,
Is come to rifle Satan's fold;
All hell doth at his presence quake,
Though he himself for cold do shake;
For in this weak unarmèd wise
The gates of hell he will surprisè.

With tears he fights and wins the field,
His naked breast stands for a shield;
His battering shot are babish cries,
His arrows looks of weeping eyes,
His martial ensigns Cold and Need;
And feeble Flesh his warrior's steed.

His camp is pitchèd in a stall,
His bulwark but a broken wall;
The crib his trench, haystalks his stakes;
Of shepherds he his muster makes;
And thus, as sure his foe to wound,
The angels' trumps alarum sound.
My soul, with Christ join thou in fight;
Stick to the tents that he hath pight.
Within his crib is surest ward;
This little Babe will be thy guard.
If thou wilt foil thy foes with joy,
then flit not from this heavenly Boy.

8 Interlude

Sioned Williams - Harp solo

9 In freezing winter night

Behold, a silly tender babe,
in freezing winter night,
In homely manger trembling lies –
Alas, a piteous sight!
The inns are full; no man will yield
This little pilgrim bed.
But forced he is with silly beasts
In crib to shroud his head.
This stable is a Prince's court,
This crib his chair of State;
The beasts are parcel of this pomp,
The wooden dish his plate.
The persons in that poor attire
His royal liveries wear;
The Prince himself is come from heav'n;
This pomp is prizèd there.
With joy approach, O Christian wight,
Do homage to the King,
And highly praise his humble pomp,
which he from Heav'n doth bring.

10 Spring Carol

Pleasure it is to hear iwis, the Birdès sing.
The deer in the dale, the sheep in the vale,
the corn springing.
God's purvayance For sustenance, it is for man.
Then we always to him give praise,
And thank him than.

11 Deo Gracias

Deo gracias! Deo gracias!
Adam lay ibounden, bounden in a bond;
Four thousand winter thought he not to long.

Deo gracias! Deo gracias!
And all was for an appil, an appil that he tok,
As clerkès finden written in their book.

Deo gracias! Deo gracias!
Ne had the appil takè ben, the appil takè ben,
Ne haddè never our lady a ben hevenè quene.

Blessèd be the time that appil takè was.
Therefore we moun singen.
Deo Gracias!

12 Recession

Hodie... (text as Procession, track 11)

13 A SHEPHERD'S CAROL

O lift your little pinkie, and touch the winter sky.
Love's all over the mountains
where the beautiful go to die.

If Time were the wicked sheriff in a horse opera,
I'd pay for riding lessons
and take his gun away. O lift . . .

If I were a Valentino, and Fortune were abroad,
I'd hypnotise that iceberg
till she kissed me of her own accord. O lift . . .

If I'd stacked up the velvet
and my crooked rib were dead,
I'd be breeding white canaries
and eating crackers in bed. O lift . . .

But my cuffs are soiled and fraying.
The kitchen clock is slow,
and over the Blue Waters
the grass grew long ago. O lift . . .

14 THE SYCAMORE TREE

As I sat under a sycamore tree,
A sycamore tree, a sycamore tree,
I looked me out upon the sea
On Christ's Sunday at morn.

I saw three ships a-sailing there,
A-sailing there, a-sailing there,
Jesu, Mary and Joseph they bear
On Christ's Sunday at morn.

Joseph did whistle and Mary did sing,
Mary did sing, Mary did sing,
And all the bells on earth did ring
For joy our Lord was born.

O they sail'd into Bethlehem
To Bethlehem, to Bethlehem,
Saint Michael was the steeresman,
Saint John sat in the horn¹.

And all the bells on earth did ring,
On earth did ring, on earth did ring:
'Welcome be Thou Heaven's King,
On Christ's Sunday at morn!'

