The Eton Choirbook
An award-winning series of CDs from The Sixteen

The Crown of Thorns
Eton Choirbook Volume II COR16012
“This is beyond doubt the most moving Eton Choirbook disc I have ever heard.”
FANFARE, USA

The Pillars of Eternity
Eton Choirbook Volume III COR16022
“It is difficult to believe that any 15th or 16th century choir could have sung this music with the refined blend, the rich tone or the shapeliness shown by The Sixteen, under the direction of Harry Christophers.”
THE TIMES

The Flower Of All Virginity
Eton Choirbook Volume IV COR16018
“Vibrant performances... with undiminished enthusiasm and imagination.”
GRAMOPHONE

The Voices of Angels
Eton Choirbook Volume V COR16002
“Foreigners were astonished at the quality of English choirs. Theirs were “the voices of angels”, a tribute which The Sixteen deserves no less today.”
CLASSIC CD

To find out more about The Sixteen, concert tours, or to buy CDs, visit 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.

THE SIXTEEN

TREBLE
Ruth Dean
Carys Lane
Alison Smart
MEAN
Sally Dunkley
Penny Vickers
Julia White
ALTO
Andrew Giles
Michael Lees
Philip Newton
Christopher Royall
TENOR
Philip Daggett
Neil MacKenzie
Nicolas Robertson
David Roy
BASS
Simon Birchall
Timothy Jones
Christopher Purves
Francis Steele

TURGES: FROM STORMY WINDES

ALTO
Philip Newton (verse)
Michael Lees
Penny Vickers
TENOR 1
Neil MacKenzie (verse)
Nicolas Robertson
David Roy
TENOR 2
Simon Berridge (verse)
Peter Burrows
Philip Daggett
BASS 1
Timothy Jones (verse)
Philip Lawson
BASS 3
Christopher Purves (verse)
Lawrence Whitehead
BASS 4
Francis Steele (verse)
Benjamin Odom

ANON: THIS DAY DAY DAWS

SOPRANO
Carys Lane (verse)
Ruth Dean
Sally Dunkley
TENOR
Neil MacKenzie (verse)
Nicolas Robertson
David Roy
BASS
Christopher Purves (verse)
Simon Birchall
Timothy Jones

BROWNE: STABAT IUXTA CHRISTI CRUCEM

TENOR 1
Neil MacKenzie (verse)
Philip Daggett
David Roy
TENOR 2
Simon Berridge (verse)
Peter Burrows
Nicolas Robertson
BASS 1
Simon Birchall (verse)
Henry Whickham
The Rose and The Ostrich Feather
Eton Choirbook Volume I

To an age that prizes and preserves the heritage of its past, the cavalier attitude of our ancestors to the culture of their own day strikes us as deplorable. Tudor church music is a case in point: rich as the repertory may seem to us today, untold quantities of similar music have been lost, most of it destroyed by the end of the sixteenth century. Without question the number of discarded works far exceeds those that survive. Why such carelessness, negligence and, to our minds, vandalism by those who should have recognized and cherished artefacts of such high quality? There are several explanations. First, English church music was devastated by political and theological change in the sixteenth century. Choral foundations that had nurtured a strong musical tradition in the late middle ages, it was recognized and cherished artefacts of such high quality? There are several explanations. First, English church music was devastated by political and theological change in the sixteenth century. Choral foundations that had nurtured a strong musical tradition in the late middle ages, it was recognized and cherished artefacts of such high quality? There are several explanations. First, English church music was devastated by political and theological change in the sixteenth century. Choral foundations that had nurtured a strong musical tradition in the late middle ages, it was...
the melody appropriate for state occasions such as coronations, investitures or royal visits. Working in the relative obscurity of Wells Cathedral, it is hard to know what even Hygons could have had in mind. Yet the biography of this composer, like so many of his colleagues, is clouded in obscurity; the true significance of his Salve Regina remains tantalizingly unexplained. Just as early Tudor church music is often shot through with references to the magnates who financed it, so partsongs by the same composers reflect the biographies, personalities and obsessions of the patrons who supported them. Turges’ prayer for the ostrich feather, preserved in a late fifteenth-century songbook emanating from courtly circles, is a clear example. Another is the anonymous three-part song This day day dawes, copied adjacently in the same manuscript. Here the allusion to ‘the lily-wighte rose’ is specifically to the emblem of Elizabeth of York, Henry VII’s queen. Yet the text is rich in other resonances: to the white rose a symbol of virginity, the rose as a metaphor for the Virgin – an image that recurs regularly in the Marian antiphons of the Eton Choirbook. At first sight the juxtaposition of secular songs and sacred music presented in this collection might seem incongruous. In reality the two repertoires, worldly and divine, intertwine exquisitely. The emblems of the white rose and the ostrich feather merge almost imperceptibly into the veneration of Christ and his Mother.

