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For details of discs and The Sixteen's forthcoming UK Cathedral Tour "A CHORAL PILGRIMAGE, THE FLOWERING OF GENIUS" contact The Sixteen Productions Ltd. 01869 331544 or see www.the-sixteen.org.uk e-mail: coro@thesixteen.org.uk



Made in Great Britain

CORO

§ The Sixteen Edition

The Flowering of Genius

The Sixteen/Harry Christophers

GUERRERO

TALLIS

VICTORIA

SHEPPARD

PHILIPPE DE MONTE

BYRD

§ The Sixteen

Soprano:

Ruth Dean, Sally Dunkley,
Helen Groves, Carys Lane,
Rebecca Outram,
Carolyn Sampson,
Lisa Beckley, Katie Pringle

Alto:

Andrew Giles,
Michael Lees,
Christopher Royall,
Robin Tyson, Angus Davidson,
Patrick Craig, Caroline Trevor

Tenor:

Andrew Carwood,
James Gilchrist,
Neil MacKenzie,
Nicolas Robertson,
David Roy, Matthew Vine,
Simon Berridge,
Philip Cave

Bass:

Simon Birchall,
Robert Evans,
Timothy Jones,
Francis Steele,
Michael McCarthy

*This list includes singers
from all tracks*

I have long been fascinated by an extraordinary turning point in history and the musical fruit it bore: the summer of 1553 saw England preparing to return to Catholicism and reverse the changes imposed by the Reformation. Mary Tudor was to annul the exile of Cardinal Pole and, to the horror of the majority of the English people, wed the heir to the Spanish throne, Prince Philip. The old faith, which ten years earlier seemed gone for ever, was back and there existed a distinct possibility of a Catholic heir to the Tudor throne.



For a time, our inspirational composers, Byrd, Sheppard and Tallis were able to indulge without fear of persecution in a musical freedom expressing the faith which they shared with their Spanish colleagues, Guerrero, Lobo and Victoria.

This disc celebrates the flourishing of their genius, alongside the emotional outpourings of faith expressed through the music of Catholic Spain.

History was to change its course again. The disappointment of a phantom pregnancy and the collapse of the marriage led to Mary's lonely but devout death. With the accession of Elizabeth I, the Protestant faith once again asserted itself.

This collection is compiled to evoke the glorious music of an age vibrant in its creativity and beliefs.

*Harry
Christians,*

From the latter years of the fifteenth century through the early years of Henry VIII's reign, stable conditions of Church and State had encouraged the flowering of the English genius in church music: the numerous abbeys, monasteries, cathedrals, parish churches, rich private households, the university colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, as well as the Chapel Royal, all maintained choirs and actively encouraged new music. Great composers - among them Taverner, Tye, Sheppard and Tallis - flourished, writing music with vigorous arches of melody, appropriate to the late-mediaeval richness of the English Catholic liturgy.

Yet the break with Rome and the dissolution of the monasteries were to have serious consequences through the turbulent times which were to follow. Henry VIII was succeeded in 1547 by his son, Edward VI, a minor and a Protestant. Now the Protestant reformers set out to diminish the amount of music used, or to eliminate it. Simple homophonic settings of English words were now required from composers. With the reign of Mary Tudor (1553-1558) the Catholic Liturgy complete with all the rich trappings of ritual was reinstated. On the accession of Elizabeth, once again papal supremacy was abandoned. However, the excesses of the Protestant reformers of Edward's reign were not repeated; and indeed the Prayer Book of

1552 was issued in Latin translation in 1560. So there was some scope for the musical setting of Latin texts during Elizabeth's reign. In this atmosphere, the Chapel Royal played an important role, for it had a first-class choir, freedom from harassment by Puritan reformers, and most of the important composers of the time belonged to it.

In England, by the time of William Byrd (1543-1623), the effects of the break from Rome could still be felt in the lives and careers of musicians. In contrast there had been stability in politics and religion in Spain since the reigns of *Los Reyes Católicos*, Ferdinand and Isabella, in the late fifteenth century. When Philip and Mary were wed in 1554, Spain was rapidly becoming the richest empire in the world. Between 1500 and 1600 a phenomenal amount of gold and silver entered the country from an empire that extended from Peru to the Philippines. Much went to benefit the Church and the Crown. Spain's churches and cathedrals were full of the sound of chant and polyphony, sung by large choirs.

