The Sixteen Edition

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Recording Producer: Mark Brown
Recording Engineer: Antony Howell
CD mastering: Julian Millard
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by John Milsom
Pronunciation adviser: Charles Barber
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Carver, Cornysh, MacMillan
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CORSACD16016
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BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

The Pillars of Eternity
Eton Choirbook Volume III
The Sixteen
HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

For further information about The Sixteen recordings on Coro or live performances and tours, call +44 (0) 1865 793 999 or email coro@thesixteen.org.uk www.thesixteen.com
I remember well, some years ago, sitting in the library at Eton College with Christopher Page and recording a programme for BBC Radio 3 about the Eton Choirbook, by far the most outstanding of a handful of choirbooks to survive the Reformation. We turned the parchment pages of this vast book, admiring the vividly illuminated capitals, marvelling at some of the, obviously frequently performed, motets, the corners of which were heavily thumbed by fingers of a past century. My abiding thought was how incredibly talented these sixteen choristers must have been to sing this highly complex music, difficult by any standard, while crowding around a lectern, straining to read by candlelight. Today we have modern editions, electricity and aids for failing sight and it still seems difficult!

Our edition represents very much the grass roots of our work and our overwhelming desire to rejoice in the survival of this great music.

**RICHARD DA VY**
(c.1465-c.1507)

- O Domine caeli terraeque creator
- Ah, mine heart, remember thee well

**WILLIAM CORNYSH**
(d.1523)

- Ave Maria, Mater Dei

**RICHARD DA VY**
(c.1465-c.1507)

- Stella caeli

**WALTER LAMBE**
(c.1450/51 – d. after Michaelmas 1499)

- Stella caeli

**RICHARD DA VY**
(c.1465-c.1507)

- Ah, mine heart, remember thee well

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**RICHARD DA VY**
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- Ah, blessed Jesu, how fortuned this?

**WALTER LAMBE**
(c.1450/51 – d. after Michaelmas 1499)

- Stella caeli

**WALTER LAMBE**
(c.1450/51 – d. after Michaelmas 1499)

- Stella caeli

**ROBERT WYLKYNSON**
(c.1450-1515 or later)

- Ah, mine heart, remember thee well
- Ah, blessed Jesu, how fortuned this?
- Jesus autem transiens/
  Credo in Deum
- Stella caeli
- Stella caeli

**Davy: Ah, mine heart, remember thee well**

**Davy: Ah, blessed Jesu, how fortuned this?**

**THE SIXTEEN**

- O Domine caeli
  Fiona Clarke
  Ruth Dean
  Carys Lane
  Caroline Ashton*
  Suzanne Pederson*
  Alison Smart*
- Stella caeli
  Sally Dunkley
  Deborah Miles Johnson
  Julia White
  Michael Lees
  Philip Newton
  Christopher Royall
  Andrew Carwood*
  Matthew Vine*
- Ah, mine heart, remember thee well
- Stella caeli
  Stoke
  Ruth Dean
  Carys Lane
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  Suzanne Pederson*
  Alison Smart*
- Ah, blessed Jesu, how fortuned this?

**Wylkynson: Jesus autem transiens/
Credo in Deum**

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- Ah, blessed Jesu, how fortuned this?
The Pills of Eternity

Eton Choirbook Volume III

Then `gin I think on that which Nature said
Upon the pillars of Eternity.

It is natural to remember thee well
When the sun sets, and the moon
Thou thy cure; With all good souls
To cause me live in rest.