JOHN MILSOM

The Rose and The Ostrich Feather
Eton Choirbook Volume I

Robert Fayrfax (1464–1521)
Magnificat (‘Regale’)

Richard Hygons (c1435–c1509)
Salve Regina

Edmund Turges (c1450–f)
This day day dawes

John Browne (fl c1490)
Stabat iuxta Christi crucem

Anon
This day day dawes

William Cornysh (d1523)
Salve Regina

Total playing time
62.34

My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my saviour. For he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he who is mighty has done great things to me; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud, even the arrogant of heart. He has deposed the mighty from their seats and exalted the humble. The hungry he has filled with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away. He has helped the mighty from their seats and exalted the humble. The hungry he has filled with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away. He has helped the mighty from their seats and exalted the humble. The hungry he has filled with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away. He has helped the mighty from their seats and exalted the humble. The hungry he has filled with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away.
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!

From stormy windes and grievous weather, Good Lord, preserve the Estridge Feather! O blessed Lord of heaven celestial, Which formed hast of thy most special grace Arthur, our prince, to us here terrestrial In honour to reign, Lord, grant him time and space, Which of alliance Our prince of pleasance By inheritance of England and France Right heir for to be; Wherefore now sing we: From stormy windes… Wherefore, good Lord, sith of thy creation Is this noble prince of royal lineage, In every case be his preservation, With joy to rejoice his due inheritance, His right to obtain In honour to reign, This heir of Britayne, of Castille and Spain, Right heir for to be; Wherefore now sing we: From stormy windes…

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 lacerarum 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 clamanium.

O pia! Funde preces tuo nato, Crucifixo, vulnerato, Et pro nobis flagellato, Spinis puncto, felle potato. O dulcis Maria, salve!

Now, good Lady, among thy saintes all, Pray to thy Son, the second in Trinity, For this young prince which is and daily shall be Thy servant with all his heart so free, O celestial, Mother maternal, Empress infernal, to thee we cry and call, His safeguard to be; Wherefore now sing we: From stormy windes…
Stabat iuxta Christi crucem

Near the cross of Christ stood Mary, As the True Light suffered there
Mother of the King of glory, There she saw Him cruelly crowned,
Saw the spear his side that wounded, Watched as death overcame her Son.
Beheld his body scourged, afflicted, Gentle hands and feet transfixed
By the blows of cruel men.
And as he bowed his head she saw The Shepherd’s body bloodied o’er For the sake of all his sheep.
Then in sorrow, holy Virgin, Sadly gazing, watching there Death invade thy dearest Son.
Greater suffering thou enduredst, Say the saints, than pain and torment Of a thousand martyrdoms.
Gentle Virgin, Virgin holy, Hope of sinners, path of glory, Virgin full of Heavenly grace, Bid thy Son, thy servants beg thee, And implore Him that He quickly Bring us into heaven’s bliss.

This day day dawes

This day day dawes
This gentill day dawes, This gentill day dawes
And I must go home.
In a glorius garden grene Sawe I syttyng a comly quene Among the flouris that fresth byn.
The lyly-whight rose methought I sawe And ever she sang: This day day dawes...
In that garden be flouris of hewe; The gelofir gent that she well knewe The flour-de-luce she did on rewe, And said - ‘The white rose is most trewe This garden to rule be ryghtwis lawe’.
The lyly-whyghte rose methought I sawe, And ever she sang: This day day dawes...

(DAWES = DAWNS. SET BETWENE = SAT AMONGST THEM. GELOFIR GENT = CLOVE-SCENTED PINK)