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CLASSICS

Naked
Byrd
Two

Armonico Consort



NAKED BYRD

TWO

1	Salve Regina <i>Anna Sandström, soprano</i>	Hermann Contractus	[3.23]
2	The Spirit of Tallis* <i>Anna Sandström, soprano</i> <i>Kelly McCusker, violin</i>	Thomas Tallis, arr. Christopher Monks	[3.07]
3	Agnus Dei (from <i>Adagio for Strings</i>)	Samuel Barber	[7.36]
4	Funeral Ikos	John Tavener	[8.07]
5	Hear my Prayer, O Lord	Henry Purcell	[2.37]
6	Spiritus Sanctus Vivificans <i>Anna Sandström, soprano</i>	Hildegard of Bingen	[2.50]
7	Never Seek to Tell Thy Love*	Jonathan Roberts	[3.50]
8	Crucifixus	Antonio Lotti	[3.29]

9	O Virtus Sapientiae <i>Kirsteen Rogers, soprano</i>	Hildegard of Bingen	[2.16]
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10	Versa Est (Requiem)	Tomás Luis de Victoria	[4.56]
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11	Strengthen ye the weak hands* <i>Rachel Robinson, soprano</i> <i>Peter Morton, tenor</i>	David Buckley	[2.18]
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12	Agnus Dei from 4 part mass	William Byrd	[4.05]
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13	The Lamb	John Tavener	[4.01]
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* World Première recordings

Total timings: [52.40]

ARMONICO CONSORT
CHRISTOPHER MONKS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

NAKED BYRD TWO

Following on from their first volume of works that were, in Christopher Monks's words 'united by the tendency of their composers to wear their hearts on their sleeves', the Armonico Consort here present a second compilation of music stimulated by overpowering feelings and potent sentiments that have the power to move and inspire the listener. In covering a vast expanse of time, the power of music as a tool for intense expression is shown to have reached far into history with some of the music on this recording composed as early as the eleventh century.

And it is in the eleventh century that the programme begins, with the haunting Marian antiphon **Salve Regina**. The exact provenance of this hymn to the Blessed Virgin Mary, one of the most enduring plainsong settings, is not known for certain, although contemporary opinion most frequently attributes it to Hermann Contractus (1013-1054), a renowned scholar, mathematician, writer and Benedictine monk, known to have written a number of hymns later in his life. Of those hymns that are attributed to him other than *Salve Regina*, perhaps the best known is *Alma Redemptoris Mater*. The hymn itself has been used in numerous ways

over the centuries by the church but is most commonly found at the end of Compline, the last service of the day and of the sequence of hours, as well as at the various feasts of Mary.

A contemporary take on a now infamous theme by the Tudor recusant composer Thomas Tallis (c. 1505-1585) follows. The original theme, a hymn by Tallis, the text of which employs the first two verses of Psalm Two, was first seen included in Archbishop Parker's Psalter of 1567. The theme was brought to particular prominence by Ralph Vaughan Williams who not only included it in the twentieth-century English Hymnal, of which he was one of the editors, but used it as the basis for his own *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*, composed in 1910 and first performed in Gloucester Cathedral the same year. In **The Spirit of Tallis**, Christopher Monks uses the original text found in the 1567 Psalter, '*Why fum'th in fight the Gentiles spite, in fury raging stout?*', while the poignant Phrygian melody of Tallis's hymn is complemented with an improvisatory and expressive violin line.

It took some thirty years for Samuel Barber (1910-1981) eventually to score his **Adagio for Strings** for eight-part choir following its composition. Originally written as a movement

of his String Quartet, Op. 11 in 1936, Barber next scored the work for full string orchestra a little while later. This second version of the work went on to become perhaps one of the best known pieces of American classical music. The text that Barber chose to set, and which is conveniently appropriate for the music, is that of the Agnus Dei, part of the ordinary of the Mass, which seeks forgiveness from sin through the 'Lamb of God'.