In Robert Wyklynsyn’s Jesus autem transiens, the most bizarre work in the Eton Choirbook, the central tenets of Christian belief are rehearsed through the words of the Apostles’ Creed: ‘I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth’. But this is no ordinary setting of the Creed. The text is divided into twelve segments, preceded by the second line of the Creed: ‘Jesus autem transiens’ (Jesus then passing through (their midst)). This is notated as a single melodic line. To perform the piece, thirteen male voices sing the music in canon: first a solo voice intones the opening segment; then a second voice enters, while the first voice moves on to the second segment; and so on, until thirteen voices are in play and all thirteen segments sound simultaneously. The net effect is a harmonious chaos; all the voice-parts are even labelled (in approximately descending order of range) according to their angelic rank: Seraphs, Cherubs, Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels and Angels. One of those parts – the tenors who act as the Powers – sings a plainchant antiphon for the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, ‘Assumpta est Maria in caelis’. Here too the symbolic representation of the divine order is easy to understand: Mary is received into heaven surrounded by the angelic host, which appeals to her on behalf of mankind: ‘To you we sigh, as we mourn and weep in this valley of tears. Ah then, our advocate, turn those merciful eyes of yours upon us; and Jesus, the blessed fruit of your womb, show to us our exile here’.

A word about the composers and the likely dates of their compositions. According to a note in the Choirbook, Davy’s O Domine caeli terraque creator was written in the span of a single day at Magdalen College, Oxford. This fixes it in the period 1590–1592, when Davy served as the college’s organist and choirmaster. The original destination of his two songs is unknown. Ave Maria, mater Dei, by William Cornsny, is a younger work probably by several years. It may have come to Eton by way of the Chapel Royal repertory. Walter Lambé’s Antiphon for the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, ‘Assumpta est Maria in caelis’. Here too the symbolic representation of the divine order is easy to understand: Mary is received into heaven surrounded by the angelic host, which appeals to her on behalf of mankind: ‘To you we sigh, as we mourn and weep in this valley of tears. Ah then, our advocate, turn those merciful eyes of yours upon us; and Jesus, the blessed fruit of your womb, show to us our exile here’.

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O Domine Caelei Terraeque Creator

O Domine caeli terraeque creator,
Totius humani generis redemptor,
Nos hic tuos servulos una congregatos
In laudem tui nominis fac tibi devotos,
Ut Trinitatem in unitate digni venerantes,
Mariam Deo dignissimam simus recolentes
Quae virtutis praebuit exemplum viventibus,
Deum Patrem et Filium unum
esse credentibus
Sic et Sanctum Spiritum eundem
cum Patre docuit,
Deum verum et unum in personis retulit:
In deitate unitas, in personis pluralitas,
Unum fore in essentia, sic est credenda
Trinitas.

We therefore pray you Lord, whom in the Trinity
we worship as threefold God but one in majesty,
to save us from all the perils of this world,
that when it is past we may be united with the
saints in heaven.

O Maria sanctissima, testis vera Christi,
Salutante Gabriele statim accepisti
Orthodoxe fidei summam religionem,
Devota mente capiens sacrum
communionem.

Nobis tuis famulis in mortis periculo
Tua prece veniam dones in hoc saeculo,
Aut nobis morientibus non desit communio,
Sed quae tuis meritis, quae mater pudica
Exstitisti et sacra virgo in hac vita,
Nos imitari condones ut tecum
Vivamus cum gaudio in perenni gloria.

Amen.

O Lord the creator of heaven and earth
and redeemer of all mankind,
make us, your servants gathered here
to the praise of your name,
truly faithful to you,
that in our rightful veneration of the One-in-Three
we may also contemplate His most worthy Mary
who has shown to all who live an example
of virtue, teaching all who believe the Father
and the Son to be one that so also the Holy Spirit
is one with the Father, laying before us the true
God, one in His persons:
a unity in godhead, a plurality in persons,
one in being, this should be our belief in the
Trinity.

We therefore pray you Lord, whom in the Trinity
we worship as threefold God but one in majesty,
to save us from all the perils of this world,
that when it is past we may be united with the
saints in heaven.

O Mary the glory of the world and protector of
the church, be to your servants an ever-present aid,
that those you judge to have offended against your
Son may receive the defence of your holy prayers
as they beseech you, and as they strive faithfully
to wait on you, if only in some way by giving
praise to your memory.

