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The Sixteen Edition

Coro

Iste Confessor
The Sacred Music of Domenico Scarlatti
The Sixteen/Harry Christophers

Producers: Mark Rosen, Engineer: Mike Hatch.
Recorded April 1997 at St Augustine’s, Kilburn.
Originally released as Collins 4502.
Translations: Jeremy White.
CD re-mastering: Julian Millard.
Photography: Hugo Maertens.
Design: Richard Boxall Design Associates.
CORO.
www.the-sixteen.org.uk.

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STABAT MATER
MISSA BREVE
"LA STELLA"
TE DEUM
ISTE CONFESSOR
The Sixteen

Soprano: Ruth Dean, Carolyn Sampson, Katie Pringle, Rebecca Outram, Libby Crabtree, Alicia Carroll, Juliet Schiemann, Lisa Beckley

Tenor: Andrew Carwood, Simon Berridge, Nicolas Robertson, David Roy, Andrew Giles, Christopher Royall, Philip Newton

Alto: Juliet Schiemann, Lisa Beckley, Libby Crabtree, Alicia Carroll, Katie Pringle, Rebecca Outram, Ruth Dean, Carolyn Sampson

Bass: Neil MacKenzie, Simon Birchall, Angus Davidson, Andrew Carwood, Simon Berridge, Michael Lees, Andrew Giles, Christopher Royall, Philip Newton

Harp: Robin Jeffrey, Elizabeth Kenny

Theorbo: Ian Watson

Organ: Neil MacKenzie, Simon Birchall

It constantly amazes me what can be unearthed when you delve into the music of a composer, particularly when that composer is really only known for one work. In the case of Domenico Scarlatti, most will know of him solely as a keyboard composer and, if they have come across any of his sacred works, they will only be acquainted with his ten part Stabat Mater. I have known of this piece for many years and always regarded it a perfect work to show off the versatility of The Sixteen. But one work does not make a programme and at this point I began to delve.

It was soon apparent that the Stabat Mater was unique in Domenico’s choral output - nothing matches it for its harmonic and textural complexity. However, I did find many works in very varied styles. The simplicity of the hymn tune Iste Confessor is absolutely captivating and, as with the best of hymn tunes, it can be inflected to reflect the cumulative sentiments of the text. Music does not have to be complex to be effective. The same can be said of his delightful mass La Stella, again a perfect work for The Sixteen; scored for a quartet of soloists from the main choir and with subtle accompaniment, played with such artistry and invention by the group’s continuo team, one can make a simple work highly enjoyable.

The year 1685 was a remarkable one for music. J.S.Bach, Handel and Domenico Scarlatti were all born within twelve months of one another and each was to influence the art of European music. Bach’s reputation relates to his role as a Lutheran composer and organist, while Handel travelled widely, finally settling in England as London’s premier purveyor of baroque opera and oratorio. Domenico Scarlatti is still best known as a brilliant keyboard composer and player. Many of his 550 keyboard sonatas (Esercizi) are still performed and admired for their technical inventiveness and brilliance. Scarlatti also wrote a considerable number of other works however – operas, oratorios and many smaller pieces which are rarely heard today.

The items on this recording have been chosen to demonstrate the range and variety of the composer’s sacred music. Domenico Scarlatti inherited his musical gifts from his father Alessandro, who was important in the development of Italian opera in the generation after Monteverdi. Although biographical detail is scarce, it seems that the relationship between father and son was somewhat akin to that between Leopold and Wolfgang Mozart. In months of one another and each was to hope of securing a position there. The tone of father’s latter of recommendation to the appointment within the same musical establishment as his father. This was in 1701, as composer and organist to the royal chapel in Naples. He was then sixteen. Alessandro was always keen to see his son’s career develop, and soon directed him to travel to Venice in the hope of securing a position there. The tone of his father’s latter of recommendation to the wealthy Medici family is revealing.