In the first of two works in this programme by John Tavener (b. 1944), **Funeral Ikos**, the influence of the Orthodox Church on his music, and a seemingly profound religious belief, become particularly evident in setting this text primarily used for the funerals of priests. Written in 1981, the simplicity of the music is conspicuous and potent with much of the work in unison and with much repetition of the material through different combinations of voice parts. Each 'Alleluia' section provides a ray of optimism looking in anticipation as to what the next world may bring.

As a composer working in the Restoration, it is difficult to overestimate the contribution that Henry Purcell (1659-1695) made to the revivification of music, both inside and outside of the church, following the period of the

Commonwealth and Protectorate. Much of the music that he wrote was linked into the reigning monarch and royal family, and it is thought that **Hear my Prayer, O Lord** is the first part of a longer work that was intended for the state funeral of King Charles II. Following rumours of the king's death-bed conversion to Catholicism the state funeral never took place and the piece was never to be completed by Purcell. What remains, however, is an astonishingly powerful setting of the first verse of Psalm 102 in which a considerable climax grows from the germ of just a single voice.

Of the multifarious activities of Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) – which included life as a Benedictine abbess, founding two monasteries, as well as being a poet and a writer on a wide range of subjects – composition of music to be sung during the liturgy was a vital feature for which she is mostly remembered. Her music, of which there are two works on this recording (**Spiritus Sanctus Vivificans** and **O Virtus Sapientiae**), largely stretched the boundaries of the chant of the time, often going beyond the common range that had become usual. It is of a lyrical nature, more often than not being particularly appropriate for the nature of each text. She combined all of her music into a

collection entitled *Symphonia armoniae celestium revelationum*, the exact date of which is not known. *Spiritus Sanctus Vivificans* is a dedicatory hymn to the Holy Spirit, while *O Virtus Sapientiae* is a hymn to the Holy Wisdom and the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Both of these works are performed here with a typical organum drone.

Following on from *Hope finds a way*, included in the first volume of Naked Byrd, Jonathan Roberts's (b. 1983) **Never Seek to Tell Thy Love**, brings the programme into the present day. For some years now Roberts has taken part in the educational arm of the Armonico Consort, assisting in their regular workshops. His own music has been nurtured through the Consort, and *Never Seek to Tell Thy Love* is the second of his compositions that they have recorded. Scored for full choir, the text is by William Blake and was first published in 1863.

Antonio Lotti (1667-1740) wrote a small number of settings of the **Crucifixus** text, of which the version found here (*Crucifixus a 8*) is probably the most frequently performed. Resident in Venice for most of his career, Lotti was a successful composer of operas as well as writing a great deal of sacred music – his last position being that of the celebrated *maestro di capella*

at the Basilica of St Mark's. He is mostly known for this short *Crucifixus* scored for eight voices, which originally formed part of a setting of the *Credo*, the Nicene Creed used in Christian liturgy, which Lotti composed between 1717 and 1719.

Tomás Luis de Victoria (c. 1548-1611) is largely regarded as the pre-eminent Spanish composer of the Renaissance period. While his output was written entirely for the church, Victoria was not the most prolific composer of his generation, with many of his contemporaries writing a great deal more music. Born and raised in Avila, Victoria studied in Rome (and possibly with Palestrina, although there is no conclusive proof of this), returning to Spain after a period of work and his ordination to the priesthood. Victoria's music shows him to be a master of polyphony, and in particular influenced by the Italian style exemplified by Palestrina. **Versa Est** is a six-part motet taken from Victoria's setting of the Requiem Mass (originally entitled *Officium Defunctorum*), originally published by Victoria in 1605. The text of *Versa Est*, from the book of Job, refers to the organ and harp echoing the voices of weeping, with a plea for mercy as death approaches.