¹prow

15 SWEET WAS THE SONG

Sweet was the song the Virgin sung,
When she to Bethlem Juda came,
And was delivered of a son,
That blessed Jesus hath to name.
Lulla, lulla, lulla, lullaby,
Lulla, lulla, lulla, lullaby,
Sweet Babe, sang she.
My Son and eke a Saviour born,
Who hast vouchsafed from on high
To visit us that were forlorn.
Lalula, lalula, lalulaby,
Sweet Babe, sang she,
and rocked Him sweetly on her knee.

MISSA BREVIS IN D

16 Kyrie

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

17 Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.
Laudamus te, benedicimus te,
adoramus te, glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi
propter magnam gloriam tuam.
Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili unigenite, Iesu Christe.
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus,
tu solus Altissimus Iesu Christe,
Cum Sancto Spiritu
in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

18 Sanctus/Benedictus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.

19 Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
dona nobis pacem.

A BOY WAS BORN

20 Theme: A Boy was Born

A BOY WAS BORN in Bethlehem,
Rejoice for that, Jerusalem! *Alleluya.*

He let himself a servant be,
That all mankind He might set free: *Alleluya.*

Then praise the Word of God who came
to dwell within a human frame: *Alleluya.*

21 Variation I: Lullay Jesu

*Mine own dear mother, sing lullay!
Lullay, Jesu, lullay, lullay!
Mine own dear mother, sing lullay!*

So blessed a sight it was to see,
How Mary rocked her Son so free;
So fair she rocked and sang 'by-by'.

'Mine own dear son, why weepest Thou thus?
Is not Thy Father King of bliss?
Have I not done that in me is?
Your grievance, tell me what it is.'

"Therefore, mother weep I nought,
But for the woe that shall be wrought
To me, ere I mankind have bought.

'Ah, dear mother! yet shall a spear
My heart in sunder all to-tear;
No wonder though I careful were.

'Now, dear mother, sing lullay,
And put away all heaviness;
Into this world I took the way,
Again to (heaven) I shall me dress,
Where joy is without end ay,
Mine own dear mother, sing lullay!
Lullay, Jesu, lullay, lullay!
Mine own dear mother, sing lullay!

22 Variation II: Herod

Noel!
Herod that was both wild and wode,
Full much he shed of Christian blood,
To slay the Child so meek of mood,
that Mary bare, that clean may¹.

Herod slew with pride and sin,
Thousands of two year and within;
The body of Christ he thought to win
And to destroy the Christian fay².

Mary with Jesu forth yfraught³,
As the angel her taught,
To flee the land till it were sought,
To Egypt she took her way.

Now Jesus that didst die for us on the Rood,
And didst christen innocents in their blood,
By the prayer of Thy mother good,
Bring us to bliss that lasteth ay.

¹Maid ²Faith ³Laden

23 Variation III: Jesu, as Thou art our Saviour

Jesu, Jesu, Jesu, Jesu,
Save us all through Thy virtue.

Jesu, as Thou art our Saviour
That Thou save us fro dolour!
Jesu is mine paramour.
Blessed be Thy name, Jesu.

Jesu was born of a may,
Upon Christēmas Day,
She was may befornd and ay,
Blessed be Thy name, Jesu.

24 Variation IV: The Three Kings

There came three kings fro Galilee
Into Bethlehem, that fair city,
To seek Him that should ever be by right-a,
Lord and king and knight-a.

They took their leave, both old and ying,
Of Herod, that moody king;
They went forth with their offering by light-a,
By the star that shone so bright-a.

Till they came into the place
Where Jesus and His mother was,
Offered they up with great solace in fere-a¹
Gold, incense, and myrrh-a.

Forth then went these kingēs three,
Till they came home to theri country;
Glad and blithe they were all three
Of the sight that they had see bydene-a².

¹Together ²Together

25 Variation V: In the bleak mid-winter

In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow has fallen, snow on snow,

Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.

Lully, lulley, lully, lulley,
The falcon hath borne my make¹ away.

He bare him up, he bare him down,
He bare him into an orchard brown.

In that orchard there was an hall
That was hangēd with purple and pall.

