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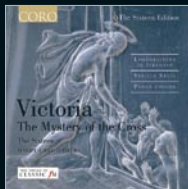


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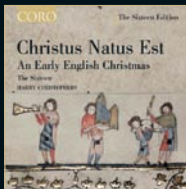


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§ The Sixteen Edition

Tomás Luis de Victoria

Requiem 1605

Officium Defunctorum

The Sixteen

HARRY CHRISTOPHERS



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Victoria's *Requiem* has been in the group's repertoire for many years but I feel that it is only at this point in our existence that we are actually ready to record this outstanding work. This is very much a 'Requiem of an Age' (the words of Bruno Turner), but it is more than that. I believe that Victoria's final work not only represents the end of Spain's golden era and the end of Renaissance music, but that it also has dignity and reverence, qualities that play such an important role in today's fast and uncompromising world.

During the recording we realised that we were embarking on a deeply felt spiritual journey. With the subtle addition of chamber organ and bajón (an early bassoon) enhancing but never dominating the choral sound, we experienced not only moments of exquisite tenderness but also moments of explosive emotion. Victoria devoted his life to the Church, and his works reveal such breathtaking passion that there are times in performances when we are almost overwhelmed by their intensity.

Now, for those of you who wonder why we are called The Sixteen - even though there always seem to be eighteen of us these days - here's a little musical anecdote: the choir of the *Monasterio de las Descalzas Reales*, who may well have originally sung the *Requiem*, had twelve singing priests and four boys at its foundation; however, after 1600, the boys were increased to six in number. When I formed The Sixteen, we started as sixteen singers to perform 16th century music, but, ten years later, I decided to increase the sopranos from four to six - history repeating itself!

Harry
Anisimer,

Tomás Luis de Victoria 1548 – 1611

By 1586 Tomás Luis de Victoria had returned to Spain, after twenty-one years in Rome where he had lived and worked through a time when Catholicism was regaining its confidence, in the period after the mid-century reforms of the Councils of Trent, with music coming to play an increasingly important role in popular religious life. Born in 1548 in Ávila, Victoria had been a chorister at the Cathedral there before his blossoming talent had brought him to Rome in 1565 to study at the Collegium Germanicum. An appointment followed at the Church of S. Maria de Monserrato in 1569, and Victoria also became teacher of plainsong at the Collegium Germanicum in 1571, and chapelmaster of the Collegium Romanum in 1573. By 1578 he had become chaplain at San Girolamo, in association with Philip Neri, famed for his populist spiritual assemblies, where music was a major influence in attracting new adherents to the Faith. Meanwhile in 1575 Victoria had been admitted to the priesthood, a vocation which seems to have been of great importance to him throughout his life; for in his dedication (to Philip II) of his 1583 Book of Masses, we read his wish to return to a quiet life in Spain: "...to spend my time in the contemplation of the Divine, as befits a priest", (*ad divinam, ut sacerdotem decet, contemplationem traducerem*).

During the years he spent in Italy, he had mixed with the numerous great singers and composers of the Age from all over Europe who thronged the chapels and churches of the Holy City, and he was to publish no less than eight impressive collections of his music there. Although he was considerably less prolific than his great contemporaries, in particular Palestrina and Lassus, in these publications Victoria bequeathed to us fine examples of music in all the important sacred genres of the time - and many of these pieces rank with the greatest masterpieces of the Renaissance (and, indeed, some would say, of any period).

As with other composers of the sixteenth century, music in homage to our Lady, the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, was to feature prominently in Victoria's output, and from the beginning. For example, the eight-voice *Salve Regina*, first printed in 1572, demonstrates how fully he had matured in the expression of his genius, even by the age of 24. And at the end of his life, indeed it was devotion to another lady which was to result in the writing of what many today regard as Victoria's supreme masterpiece, his final published work, the Office for the Dead, of 1605, much performed in modern times, even as far afield as Japan.