The British-born composer David Buckley (b. 1976) is perhaps best known as a composer of film scores, writing for major film productions and releases. Trained at the University of Cambridge, Buckley has also written successfully for television, his output being influenced by a remarkably diverse range of musical styles. In **Strengthen ye the weak hands**, a setting of a text from Isaiah Chapter 35, he demonstrates his compositional versatility in a piece that is full of hope in the coming of the Saviour.

Similarly to Tallis, William Byrd (c. 1540-1623) was a recusant composer, forced to keep his Roman Catholic faith a secret. In post-Reformation England when the Latin Catholic liturgy was banned, services that followed the Roman Rite took place in secret, and a number of composers wrote music that would have been performed during such events. Byrd's three Latin settings of the Mass for three, four and five voices fall clearly into this category, and Byrd was quite brave in allowing his name to be credited on their first publication around 1592 (the publisher wasn't quite as brave, preferring to remain anonymous). As a composer who was in particular favour with Queen Elizabeth I, Byrd's Catholic activities were frequently overlooked.

The **Agnus Dei** presented here is from the Mass for four voices, which is thought to have been the first of these three settings of the Mass that Byrd penned.

Closing the recording is perhaps one of the most significant and well-known shorter pieces of choral music composed in Britain in the latter half of the twentieth century. Composed in 1982, **The Lamb**, with a text by William Blake, was written for the third birthday of John Tavener's nephew, Simon, and has become one of his most renowned works. The simplicity of the music mirrors that of the text and Tavener himself has written that 'It was composed from seven notes in an afternoon. Blake's child-like vision perhaps explains The Lamb's great popularity in a world that is starved of this precious and sacred dimension in almost every aspect of life.'

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TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

1 Salve Regina

Salve, Regina, Mater misericordiæ,
vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra salve.
Ad te clamamus exules filii Evæ,
Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes
in hac lacrymarum valle.
Eja, ergo, Advocata nostra, illos tuos
misericordes oculos ad nos converte;
Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,
nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.
O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.

*Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy,
our life, our sweetness and our hope.
To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve;
to thee do we send up our sighs,
mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.
Turn then, most gracious advocate,
thine eyes of mercy toward us;
and after this our exile,
show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.*

Attributed to Hermann Contractus

2 Why Fum'th in Fight

Why fum'th in fight the gentiles spite,
in fury raging stout?
Why tak'th in hand the people fond,
vain things to bring about?
The kings arise, the lords devise,
in counsels met thereto,
against the Lord with false accord,
against his Christ they go.

*Psalm 2: 1–2
from Archbishop Matthew Parker's Psalter, 1567.*

3 Agnus Dei

Agnus Deim qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.

Agnus Deim qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.

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

*O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world,
Have mercy upon us.*

*O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world,
Have mercy upon us.*

*O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world,
Grant us thy peace.*

4 Funeral Ikos

Why these bitter words of the dying,
O brethren, which they utter as they go hence?
I am parted from my brethren.
All my friends do I abandon, and go hence.
But whither I go, that understand I not, neither
what shall become of me yonder;
only God, who hath summoned me knoweth.
But make commemoration of me with the song:
Alleluia.

But whither now go the souls?
How dwell they now together there?
This mystery have I desired to learn,
but none can impart aright.
Do they call to mind their own people, as we do them?
Or have they forgotten all those who mourn them
and make the song:
Alleluia.

We go forth on the path eternal and as condemned,
with downcast faces,
present ourselves before the only God eternal.
Where then is comeliness? Where then is wealth?
Where then is the glory of this world?

There shall none of these things aid us,
but only to say off the psalm:
Alleluia.

Why these bitter words of the dying ...

If thou hast shown mercy unto man,
O man, that same mercy shall be shown thee there;
and if on an orphan thou hast shown compassion,
the same shall there deliver thee from want.
If in this life the naked thou hast clothed,
the same shall give thee shelter there,
and sing the psalm:
Alleluia.