Even by mid-century, Spanish composers had begun to benefit from the ready availability of printing: money was to be made, careers to be advanced, international fame to be gained by the publication of books of polyphonic music. And new music was always required. The greatest Spanish composer of the early

century, Cristóbal de Morales and Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611) spent much of their working lives in Rome. They shared an international reputation, as a result of the availability of their music in print. Francisco Guerrero (1528-1599), who worked at Seville for most of his life, issued his first book of motets there in 1555; further prints of his music included Magnificats (Louvain, 1563); the first book of Masses (Paris, 1566); the second book of motets (Venice, 1570); the second book of Masses (Rome, 1582); *Liber vesperarum* (Rome, 1584); a third book of motets (Venice, 1589); a fourth book of motets (Venice, 1597). As a result even the music of a Spanish composer who stayed at home was widely performed in Europe and the New World during his lifetime and for long after his death.

For Spanish musicians this was a Golden Age of opportunity, in contrast to England, where the first printing of Latin church music was as late as 1575. This volume of *Cantiones sacrae*, music by Byrd and Tallis, created no impact internationally, and it was financially unsuccessful. Nevertheless, the greatest music by English composers of the sixteenth century, while idiosyncratic in style, loses nothing in comparison with the masterpieces which have come down to us from Spain during the same period.

Ave virgo sanctissima was Francisco Guerrero's most famous work, printed for

the first time in 1566. Two trebles, in canon at the unison, intertwine with the three lower voices, singing melodies mellifluous and elegant, perfectly in accord with the beautiful text in praise of the Virgin Mary, comparing her in turn (in the manner of the *Song of Songs*) to the pearl, the lily and the rose.

Thomas Tallis (c.1505-1585) was unique in that his composing career lasted through the reigns of four monarchs, and it is therefore not surprising that he stands alone in range and variety of his work. The motet *Suscipe quaeso* is the longest of Tallis's *Cantiones*. The text is non-liturgical, penitential, and personal; and Tallis responded with a setting of great power, giving us a coherent musical statement projecting the mood and meaning of the words with great fluency, clearly the work of a composer at the height of his maturity. The seven voices are combined with great flexibility, ranging in texture from passages of strict imitation to homophony and antiphony, and most of the word setting is syllabic.

In 1554, Cardinal Pole, exiled under Henry VIII, returned to England to reunite her formally with the Church of Rome. A public absolution was made the following Sunday at St. Paul's Cathedral in the presence of the Cardinal. A huge crowd of 15,000 people in the churchyard heard Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester,

deliver a two-hour sermon on the words: "It is time to awaken out of sleep", following which, on Pole's authority, he blessed and absolved all those present. It has been suggested, mainly on the basis of the penitential text, that Tallis wrote *Suscipe quaeso* specifically for this occasion; however a later date of composition (probably Elizabethan) is supported by the personal, 'confessional' nature of the words, and by the evidence of the sources and the musical style.

Victoria's musical character was fully formed and perfect from the beginning. *O vos omnes* and *Vere languores*, published in 1572, are motets for the Passion of our Lord. A subtle use of silence enhances the effect of the words upon our emotions in these plangent and moving works. *O Domine Iesu Christe*, for six voices, dates from 1576, and is a moving prayer to Jesus, hanging on the Cross. In these pieces Victoria demonstrates admirably all the features of his music so appreciated in our time - in general a quasi-chordal structure decorated by imitative motifs repeated and developed, simply and economically, marrying to perfection verbal and musical expression.

Vadam et circuibō civitatem (printed in 1572) is an extended motet, with a text from the Song of Songs. Victoria combines the six voices in a great variety of rhythms and textures, a decorated homophony, never letting the linear impetus flag. *Super flumina*

Babylonis (Vulgate, Psalm 136), for double choir, is a supreme example of Victoria's art. It falls into two main parts, the second introduced by two short passages for each choir in turn. The influence of madrigalism is apparent at *verba cantionum* and at *hymnum cantate nobis*, where the music dances into the lilting triple-time music for *de canticis Sion*. Victoria sets the words beginning *Quomodo cantabimus* in emphatic fashion, in length equal to all that has gone before. Might we detect a touch of homesickness, a longing for Spain, in Victoria's glorious peroration on in *terra aliena*? The Vesper Psalm *Laudate Dominum* (Vulgate, 116) dating from 1581, is an elegant setting for double choir. The music flows naturally into a brisk triple-time section for *Gloria Patri*, then closes again in duple time with a brief Amen involving the full sonority of both choirs.