The eight-voice *Salve*, the epitome of confident passion and piety, too has found much favour today amongst choirs and singers, liturgically, in concert and on record. But Victoria lavished his genius several times

on this great Marian Antiphon text, and the setting for six voices, published in 1576, with its two treble and alto parts, combines the somewhat archaic compositional techniques of *ostinato* and *canon*, and ‘modern’ imitative voice-leading, with its balance between text declamation and musical expression (Palestrina often being cited as the supreme proponent of this). Victoria intertwines a sonorous web of imitative polyphony enveloping the two *ostinati* for the first two-thirds of the piece, the second soprano intoning the four-note *Salve* chant incipit in long notes at two different pitch levels, while the second alto repeats likewise a longer phrase to the words “*Mater misericordia*”. At the *Et Iesum* verse, the lower voices fall silent, returning for the final invocations of “*O clemens, O dulcis, O pia Virgo Maria*”, set by Victoria in six-part polyphony just as perfect and magical as in its more famous eight-voice predecessor. A mere mechanical description of the piece is a poor substitute to prepare one for the effect of this music in performance, the passionate beauty of which, elevating the spirit of the singer or listener in the contemplation of the divine mystery of the Mother of God, defies imitation by lesser mortals.

Of the other great Marian Antiphons, Victoria made two settings each of *Ave Regina*, *Alma Redemptoris Mater* and *Regina caeli*, for five and for eight voices. In his publications from 1572 to 1583, he had been

a pioneer in making not only double-choir settings of Vesper Psalms (such as his famous *Super flumina Babylonis*), but even triple-choir music (the first to be published in Rome) for Psalm 121, *Laetatus sum*. From the 1580s on, three choirs of musicians were becoming standard in Rome for Mass and Vespers on major feast days, and Victoria’s music must have been widely heard at the time.

The eight-voice *Ave Regina* is typical of the *cori spezzati* (spaced choir) style, the texture commonly antiphonal, and polyphony merging freely in and out of homophony, with both choirs combining for the final oration in a rich and expressive sonority. And there are the characteristic fast triple-time sections at the words “*Gaude gloriosa*”, and momentarily at “*et pro nobis*”. Contrast is obvious with the five-voice setting (for SAATB), both in sonority and in texture. Victoria’s expressive aims are achieved here with smooth, flowing imitative polyphony, sometimes chant-derived, sometimes freely invented, always the joyous text in perfect balance with the music.

Favoured by composers, even into our own times, the Song of Songs has been a rich and stimulating source of texts for music in praise of the Virgin. Originally Hebrew love poetry, it was written down maybe 300 years before the birth of Christ, and has since been read by Jews and Christians alike as a religious allegory, despite its eroticism, in the Roman Catholic Liturgy a description of the love between Christ and the Church,

Mary and her Son, or the faithful and Mary. Palestrina was perhaps exceptional when he published a single volume containing twenty-six motets on Song of Song texts in 1584; Victoria however was less ambitious in terms of quantity, but each of his inspirations has a unique character of its own. *Nigra sum sed formosa*, “I am black but beautiful...”, its opening notes printed symbolically in black color, is for six voices, with two sopranos and two tenors, bright and richly sonorous. Almost madrigalian (at the rising scalic imitations at *Surge...*), Victoria still maintains the right and proper reverential atmosphere, (the music never sounds or feels secular, even when quick repeated-quaver imitations and chordal phrases, *Imber abiit...*, *Flores apparuerunt...*, *Tempus putationis...*, rush us towards the final cadence).

The four-voice motet, *Quam pulchri sunt gressus tui* is typical of Victoria’s more intimate settings. The general trend through the sixteenth century was for polyphonic music for the Liturgy to become more and more concise, sometimes, by the early seventeenth century, with lesser composers, verging on the perfunctory. Partly this was a result of the reforms of the Council of Trent, when many texts were standardised and an emphasis was laid on the meaning of the words. For Victoria, though fully capable of extended musical flights of inspiration (for example his motet *Vadam et circuibo civitatem*), the discipline of such brevity

was perhaps an advantage, for he could well accommodate a multitude of musical ideas in a small canvas, the rapidly shifting tensions between melody and harmony producing a high pitch of emotion. The confident happiness and sweetness of the present motet is a famous example. In the six-voice motet, *Trahe me post te*, Victoria constructs his music, with supreme fluency, (as Guerrero before him, albeit with a more extended text), round a canon, in this case alto 1, tenor 1 echoed by alto 2, tenor 2. A characteristic joyous Alleluia concludes.