Youth and the beauty of the body fade
at the hour of death,
and the tongue then burneth fiercely,
and the parched throat is inflamed.
The beauty of the eyes is quenched then,
the comeliness of the face all altered,
the shapeliness of the neck destroyed;
and the other parts have become numb,
nor often say:
Alleluia.

With ecstasy are we inflamed
if we but hear that there is light eternal yonder;
that there is Paradise,

wherein every soul of Righteous Ones rejoiceth.
Let us all, also, enter into Christ,
that all we may cry aloud thus unto God:
Alleluia.

5 Hear my Prayer, O Lord

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my crying come
unto thee.

Psalm 102: 1

6 Spiritus Sanctus Vivificans

Spiritus Sanctus vivificans vita,
movens omnia, et radix est in omni creatura,
ac omnia de immunditia abluit, tergens crimina,
ac ungit vulnera,
et sic est fulgens ac laudabilis vita,
suscitans et resuscitans omnia.

*Holy Spirit, bestowing life unto life,
moving in All, You are the root of all creatures,
washing away all impurity, scouring guilt,
and anointing wounds.
Thus you are luminous and praiseworthy, Life,
awakening, and re-awakening all that is.*

Hildegarde of Bingen

7 Never Seek to Tell Thy Love

Never seek to tell thy love,
Love that never told can be;
For the gentle wind does move,
Silently, invisibly.

I told my love, I told my love,
I told her all my heart;
Trembling, cold, in ghastly fears,
Ah! she did depart.

Soon after she was gone from me,
A traveller came by,
Silently, invisibly;
He took her with a sigh.

William Blake (1757–1827)

8 Crucifixus

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis
sub Pontio Pilato:
passus et sepultus est.

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

9 O Virtus Sapientiae

O virtus Sapientiae,
quae circuiens circuisti
comprehendendo omnia
in una via, quae habet vitam,
tres alas habens:
quarum una in altum volat,
et altera de terra sudat,
et tertia undique volat.
Laus tibi sit, sicut te decet,
O Sapientia.

*O strength of Wisdom
who, circling, circled,
enclosing all
in one lifegiving path,
three wings you have:
one soars to the heights,
one distills its essence upon the earth,
and the third is everywhere.
Praise to you, as is fitting,
O Wisdom.*

Hildegarde of Bingen

10 Versa Est

Versa est in luctum cithara mea,
et organum meum in vocem flentium.
Parce mihi, Domine, nihil enim sunt dies mei.

*My harp is tuned for mourning,
and my organ to the voice of those that weep.
Spare me, O Lord, for my days are nothing.*

11 Strengthen ye the weak hands

Strengthen ye the weak hands,
and confirm the feeble knees.
Say to them that are fearful:
'Behold your God will come with vengeance,
even God with a recompense,
he will come and save you.'

Interveniatur pro nobis
quaesumus Domine,
sanctus Lucas Evangelista.

*May he intercede for us,
we beseech thee, Lord,
holy Luke Evangelist.*

12 **Agnus Dei**

As before

13 **The Lamb**

Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed,
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee.
He is called by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild;
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by His name.
Little Lamb, God bless thee!
Little Lamb, God bless thee!

William Blake

BIOGRAPHIES

ARMONICO CONSORT

Soprano

Anna Sandström
Elizabeth Edwards
Rachel Robinson
Kirsteen Rogers
Claire Monks*
Rebecca Sampson*

Tenor

Peter Morton
Peter Wilman
James Hall*

Alto

Henry Capper-Allen
Olivia Maffett

Bass

Reuben Thomas
Francis Brett
James Brash*

* *Performing on tracks 3 & 4 only.*

'Superb!' - The Times

'A Beautiful Sound' - BBC Radio 3

Under the dynamic leadership of founder and Artistic Director, Christopher Monks, Armonico Consort has become the fastest-growing arts organisation of its type in the country. Since its debut performance with Emma Kirkby in 2001, Armonico Consort has gained a reputation for presenting innovative programmes in an accessible and entertaining manner.