It has been suggested that the seven-voice *Missa Puer natus est nobis* by Thomas Tallis was written especially for Christmas 1554, in celebration of Mary Tudor's supposed pregnancy. The unusual voicing (lacking the characteristically English high treble parts) may indicate that it was written for the Chapel Royal and Spanish *Capilla Real* to perform in combination; also the music is much more continental in style than any English Festal Mass of the period. It has come down to us imperfectly preserved, for

most of the Credo is lost. In the English fashion, *Kyrie eleison* is not set. The Mass has a rich, full texture throughout, lacking any of the reduced-voice sections so characteristic of earlier English music of this genre. The setting of the text is predominantly syllabic, even in the less wordy *Sanctus and Agnus Dei*.

From 1543 until 1548 John Sheppard was *Informator choristarum* at Magdalen College, Oxford. By 1552 he had become a member of the Chapel Royal. Sheppard was perhaps a more prolific composer than Tallis, for about eighty works survive, the majority Latin-texted, though there are some English Anthems and Services, which must date from the reign of Edward, for Sheppard died in December 1558. *Verbum caro* is a Respond for Matins on Christmas Day, and is notable for the brilliance of the treble part, which Sheppard divides into three on the final chord, to great effect.

The feelings of Byrd and his fellow English Catholics at their suppression during the reign of Elizabeth are well illustrated by a remarkable exchange between Byrd and the Fleming, Philippe de Monte (1521-1603), who had come to England in 1554 as a member of Philip's Chapel. In 1583 he sent Byrd a double-choir motet setting of the first four verses of the Psalm *Super flumina Babylonis*, with the order of the verses rearranged to end with the second: "*We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof*". William

Byrd's reply was an eight-voice setting, *Quomodo cantabimus*, of verses 4 - 7, a defiant response in the face of persecution, emphasising his determination not to forget Jerusalem (= Rome): "*How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy. Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem*". Byrd cunningly interweaves a canon à 3 (one voice in inversion) with supreme fluency into this heartfelt and extended lyrical utterance.

The creations of genius are often the outcome of trial and tribulation, of suffering, or inspired by momentous events, by the passing of the great and mighty into Eternity. It is their ultimate triumph that they transcend the more earthly concerns of their times and states, reaching us as lasting testaments to the greater glory of God.

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The Flowering of Genius.
Translations into French and German
are available from coro@thesixteen.org.uk

1. AVE VIRGO SANCTISSIMA

Ave virgo sanctissima
Dei Mater, maris stella clarissima.
Salve, semper gloriosa,
margarita pretiosa,
sicut liliū formosa,
nitens, olens velut rosa

2. SUSCIPE QUAESO

Part 1

Suscipe, quaeso Domine,
vocem confitentis;
scelera mea non defendo,
peccavi.
Deus, miserere mei,
dele culpas meas gratia tua.



Part 2

Si enim iniquitates recordaberis,
quis sustineat?
Quis enim justus qui se dicere audeat
sine peccato esse?
Nullus est enim mundus
in conspectu tuo.

*Hail, Holy Virgin, Most blessed Mother of God,
bright star of the sea.
Hail ever glorious,
precious pearl,
beautiful as the lily,
shining and giving perfume
like the rose.*

*Receive, I beg you Lord,
the voice of one who confesses;
I do not defend my wrongdoing,
I have sinned.
O God, have mercy on me,
and do away with my faults by your grace.*



*For if you were to call to mind our offences,
who could stand his ground?
For who is so just that he would dare to say
he was without sin?
For no man is clean
in your sight.*

3. O VOS OMNES

O vos omnes qui transitis per viam,
attendite et videte:
si est dolor similis
sicut dolor meus.
Attendite universi populi,
et videte dolorem meum:
si est dolor similis
sicut dolor meus.

*O all ye who pass by the way,
stop and see,
if there be sorrow
like unto my sorrow.
Watch, all ye people,
and see my sorrow:
if there be sorrow
like unto my sorrow.*

4. VERE LANGUORES

Vere languores nostros ipse tulit,
et dolores nostros ipse portavit:
cuius livore sanati sumus.
Dulce lignum, dulces clavos,
dulcia ferens pondera,
quae sola fuisti digna sustinere
Regem caelorum, et Dominum

*Verily he hath borne our weaknesses,
and he hath taken charge of our sorrows:
we are cleansed by his pallor.
Sweet wood, sweet nails,
bearing that sweet weight,
you alone were worthy to sustain
the King of Heaven, and our Lord.*

5. O DOMINE IESU CHRISTE

O Domine Iesu Christe,
adoro te in cruce vulneratum,
felle et aceto potatum:
deprecor te,
ut tua vulnera morsque tua
sit vita mea.