‘I have forcibly removed him from Naples where, though there was scope for his talent, it was not the talent for such a place. I am removing him from Rome as well, because Rome has no shelter for music, which lives here as a beggar. This son of mine is an eagle whose wings are grown; he must not remain idle in the nest, and I must not hinder his flight…’

In spite of these remarks, Domenico found his first employment in Rome before being appointed Court Harpsichordist to the King of Portugal and teacher of Princess Maria Barbara. When she married the King of Spain in 1729, Scarlatti moved on with her and remained in Madrid for the rest of his life.

The first item in this collection is his Te Deum. As with many baroque settings, Scarlatti’s score is in the typically jubilant key of C major, and calls for two four-part choirs accompanied by organ continuo. Most of the lengthy text is set syllabically in a bright allegro over a ‘walking’ instrumental bass line. At the words ‘Te ergo quaesumus’ (therefore we beseech you) the music slows down briefly for a few bars before returning to a faster pulse for ‘aeterna fac’ (let them be numbered). The final pages are notable for two delightful touches. First, attention is focused momentarily on the altos, sopranos and tenors as each has a solo

Stabat Mater
1. **TE DEUM**

Te Deum laudamus:  
Te Dominum confitemur.  
Te aeternum Patrem omnis terra veneratur.  
Tibi omnes Angeli, tibi caeli et universae Potestates.  
Tibi Cherubim et Seraphim incessabili voce proclamant:  
Sanctus; Sanctus; Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth;  
Pleni sunt caeli et terra majestatis gloriae tuae.  
Te gloriosus Apostolorum chorus,  
Te Prophetarum laudabilis numeru  
Te Martyrum candidatus laudat exercitus.  
Te per orbem terrarum sancta confitetur Ecclesia  
Patrem immensae majestatis;  
Venerandum tuum verum et unicum Filium;  
Sanctum quoque Paraclitum Spiritum.  
Tu Rex gloriae, Christe.  
Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem,  
Non horruisti Virginis uterum.  
Tu devicto mortis aculeo,  
Aperuisti credentibus regna caelorum.  
Tu ad dexteram Dei sedes,  
in gloria Patris.

We praise you as our God:  
we acknowledge you as Lord.  
All the earth worships you as the eternal Father.  
To you all the angels, the heavens and all the Powers,  
the Cherubim and Seraphim cry out with an unending voice:  
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts;  
heaven and earth are full of the majesty of your glory.  
The glorious choir of the Apostles,  
the admirable company of the Prophets,  
the white-robed army of Martyrs praise you.  
The holy Church throughout the whole earth acknowledges you  
the Father of unmeasurable majesty;  
and your adorable, true and only Son;  
and the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.  
You are the King of glory, O Christ.  
You are the everlasting Son of the Father.  
You, in taking upon you to deliver man,  
did not disdain the womb of the Virgin.  
You, having overcome the sting of death,  
have opened the kingdom of heaven to all who believe.  
You sit at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father.  
We believe you to be the judge who is to come.
Therefore we beseech you to help your servants, whom you have redeemed with your precious blood. Let them be numbered among your saints in eternal glory.

Save your people Lord, and bless your inheritance, and govern them, and exalt them for ever. Day by day we bless you, and we praise your name for ever.

Grant, Lord, that you will keep us this day without sin. Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy on us. Let your mercy be upon us Lord, as we have put our hope in you.

In you Lord have I trusted; let me not be confounded for ever.

Unde nunc noster chorus in honorem ipsius hymnum canit nunc libenter, ut piis ejus meritis juvemur omne per aevum. Sit salus illi, decus atque virtus, qui, supra caeli residens cacumen, totus mundi machina gubernat trinus et unus. Amen.

Therefore now this our choir gladly sings this hymn in his honour, that through all the ages we might be helped by his holy merits.

Salvation, glory and power be to Him who from his throne above the heavens governs the whole frame of earth, Three and One. Amen.

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 coelestis,

Glory be to God on high. And on earth peace to men of good will. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we glorify Thee. We give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory. Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father almighty.