And in that hall there was a bed,
It was hangēd with gold so red.

In that bed there lieth a knight,
His woundēs bleeding, day and night.

By that bedside kneeleth a may,
And she weepeth both night and day.

And by that bedside there standeth a stone,
Corpus Christi written thereon.

¹Mate

26 Variation VI: (Finale) Noel!

Noel! Wassail! Good day, good day,
My Lord Sir Christēmas, good day!

Good day, Sir Christēmas our King,
For every man, both old and ying,
Is glad of your coming. *Good day.*

God's Son so much of might
From heaven to earth down is light
And born is of a maid so bright. *Good day.*

*Noel! Our King! Hosanna!
This night a Child is born.*

'Get ivy and hull¹, woman, deck up thine house,
And take this same brawn for to seethe and to souse;
Provide us good cheer, for thou knowest the old guise,
Old customs that good be, let no man despise.
At Christmas be merry and thank God of all,
And feast thy poor neighbours, the great and the small.
Yea, all the year long have an eye to the poor,
And God shall send luck to keep open thy door.
Good fruit and good plenty do well in thy loft,
Then lay for an orchard and cherish it oft.
The profit is mickle, the pleasure is much;
At pleasure with profit few wise men will grutch.
For plants and for stocks lay aforehand to cast,
But set or remove them, while Twelve-tide do last.
The profit is mickle, the pleasure is much;
At pleasure with profit few wise men will grutch.
For plants and for stocks lay aforehand to cast,
But set or remove them, while Twelve-tide do last.

Welcome be Thou, heaven-king,
Welcome born in one morning,
Welcome for whom we shall sing *Welcome Yule.*

Welcome be ye that are here,
Welcome all, and make good cheer,
Welcome all another year! *Welcome Yule.*

Glory to God on high, and jolly mirth,
'Twi'x man and man, and peace on earth!

*Wassail, Wassail!
Lully, lulley, lully, lulley...*

*Noel! Noel!...
Herod that was so wild and wode.*

Mine own dear mother... Jesu, Jesu!...

This night a Child is born;
This night a Son is given;
This son, this Child
Hath reconciled
Poor man that was forlorn,
And the angry God of Heaven.
Hosanna, sing Hosanna!

Now, now that joyful day,
That blessed hour is come,
That was foretold
In days of old,
Wherein all nations may
Bless, bless the virgin's womb.
Hosanna, sing Hosanna!

Let heaven triumph above,
Let earth rejoice below;
Let heaven and earth
Be filled with mirth,
For peace and lasting love
Atones your God and you.
Hosanna, sing Hosanna!

¹Holly

§ The Sixteen HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

After twenty-five years of world-wide performance and recording, **The Sixteen** is recognised as one of the world's greatest vocal ensembles.

Its special reputation for performing early English polyphony, masterpieces of the Renaissance and a diversity of 20th century music is drawn from the passions of conductor and founder, **Harry Christophers**. Over eighty recordings, many prize-winning, reflect The Sixteen's quality in a range of work spanning the music of six hundred years.

The Sixteen has toured throughout Europe, Japan, Australia and the Americas and has given regular performances at major concert halls and festivals worldwide, including the Barbican Centre, Sydney Opera House, and Vienna Musikverein; also the BBC Proms, and the festivals of Salzburg, Granada, Lucerne and Istanbul. The vigour and passion of its performance win new fans wherever it performs. At home in the UK, the group promotes A Choral Pilgrimage, a tour of our finest cathedrals bringing music back to the buildings for which it was written.

The choir is enhanced by the existence of its own period instrument orchestra, The Symphony of Harmony and Invention, and through it Harry Christophers brings fresh insights to music including that of Purcell, Monteverdi, JS Bach and Handel. 2004 witnessed the launch of the group's annual Handel in Oxford Festival, a weekend of concerts and events dedicated to the life of this great composer.



Recording Producer: Mark Brown
Recording Engineers: Mike Hatch, Mike Clements
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