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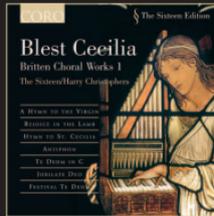


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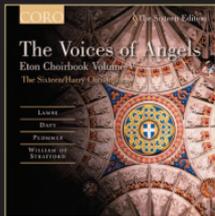


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§ The Sixteen Edition

An Eternal Harmony

ROBERT CARVER

JAMES MACMILLAN

WILLIAM CORNYSH

ROBERT RAMSEY

The Sixteen
HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

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COR16010

THE VOICES OF
CLASSIC *f*M

AN ETERNAL HARMONY

The Sixteen

HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

Soprano:

Cecilia Osmond (solo)*,
Angharad Gruffydd Jones*,
Lisa Beckley*, Libby Crabtree*,
Rebecca Outram (solo)*,
Sally Dunkley*, Ruth Dean,
Carolyn Sampson, Carys Lane,
Fiona Clarke, Deborah Miles Johnson,
Julia White

Alto:

Christopher Royall*, Michael Lees*,
Andrew Giles*, Angus Davidson* ,
Caroline Trevor, Philip Newton

Tenor:

Mark Dobell (solo)*, David Roy*,
Matthew Vine*, Nicolas Robertson* ,
Andrew Carwood, Neil MacKenzie,
Simon Berridge, Philip Daggett

Bass:

Robert Evans (solo)*, Timothy Jones*,
Michael McCarthy*, Jeremy White*,
Francis Steele, Simon Birchall,
Charles Gibbs, Matthew Brook,
Jonathan Arnold

List includes singers

from all tracks. Those marked * appear
on James MacMillan's 'O bone Jesu'.



It is now twenty five years since I brought together a group of singers to delve into the glories of Tudor music, not just to revel in the sumptuous sounds of the music but also to convey to a modern audience the wonders of the text. Today, we are still discovering remarkable

compositional feats and, with the advent of our Choral Pilgrimage, we are able to present these to a much wider audience than any of us ever dreamed of. It was also my intention that at some stage we would commission a new liturgical work which would also survive the test of time. I do believe that, in James MacMillan, we have found that lasting voice.

Our programme explores the music of the early 1500s from the royal courts of England and Scotland. William Cornysh was the foremost composer from the English Chapel Royal, whose choristers were once described as “more divine than human”. More than four hundred miles away, Robert Carver was proving to be the most outstanding composer of the Scottish Chapel Royal. He would have written his mesmeric nineteen-part setting of “O Bone Jesu” as an ornamentation of the private prayers of James IV. Five hundred years later, Scotland’s most remarkable composer, James MacMillan, has cast a modern idiom over that very same devotion on the name of Jesus.

Harry
Christophers

The years around the turn of the 15th-16th centuries marked a period of great splendour in the cultivation of religious ceremonial in the royal establishments of both England and Scotland. Magnificent new buildings as well as educational and musical establishments were generously endowed by a succession of pious monarchs intent on carrying out and being seen to carry out their religious duties with due dedication and solemnity.

In 1501, James IV established his Chapel Royal as a collegiate body consisting of ‘sixteen canons and as many prebends skilled in song, with six boy clerics, competently trained in song or fit to be instructed therein’; he also had building works carried out at Stirling Castle where the institution was based. Our knowledge of the music that would have been performed by the Chapel Royal is centred on the great choirbook (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Adv. Ms 5.1.15) believed to have been compiled by the pre-eminent Scottish composer Robert Carver (or Carvor, alias Arnat). It offers a fascinating insight into the likely repertory of the institution, containing a Mass by Dufay, the *Salve Regina* of Cornysh and a number of other works common to the Eton Choirbook, as well as Carver’s own music. It is tempting to speculate that the

appearance of the English composers came about through the bond forged by the marriage in 1503 of James IV to Margaret, daughter of Henry VII.

Most of what little is known of Carver’s biography is gleaned from two margin notes in the choirbook which describe him as a canon of the Augustinian abbey of Scone, and from which his date of birth can be established as 1487 or early 88. The late Isobel Woods Preece made a convincing explanation for the contradictory dates attached to his Mass *Dum sacrum mysterium*, concluding that the death of James IV at Flodden and the consequently hurried arrangements for the coronation of his successor in September 1513 would have necessitated making use of a Mass that had already been composed a few years earlier⁽¹⁾. In this recording the Mass Credo is preceded by the antiphon ‘Dum sacrum mysterium’ sung in the Sarum version that was widely used in Scotland at this time. The Mass takes both its title and its slow-moving tenor *cantus firmus* from this antiphon for the feast of St Michael (29 September). Certain technical features of Carver’s writing are also found in the music of the Eton Choirbook, compiled 15 years or so earlier in England: the wide overall tessitura of over three octaves, the division of the text into sections for a few

voices which contrast with those for the full ensemble, the use of florid melodic figuration and the omission of part of the Credo text. But Carver's own voice is distinguished by the kaleidoscope of bold passing dissonances, the persistent shifting between chords rooted a tone apart, and the rhythmic vigour of the ten-part writing.