Amen.
Ave Maria, Mater Dei

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

Stella Caeli

Stella caeli exstirpavit
Quae lactavit Dominum
Mortis pestem quam plantavit
Primus parens hominum.
Ipsa Stella nunc dignetur
Sidera compescere,
Quorum bella plebem caedunt
Dirae mortis ulcere.
O gloriosa Stella Maris
A peste succurre nobis;
Audi nos, nam te Filius
Nihil negans honorat.
Salva nos Jesu pro quibus
Virgo mater te orat!

Ah, Mine Heart,
Remember Thee Well

(Original sung in English)

Burden:
Ah, mine heart, remember thee well,
And think on the paines that been in hell.

Verse 1:
Ah, mine heart, remember me well,
how greatly thou art bound indeed;
Thou thinkest on Him never a deal
That helps thee ever at thy most need.
Alas, for sorrow mine heart doth bleed,
To think how grievously I have offended;
I cry God mercy, I will amend.

Verse 2:
With weeping tears most lamentable
To God above I call and cry;
I will axe grace while I am able,
I have offended so grievously;
Me to amend I will me hie,
For all my life-days I have mispend:
I cry God mercy, I will amend.

* hasten

A Star of heaven,
she who suckled the Lord,
rooted out the deadly plague
which mankind's first father planted.

May this Star now be gracious
and restrain the heavens,
whose attacks bring our people low
with fierce and deadly wounds.

O glorious Star of the Sea,
come to save us from this plague:
hear us, for your Son in respect
will never deny your prayer.

Save us Jesus, for whom
your Virgin mother pleads to you!
Ah, Blessed Jesu, How Fortuned This?

(Original sung in English)

Verse 1:
Ah, blessed Jesu, how fortuned this?
My mood is changed in every wise,
Nature of acquaintance is turned to a guest,
So shortly am I bidden to a grievous fest,
Whereas I am in ybid with all bodily rest;

Refrain:
Thus troubled am I,
yet I trust it shall be for the best:
Sicut domino placuit, ita factum est.

Verse 2:
Where art thou, Nature,
that wont were me to store
To lusty pleasure? Now lying in the floor,
My taste disordered, all reason far passing,
My face disfigured, mine eyes full dazzling,
Thou, Nature, hast left me;
by thee find I no rest:

Verse 3:
My voice is so troubled, my sickness then feel I,
My sleeps be so fearful, I think then sure to die;
My dream is so marvellous, seremeth me to tear,
Great mountains falling over me,
thus sleep do I in fear;
So waking, ne sleeping, find I no rest:

Verse 4:
Now, merciful Jesu, to thee make I my moan;
Nature hath forsaken me, and left me thus alone.
“Remember thee, my creature, thou must needs die, I thee ensure.”
Alas, to die thou makst me sure;
yet then, good Lord, do thou thy cure;
With all good souls to cause me live in rest.

Credo

© TRANSLATIONS BY JEREMY WHITE

Salve Regina

Salve Regina, mater misericordiae,
Vita, dulcedo et spes nostra, salve.
Ad te clamamus, exsules filii Evae.
Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes
in hac lacrimarum valle.
Eia ergo, advocata nostra,
illos tuos miserericordes 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, exiled children of Eve.
To you we sigh, as we mourn and weep
in this valley of tears.
Ah then, our advocate,
turn those merciful eyes of yours
upon us;
and Jesus, the blessed fruit of your womb,
show to us after our exile here.

Virgin mother of the church,
everlasting gate to glory,
be our refuge
before the Father and the Son.
O gentle!
Gentle virgin, loving virgin
O sweet virgin Mary,
hear the prayers of all
who humbly cry to you.
O loving!
Pour out prayers to your Son,
the crucified, the wounded,
scourged for our sake,
pierced with thorns, given gall to drink.
O sweet Mary, hail!