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COR16009
ANTÓNIO TEIXEIRA
Te Deum

The Sixteen
The Symphony of Harmony and Invention
HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

Soloists

Soprano 1
Lynda Russell
Soprano 2
Gillian Fisher
Alto 1
Catherine Denley
Alto 2
Andrew Murgatroyd
Tenor 1
William Kendall
Tenor 2
Carys Lane
Bass 1
Michael George
Bass 2
Peter Harvey

Violin 1
David Woodcock (leader),
James Ellis, Simon Jones,
Jane Carwardine
Violin 2
William Thorp, Theresa Caudle,
Stephanie Heichelheim,
Jean Paterson
Viola
Simon Whistler,
Penelope Veryard
Cello
Mark Caudle, Katherine Sharman
Double Bass
William Hunt
Theorbo
Robin Jeffrey
Oboe
Sophia McKenna,
Cherry Forbes
Bassoon
Michael Brain
Flute
Rachel Beckett,
Siu Peasgood
Organ
Laurence Cummings,
Margaret Phillips
Horn
David Cox,
Roger Montgomery

Imagine a church vestry in the heart of Lisbon, rows of dusty leather-bound books, an English musicologist resident in Portugal, the industrious arts department of the esteemed Gulbenkian Foundation and a maverick BBC producer, and thereby an amazing sequence of events unfolds.

Standing upright on a shelf in Lisbon’s ornate Italian church is the score of Teixeira’s Te Deum. In Portugal’s golden age, New Year’s Eve was a day of great musical celebration and congregations looked forward to the performance of a Te Deum to honour our Lord for the past year. Teixeira’s setting must have been not only a wonderful musical experience but also a great occasion. Within a relatively short space of time, Teixeira’s renown spread from relative anonymity to worldwide recognition via a BBC radio recording, tours of Portugal, Belgium and Macau, a BBC Promenade concert in 1992 (Max Loppert’s Financial Times review called it “One of the most imaginative pieces of planning in this year’s Proms”) and, of course, this disc - the fruit of all our efforts.

And so, in the autumn of 1989, after rehearsals in London, we flew to Lisbon to perform, for the first time in living memory, Teixeira’s Te Deum in the very church which had become, for countless years, the home of the autographed score. Sixty performers, crammed into the sanctuary, with an audience of all ages occupying every possible nook and cranny, were all witness to a memorable occasion. Within a relatively short space of time, Teixeira’s renown spread from relative anonymity to worldwide recognition via a BBC radio recording, tours of Portugal, Belgium and Macau, a BBC Promenade concert in 1992 (Max Loppert’s Financial Times review called it “One of the most imaginative pieces of planning in this year’s Proms”) and, of course, this disc - the fruit of all our efforts.
Teixeira was born in 1707 (the exact date is unknown, but he was baptised on 14th May) in Lisbon, and was aged only nine or ten when the royal grant made possible his journey to Italy. He remained in Rome for ten years, and on his return to Lisbon he was immediately much in demand as a musician. On 11th June 1728 he was appointed as a chaplain singer and official examiner in plainsong to the Cathedral and diocese. The ecclesiastical orientation of his career naturally meant that he left a large quantity of sacred music in various genres, surviving today in libraries in both Lisbon and Vila Viçosa (2). He also began to compose secular cantatas (Gli spori fortunati, for example, was given its first performance at Carnival time in 1732) and operas: it is known that he composed music for seven libretti by António José da Silva, some of which now survive only in libraries in both Lisbon and Vila Viçosa (2). He also began to compose secular cantatas (Gli spori fortunati, for example, was given its first performance at Carnival time in 1732) and operas: it is known that he composed music for seven libretti by António José da Silva, some of which now survive only in libraries in both Lisbon and Vila Viçosa (2).

The score of the *Te Deum* survives in the Italian Church (Igreja do Loreto) in Lisbon. It was probably performed on the last day of 1734, though it could possibly have been two years earlier. The date was determined by the old tradition of singing the *Te Deum* on 31st December in order to give thanks to God for all the benefits received during the course of the year. Teixeira sets the text in *alternatim* fashion; that is to say, he sets only every other verse, leaving the rest to be sung in plainchant. For this recording, the missing verses have been supplied from a contemporary Portuguese chant source (3). Teixeira’s setting is remarkable both for its length (though this ceases to be quite so surprising when one takes into account the venerable Portuguese tradition behind the composition of such substantial works) and for its scoring: it calls for eight soloists, five four-part choirs, and a large orchestra which comprises, in addition to the usual strings and continuo section, flutes, oboes, bassoon, and horns.

Musically the *Te Deum* is extremely resourceful, and the fruit of Teixeira’s studies in Rome is much in evidence. Frequent and effective use is made of polychordal writing (the end of ‘Tibi omnes angeli’ is a noteworthy example) as a balance to the massive textures obtainable with the full choral ensemble, and with the addition of the often virtuoso writing for the soloists the range of colours the composer is able to draw upon is very large. A notable feature of much of the solo writing is its operatic character: the opening soprano solo of ‘Tu devicto mortis’ is an effective transposition into a sacred context of a dramatic recitative, and ‘Dignare Domine’ begins with a miniature aria. The full chorus is often employed in passages of a loosely canonic character, but also has two particularly impressive sections of stricter fugal writing, at ‘Te gloriou’ and ‘In to Domine speravi’. The former in fact gives way, at ‘apostolorum chorus’, to an extended and very jubilant antiphonal passage, but the latter maintains its contrapuntal character until the ‘Non confundar’ section.

Any visitor to Portugal today may see for himself the architectural evidence of the reign of the priest-king Dom João V in the astonishing Convent of Mafra, built in fulfilment of a vow made to St. Anthony. Teixeira’s *Te Deum*, in sharing its monumental architectural quality, and the sense of an intricate grand design in the service of a higher cause, is no less a reflection of its time.

**IVAN MOODY**

(1) This seminary was transferred to the Convento de São Francisco upon the elevation of Lisbon to the status of patriarchate, and existed until 1835, when it was replaced by the present Conservatory.

(2) There exists, however, the possibility that another composer of the same name was the author of some of these works.

(3) The chant may be found in many books of the period. See, for example, Processionale Iuxta Formam Ritualis Romani Paedi V (Coimbra 1740).
We praise thee, O God: we acknowledge thee to be the Lord. All the earth doth worship thee, the Father everlasting.

To thee all Angels cry aloud, the heavens and all the powers therein. To thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord of Sabaoth. Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty of thy glory.

The glorious company of the Apostles praise thee: The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise thee:

The noble army of Martyrs praise thee The holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge thee:

The Father of an infinite Majesty: Thine honourable, true and only Son:

Also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. Thou art the King of glory, O Christ.

Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father. When thouakest upon thee to deliver man, thou didst not abhor the Virgin’s womb.

When thou hast overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Thou sittest at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father.

We believe that thou shalt come to be our judge. We therefore pray thee, help thy servants, whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood. Make them to be numbered with thy Saints in glory everlasting.

O Lord, save thy people, and bless thine heritage. Govern them, and lift them up for ever.

Day by day, we magnify thee. And we worship thy Name ever world without end.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin. O Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us.

O Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us, as our trust is in thee.

O Lord, in thee have I trusted: let me never be confounded.

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