O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesu Christ. Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.
Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy upon us.
For Thou only art holy,
Thou only art the Lord,
Thou only art the most high,
Jesu Christ.
With the Holy Spirit
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only begotten Son of God,
begotten of his Father before all worlds.
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made.
Who for us men,
and for our salvation,
came down from heaven.
And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost
of the Virgin Mary
and was made man.
And was crucified also for us
under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.

And the third day he rose again
according to the scriptures;
and ascended into heaven,
and sitteth at the right hand of the Father.
And he shall come again with glory
to judge both the quick and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end.
And I believe in the Holy Ghost
the Lord and giver of life.
who proceedeth from the Father and the Son;
who with the Father and the Son together
is worshipped and glorified;
who spake by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy, Catholic and
Apostolic church.
I acknowledge one Baptism
for the remission of sins.
And I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

The Lord has fed them with finest wheat,
and with honey from the rock he has filled us.
Alleluja.

Lamb of God,
that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.
4. STABAT MATER

Stabat mater dolorosa
Juxta crucem lacrimosa
Dum pendebat Filius.

Cuius animam gementem,
Contristantem et dolentem,

Per tansivit gladius.

O quam tristis et afflicta
Fuit illa benedicta
Mater Unigeniti!

Quae moerebat et dolebat
Et tremebat cum videbat
Nati poenas inclyti.

Quis est homo, qui non fleret
Quis Christi Matrem si videret
In tanto supplicio?

Quis non posset contristari
Christi Matrem contemplari
Dolentem cum Filio?

Pro peccatis suae gentis
Vidit Jesum in tormentis
Et flagellis subditum.

Vidit suum dulcem Natum
Morientem desolatum
Dum emisit spiritum.

Eia Mater fons amoris,
Me sentire vim doloris,
Fac ut tecum flueris.

Fac ut ardeat cor meum
In amando Christum Deum,
Ut sibi complaceam.

The sorrowful Mother stood
close to the cross in tears
as her Son hung there.
Through her groaning heart,
grieving in compassion for him,
a sword had passed.

Who is the man who would not weep
to see Christ’s Mother
in such great suffering?
Who could not grieve in sympathy
to behold Christ’s Mother
grieving with her Son?

For the sins of his people
she saw Jesus in torment, subjected to the lash.
She saw her sweet Son
dying abandoned
as he gave up his spirit.

Ah Mother, fount of love,
make me feel the keenness of your grief
that I may grieve with you.
Let my heart burn
with love for Christ my God,
that I may be pleasing to him.

Sancta mater, istud agas,
Crucifixi fide plagas
Cordi meo valide.

Tui nati vulnerati,
Tam dignati pro me pati,
Poenas mecum divide.

Fac me vere tecum flere,
Crucifixo con dolore
Donee ego vixeris.

Juxta crucem tecum stare,
Et me tibi sociare
In planctu desidero.

Virgo virginum praeclara,
Mihi jam non sis amara:
Fac me tecum plangere.

Fac, ut portem Christi mortem,
Passionis fac consortem
Et plagas recolere.

Fac me plagis vulnerari
Cruce hac inebriari
Ob amorem Filii.

Inflammatus et accensus
Per te, Virgo, sim defensus
In die judicii.

Fac me cruce custodire,
Morte Christi praemuniri,
Confoveri gratia.

Quando corpus morietur
Fac ut animae donetur
Paradisi gloria.

Holy Mother, do this for me,
fix the pains of the Crucified
firmly in my heart.
your wounded Son,
who deigned to suffer so for my sake,
share his pains with me.

Make me truly weep with you
and suffer with the Crucified
as long as I shall live.
To stand by the cross with you
and to keep company with you
in your tears, this is my desire.

O virgin bright beyond all virgins,
be not aloof from me now;
make me weep with you.
Let me bear the death of Christ,
make me a companion in his passion
and recall his pains.

Let me be wounded with the same blows,
make me ecstatic with this Cross
for the love of your Son.
Thus inflamed and burning with love,
may I enjoy your protection, O Virgin,
on the day of judgement.

Let me be kept safe by the Cross,
defended by the death of Christ
and enfolded in his grace.
When my body dies,
then let my soul be granted
the glory of Paradise.