Carver's ability to write for large numbers of voices is also displayed in the remarkable motet in 19 parts, *O bone Jesu*, a technical challenge only surpassed by Tallis' 40-part *Spem in alium*. The words formed part of the Devotion of the Name of Jesus, a ceremony performed after Compline and one that continues to have particular significance for Scottish Catholics. The penitential supplication of this text is greatly intensified by the use of the first person singular, and Carver's music throws into relief each invocation 'Jesu' by coming to rest on monumental chords, a technique that is echoed by James MacMillan in his setting.

Robert Ramsey (d.1644) makes his way into this programme through a rather different kind of Scottish connection: a set of partbooks now in the Euing Collection of Glasgow University Library which are almost certainly in the composer's own hand. While there is a possibility that Ramsey was related to the Scottish trumpeters of that name who

accompanied King James VI/I to London in 1603, what is known for certain about his life is his association with Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was organist and master of the choristers until his death in 1644. At the time of his MusB supplication in 1616 he described himself as having been active as a musician for seven years, though his exact date of birth is unknown. All his surviving music is vocal, and it offers a fascinating glimpse of the Italian *seconda prattica* as seen through an English perspective. How Ramsey came to absorb this new style or whether he ever lived abroad is not known, though it is interesting to find that two 17th-century writers (Peacham and Mace) bear witness to Cambridge as a particular centre of interest in Italian music.

The three works from the Euing partbooks may be described as 'madrigal-anthems', settings of sacred texts for that were destined for devotional or domestic use, despite the fact that both the Latin texts originate in the Holy Week liturgy. Thought to date from around 1615, they are scored for six unaccompanied voices and show Ramsey's mastery of sustained writing driven along by harmonic tension and resolution. He sometimes adopts a madrigalian approach to word painting, as in the angular opening phrase of *In monte Oliveti*, for example, but

goes on to develop his motifs through intensified repetition, the melodic twists and turns of 'si est dolor aliquis' (*O vos omnes*) creating some searing dissonances. Static block chords stand in declamatory contrast, highlighting the supplication of Christ's words 'Pater, si placet tibi transeat a me calix iste' (*In monte Oliveti*) and the exhortation 'attendite et videte' (*O vos omnes*).

The untimely death in 1612 of Prince Henry, heir to the throne, and the national mourning that accompanied it was marked by the composition of a number of musical laments. Some, such as Ramsey's *Sleep, fleshly birth*, were direct tributes while others, notably those by Tomkins, Weelkes and East as well as Ramsey's *When David heard*, clothed their expressions of grief in texts drawn from the Old Testament, and in particular those lamenting the deaths of Absalom and Jonathan. *How are the mighty fall'n* also drew from Ramsey an impassioned response, full of affective harmonies and gestures, the boldest one being reserved for the third section, where the words 'How are the mighty fall'n' are reintroduced with a daring dissonance.

Two composers named William Cornysh, probably father and son, were active in London musical circles in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. The elder one

was appointed Master of the Choristers at Westminster Abbey in 1479, admitted to the Fraternity of St Nicholas (or the London Guild of Parish Clerks) in the following year, lived near the Abbey and was buried in the churchyard of St Margaret's Westminster in 1502. In addition to his duties as a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal (he was recorded as attending the interment of Henry VII and the coronation of Henry VIII in 1509), the younger man achieved renown as a court composer, a leading figure in the plays and entertainments favoured by the young Henry VIII, who he accompanied to the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520.

Until recently both the secular songs in the Fayrfax manuscript (London, British Library Add.Mss.5465) and the Latin sacred music that is preserved in the Eton Choirbook and elsewhere have been attributed to the William Cornysh who died in 1523, but a recent re-examination of the evidence has led David Skinner⁽²⁾ to conclude that the Latin music should in fact be credited to the older man. Several anomalies are resolved by the convincing arguments he presents, not least the presence of what are clearly mature works by Cornysh in the Eton Choirbook, which was assembled for use at the College between 1490 and 1504.

Founded by Henry VI in 1440 as the

‘College Royal of Our Lady’, Eton supported a highly skilled choir which was required by the foundation statutes to process into the chapel each evening and sing a Marian antiphon ‘meliori modo quo sciverint’ (literally, ‘in the best manner they know’) before the image of the Virgin. The elaborate polyphonic settings of *Salve Regina* in the Eton Choirbook would have been performed at these ceremonies as part of an act of collective devotion. Cornysh’s exceptionally fine setting is scored for sonorous five-part choir and makes characteristic use of the contrast between full and reduced-voice textures. His *Ave Maria*, *Mater Dei*, another votive text, is sung by men’s voices only.