'I've seldom seen children as enchanted with The Magic Flute as they were here' - The Independent

Armonico Consort is, at its heart, a highly talented vocal ensemble staging a wide range of programmes in atmospheric settings. From massive 16th century polyphony including *Spem in Alium*, to sonorous romantic music such as Rachmaninov's *Vespers*, and from the Bach Passions to *Venetian Vespers* with the English Cornett and Sackbut Ensemble, Armonico Consort brings each work to life, providing the audience

with a fresh musical experience. These performances are often accompanied by their own orchestra, which features the finest period instrumentalists in the world. The choir also regularly works with other orchestras, including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, The Philharmonia and The European Union Chamber Orchestra. Armonico Consort performs regularly at the majority of major festivals in the UK, at venues across the world and regularly perform with some of the world's greatest artists including Nicola Benedetti, Natalie Clein, James Bowman, Jennifer Pike, Dame Evelyn Glennie, Crispian Steele-Perkins and Dame Emma Kirkby.

Armonico Consort Education has reached more than 50,000 children in the past seven years, allowing them to experience first-hand the joy of performing live music. Its workshops, complete with especially composed music by Armonico Consort member, and Hollywood composer David Buckley (credits include Shrek III), have inspired hundreds of young singers and have received acclaim from pupils, teachers, music authorities and the media.

Armonico Consort's charitable activities extend to its support of young professional singers starting out in their careers. In the Young Artists

Programme, these musicians are offered real opportunities and training, intended to equip them for the challenging musical journey they have chosen.

Armonico Consort has recorded seven CDs, including *Dixit Dominus*, a world premiere recording of the music of Francesco Scarlatti with Dame Emma Kirkby, which was acclaimed as one of the top five choral releases of 2004 by Gramophone Magazine, and Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* which was awarded four stars by The Times.

Armonico Consort, registered charity number 1103159. Find out more at www.armonico.org.uk



CHRISTOPHER MONKS

As founder and Artistic Director of Armonico Consort, Christopher is a dynamic and innovative conductor and keyboard player. Equally at home with early, classical and modern music, he is the driving force behind Armonico Consort's success, developing the group from its initial inception as a choir and orchestra specialising in skilled and moving interpretations of Renaissance and Baroque and even modern music, to its latest manifestation as an opera company giving ground-breaking performances with a superb cast of professional singers, dancers, actors and musicians. Along the way, Christopher has established an education programme now reaching out to tens of thousands of young children across the country, and is closely involved in the establishment of AC Academy, Armonico Consort's very own 100 strong children's choir.

'Christopher Monks is an accomplished director; his choir is absolutely stacked with talent'
- **Birmingham Post**

Christopher has performed world premieres with internationally renowned musicians such as Evelyn Glennie and the Fine Arts Brass Ensemble and regularly performs with some of the country's

finest musicians. He has conducted a range of high-profile orchestras, including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, The Philharmonia and the European Union Chamber Orchestra, in addition to Armonico Consort's own orchestra.



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Through his work with Armonico Consort, future concerts will take place in Bridgewater Hall, Town Hall Birmingham, Cadogan Hall, and at venues across the world including Israel, Barbados, USA, Italy and Ireland. Christopher was organ scholar at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, and studied conducting with David Hill whilst an organist at Winchester Cathedral. As a keyboard player with the CBSO, including a performance of the Saint-Saëns Organ Symphony, he has worked with numerous internationally renowned conductors.



The recording of this CD has been made possible by a gift from Mr John Cook,
in memory of his wife Sarah

“Pos si torno all’eterna Fontana”

Recorded at Moreton Morrell Real Tennis Court on 11 & 12 February 2010
Producers - Christopher Monks & John Taylor
Engineer & Editor - John Taylor

Cover Image - Frank Cadogan Cowper, R.A. 'Vanity', 1907, Oil on panel
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Design and Artwork - Woven Design
www.wovendesign.co.uk

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