*O Lord Jesus Christ,
we worship thee wounded on the Cross,
having drunk of gall and vinegar:
we beseech thee,
that thy wounds and thy death
will be life for me.*

6. AGNUS DEI

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

*Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.*

7. SUPER FLUMINA BABYLONIS

Super flumina Babylonis,
Illic sedimus et flevimus,
dum recordaremur tui Sion.
In salicibus in medio eius,
suspendimus organa nostra.
Quia illic interrogaverunt nos,
qui captivos duxerunt nos,
verba cantionum.
Et qui abduxerunt nos:
Hymnum cantate nobis
de canticis Sion.
Quomodo cantabimus
canticum Domini in terra aliena?

*By the waters of Babylon,
there we sat down and wept
as we remembered thee O Zion.
We hanged our harps upon the willows
in the midst thereof.
For they that led us away captive
required of us a song;
and they that wasted us
required of us mirth, saying,
Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
How shall we sing the Lord's song
in a strange land?*

8. VADAM ET CIRCUIBO

Vadam et circuibo civitatem
per vicos et plateas.
Quaeram quem diligit anima mea:
quaesivi illum, et non inveni.
Adiuro vos, filiae Hierusalem,
si inveneritis dilectum meum,
ut annuntietis ei, quia amore langueo.
Qualis est dilectus tuus,
quia sic adiurasti nos?
Dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus,
electus ex millibus:
talis est dilectus meus, et est amicus meus,
filiae Hierusalem.
Quo abiit dilectus tuus,

*I will arise and go about the city in the streets
and in the broad ways.
I will seek him whom my soul loveth:
I sought him but found him not.
I charge ye, O daughters of Jerusalem,
if ye find my beloved,
that ye tell him, that I am sick of love.
What is thy beloved more than another beloved,
that thou dost so charge us?
My beloved is white and ruddy,
the chiefest among ten thousand.
This is my beloved, and this is my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem.
Whither is thy beloved gone,*

O pulcherrima mulierum?
Quo declinavit et quaeremus
eum tecum?
Ascendit in palmam,
et apprehendit fructus eius.

*O thou fairest among women?
Whither is thy beloved turned aside,
that we may seek him with thee?
He has gone up into the palm tree,
and taken the fruit thereof.*

9. LAUDATE DOMINUM OMNES GENTES

Laudate Dominum, omnes gentes:
laudate eum, omnes populi:
Quoniam confirmata est
super nos misericordia eius:
et veritas Domini manet in aeternum.
Gloria Patri, et Filio,
et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

*Praise the Lord, all ye nations:
praise him, all ye people.
For his merciful kindness
is great towards us:
and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever.
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.*

10. VERBUM CARO FACTUM EST

Verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis;
cuius gloriam vidimus quasi unigeniti
a Patre, plenum gratiae et veritatis.
In principio erat verbum et verbum erat
apud Deum, et Deus erat verbum.
Gloria Patri et Filio
et Spiritui Sancto.

*The word was made flesh and dwelt among us:
and we beheld his glory as of the only Son
of the Father, full of grace and truth.
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word
was with God, and the Word was God.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit.*

11. SUPER FLUMINA BABYLONIS

Super flumina Babylonis,
Illic sedimus, et flevimus
dum recordaremur tui Sion.
Illic interrogaverunt nos,
qui captivos abduxerunt nos,
verba cantionum.
Quomodo cantabimus
canticum Domini in terra aliena?
In salicibus in medio eius,
suspendimus organa nostra.

*By the waters of Babylon,
there we sat down and wept
when we remembered thee, O Zion.
For there they that carried us away captive
required of us a song.
How shall we sing the Lord's song
in a strange land?
We hanged up our harps upon the willows
in the midst thereof.*

12. QUOMODO CANTABIMUS

Quomodo cantabimus canticum Domini
in terra aliena?
Si oblitus fuero tui, Jerusalem,
oblivioni detur dextra mea.
Adhaereat lingua mea faucibus meis,
si non meminero tui.
Si non proposuero Jerusalem in principio
laetitiae meae.
Memor esto Domine, filiorum Edom
in die Jerusalem.

*How shall we sing the Lord's song
in a strange land?
If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand forget her cunning.
If I do not remember thee, let my tongue
cleave to the roof of my mouth.
If I prefer not Jerusalem above
my chief joy.
Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom
in the day of Jerusalem.*