SALLY DUNKLEY © 2002

(1) *Isobel Woods Preece*,
‘Our awin Scottis use’: music in the
Scottish church up to 1603 (Glasgow, 2000)

(2) *David Skinner*,
‘William Cornysh: clerk or courtier?’,
Musical Times, May 1997

JAMES MACMILLAN WRITES OF HIS SETTING OF ‘O BONE JESU’

Listening to Robert Carver’s 19-part motet *O bone Jesu* is always a bitter-sweet experience for me. As well as feeling delight and awe at the complex beauties of this marvellous motet from pre-Reformation Scotland, there is also sadness at how such a rich culture was brought to such an abrupt and violent



“Harry Christophers and James MacMillan during recording of ‘O bone Jesu’”

cessation by the political and theological turmoil of the 16th century.

For various reasons I have always felt an empathy with Robert Carver and for a while I secretly harboured a wish to re-visit this glorious text and clothe it in my own 21st century Scottish musical language. When Harry Christophers offered me a commission

for *The Sixteen* in a programme which would include the early Scottish masterpiece, I couldn’t believe my luck. The new motet does not make any allusions to the old one but I was struck by the possibility, explored in the Carver, of highlighting the repeated word ‘Jesu’ which occurs twenty times in all.

The same two-note falling motif is used for every occurrence of the word, but it is harmonized differently each time and gradually rises semi-tonally and in texture, the last ‘Jesu’ being harmonized from above, as it were. All the extra inter-linking text is stitched together with a number of free-flowing, episodic motifs. A whole range of textures from solo voices, sparse two-and-three part and multi-voiced contrapuntal and homophonic combinations are used to bind the text together. Sometimes each note and syllable of a line are sung by a different solo voice, rotating the order through each section of the choir. This is combined with sighing, sliding effects in other voices. The final phrase ‘dulcis Jesu’ rises slowly from the low voices, gathering the full choir in an eight-part polyphonic texture towards a final ecstatic high ‘Jesu’ on three soprano solo voices.

This motet is dedicated to my twins, Aidan and Clare, who made their first Holy Communion at the time of its completion in the spring of 2002.

JAMES MACMILLAN

1 PLAINCHANT ANTIPHON - DUM SACRUM MYSTERIUM

Dum sacrum mysterium cerneret Johannes, Archangelus Michael tuba cecinit, Ignosce Domine Deus noster Qui aperies librum et solves signacula ejus. Alleluia.

While John surveys the divine mystery, Archangel Michael sounds the trumpet, O forgiving Lord our God, Who lays open the book and reveals His signs. Alleluia.

2 CREDO

Credo in unum Deum. Patrem omnipotentem, factorem coeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et invisibilium. Et in unum Dominum, Iesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum, et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula. Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero, genitum, non factum, consubstantialem Patri, per quem omnia facta sunt. Qui, propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem, descendit de coelis. Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria virgine, et homo factus est. Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato; passus et sepultus est. Et resurrexit tertia die, secundum scripturas; et ascendit in coelum, sedet ad dexteram

Patris. Et iterum venturus est cum gloria iudicare vivos et mortuos, cuius regni non erit finis. Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum et vitam venturi saeculi. 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 look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

③ O BONE JESU

O bone Jesu, O piissime Jesu, O dulcissime Jesu, O Jesu fili virginis Mariae plenus pietate. O dulcis Jesu, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam, miserere mei. O clementissime Jesu, deprecor te, per illum sanguinem pretiosum quem pro peccatoribus effundere voluisti, ut abluas iniquitatem meam et in me respicias, miserum et indignum peccatorem, et hoc nomen Jesum invocantem.

O nomen Jesu, nomen dulce, nomen Jesu, nomen dilectabile, nomen Jesu, nomen suave; quid enim est Jesus nisi salvator?

Ergo, bone Jesu, propter nomen tuum salva me ne periam et ne permittas me damnari quem tu ex nihilo creasti. O bone Jesu, ne perdat me iniquitas mea. Rogo te, piissime Jesu, ne perdas me quem fecit tua bonitas. O dulcis Jesu, recognosce quod tuum est et absterge quod alienum est. O amantissime Jesu, O desideratissime Jesu, O mitissime Jesu, O Jesu, admitte me intrare regnum tuum, dulcis Jesu.

O kind Jesus, O most loving Jesus, O most sweet Jesus, O Jesus, son of the virgin Mary filled with devotion.

O sweet Jesus, according to thy great mercy have mercy on me.

O most clement Jesus, I pray thee by that most precious blood which thou wast pleased to shed for sinners that thou wash away my sin and look upon me, wretched and unworthy sinner, even as I call upon this name of Jesus.

O name of Jesus, sweet name, name of Jesus, delightful name, name of Jesus, gentle name; for what is Jesus but our saviour?

Therefore kind Jesus, for the sake of thy name save me lest I perish, and let me not see ruin whom thou hast made out of nothing.

O kind Jesus, let not my sinfulness be my ruin. I beg thee, most loving Jesus, let me not be lost whom thy goodness has made. O sweet Jesus, acknowledge what is thine and wipe away all that is not.

O most loving Jesus. O most longed-for Jesus, O most gentle Jesus,

O Jesus, permit me to enter into thy kingdom, sweet Jesus.

④ WHEN DAVID HEARD

When David heard that Absalon was slain, he went up to his chamber over the gate, and wept, and as he went thus he said:

O my son Absalon, Absalon, would to God I had died for thee, O Absalon my son, my son.

THREE MOTETS FROM THE EUING COLLECTION

⑤ IN MONTE OLIVETI

In monte Oliveti orabat ad Patrem: Pater, si placet tibi transeat a me calix iste. Spiritus vero promptus est, Caro enim concupiscit ad versum spiritum. Fiat voluntas tua.

On the Mount of Olives He prayed to the Father: Father, if it please You take this cup away from me. The spirit is willing, The flesh, however, craves that the spirit be turned. Thy will be done.

6 O VOS OMNES

O vos omnes qui transitis per viam,
attendite et videte:
si est dolor aliquis
sicut dolor meus.

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

7 HOW ARE THE MIGHTY FALL'N

How are the mighty fall'n in the midst
of the battle.
O Jonathan, thou wast slain
in thy high places.

O Jonathan, woe is me for thee, O Jonathan,
my brother Jonathan, very kind hast thou
been to me: thy love to me was wonderful,
passing the love of women.

How are the mighty fall'n and the weapons
of war destroyed.

8 SALVE REGINA

Salve Regina, mater misericordiae;
Vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.
Ad te clamamus exules filii Evae.
Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes in hac
lacrimarum valle. Eia ergo advocata nostra,
illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos
converte, et Jesum, benedictum fructum
ventris tui, nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.
Virgo Mater ecclesiae, aeterna porta gloriae,
esto nobis refugium apud Patrem et Filium.
O clemens!

Virgo clemens, Virgo pia, Virgo dulcis,
O Maria, exaudi preces omnium
ad te pie clamantium.
O pia!
Funde preces tuo nato. Crucifixo,
vulnerato, et pro nobis flagellato,
Spinis puncto, felle potato.
O dulcis Maria, salve!

*Hail, O Queen, mother of mercy; our life,
our sweetness and our hope, hail!
To you we cry out, exiled children of Eve;
to you we sigh as we mourn and weep in
this valley of tears. O then, our advocate,
turn those merciful eyes of yours towards us;
and after our exile here, show us to the blessed
fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Virgin mother of the church, everlasting
gateway to glory, be our refuge*

before the face of the Father and the Son.

*O gentle!
Virgin gentle, Virgin holy, Virgin sweet,
O Mary, hear the prayers of all who
dutifully cry to you.
O holy!
Pour out our prayers to your Son, crucified,
bruised and scourged for our sake,
pierced with thorns, given gall to drink.
O sweet Mary, hail!*

9 AVE MARIA, MATER DEI

Ave Maria, Mater Dei,
Regina caeli, Domina mundi,
Imperatrix inferni:
Miserere mei et totius populi Christiani,
Et ne permittas nos mortaliter peccare
Sed tuam sanctissimam voluntatem
adimplere.
Amen.

*Hail Mary, Mother of God,
Queen of heaven, Mistress of the world,
Empress of hell:
have mercy on me and on all Christian people,
and let us not fall into mortal sin
but wholly fulfil your most holy will.
Amen.*

10 O BONE JESU a 19

Text as track 3

Dum Sacrum mysterium (Carver)*,
Credo (Carver)*,
O Bone Jesu a 19 (Carver)*

Recording Producer: Mark Brown
Recording Engineer: Mike Clements, Floating Earth

O bone Jesu (MacMillan),
Three motets from the Glasgow Euing Col.
and When David heard (Ramsey)
Recording Producer: Mark Brown
Recording Engineer: Mike Hatch, Floating Earth
Recorded at St Michael's Church, Highgate, July 4 2002

Ave Maria*, Salve Regina (Cornysh)*
Recording Producer: Mark Brown
Recording Engineer: Antony Howell

*Originally released on Collins Classics.

Photography Graham Topping and Andrew Giles

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