In 1583 Victoria had issued a four-voice *Missa pro defunctis*, in the same publication where he expressed his desire to return to Spain. What was Victoria like as a man? We are accustomed to biographies of composers who lived nearer to us in time, in which we can read much of their personal feelings and thoughts. Victoria however remains a shadowy figure - we can only guess at what made him leave what must have been a very successful career in Rome. Did he feel some guilt at his fame, a lack of humility, which could only be expiated by a return to a simpler life in Spain? Perhaps, for he turned down offers from Saragossa and Seville, choosing instead to spend the last twenty-four years of his life as chaplain and choirmaster at the Royal Convent of the Barefoot Nuns of St Clare in Madrid, under the aegis of the Dowager Empress Maria of Austria, sister of Philip II. And it was

her death in 1603 which prompted Victoria to write a new *Missa pro defunctis*, for six voices, this time accompanied by extra music - *Versa est in luctum*, an extra-liturgical motet; the Responsorium, *Libera me*, for the Absolution which follows the Mass; and a Lesson from Matins, *Taedet animam meam*, a bleak text extracted from the Book of Job. The music of the Mass is supplied with the proper plainsong intonations and verses, and the plainsong is paraphrased in the polyphony, always in the second soprano, save for the Offertory, where it is in the alto part. The chant intonations are written by Victoria in high clefs throughout, to be sung by the boys (sopranos). In this recording, The Sixteen follow this, except in the *Libera me*, where men's voices double at the octave (always a possibility in Victoria's day).

When two years later Victoria published this, his *Officium defunctorum*, in Madrid, he included the coat of arms of the Empress as the frontispiece; and he wrote of the music as "for the obsequies of your most revered mother", referring to Princess Margaret, daughter of the Empress, who had entered the Convent in 1584 and was one of the thirty-three cloistered nuns whose daily service, the Divine Office, was celebrated by twelve priest singers and four boys (after 1600, six), under Victoria's guidance.

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Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611) Requiem 1605

1	Salve Regina	9.55
2	Ave Regina caelorum a 5	4.17
3	Nigra sum	3.42
4	Quam pulchri sunt	3.49
5	Trahe me post te	3.09
6	Ave Regina caelorum a 8	3.34

OFFICIUM DEFUNCTORUM

7	Taedet animam meam	4.05
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MISSA PRO DEFUNCTIS A 6

8	Introit	5.05
9	Kyrie	2.13
10	Gradual	3.09
11	Offertory	4.59
12	Sanctus & Benedictus	2.46
13	Agnus Dei I, II & III	3.52
14	Communion	4.03
15	Funeral motet: Versa est in luctum	3.59
16	Responsory: Libera me	8.49
	Total playing time	72.58



THE SIXTEEN

SOPRANO

Lisa Beckley, Libby Crabtree
Grace Davidson, Sally Dunkley
Kirsty Hopkins, Elin Manahan Thomas

ALTO

David Clegg, William Missin
Christopher Royall
Ian Aitkenhead/Caroline Trevor

ORGAN

Gary Cooper

TENOR

Simon Berridge, Mark Dobell
David Roy
Matthew Vine/William Unwin

BASS

Jonathan Arnold, Ben Davies
Timothy Jones
Robert Macdonald/Eamonn Dougan

BAJÓN

Keith McGowan

① 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 misericordes oculos ad nos converte.
Et Iesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,
nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.
O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.*

② Ave Regina caelorum a 5

*Ave Regina caelorum,
Ave Domina Angelorum.
Salve, radix sancta,
ex qua mundo lux est orta.
Gaude gloriosa,
super omnes speciosa.
Vale, valde decora,
et pro nobis semper Christum exora.*

③ Nigra sum

*Nigra sum, sed formosa,
filia Ierusalem:*

Hail, Queen, Mother of mercy,
our life, our sweetness and hope, hail.
To thee we cry, the banished ones, children of
Eve. To thee we send up our sighs,
mourning and weeping in this vale of tears.
Thou therefore, our Advocate,
turn thine eyes of mercy towards us.
And show us Jesus, blessed fruit of thy womb,
after this our exile.
O kind, O merciful, O sweet Virgin Mary.

Hail, Queen of Heaven.
Hail, Mistress of the angels.
Hail, sacred stem,
from whom light for the world has arisen.
Rejoice most glorious one,
beautiful above all others.
Hail and farewell, most gracious one,
plead always with Christ for us.

I am black, but beautiful,
a daughter of Jerusalem:

*ideo dilexit me Rex,
et introduxit me in cubiculum suum
et dixit mihi:
surge amica mea, et veni:
iam hiems transiit,
imber abiit et recessit:
flores apparuerunt in terra nostra,
tempus putationis advenit.*

④ Quam pulchri sunt

*Quam pulchri sunt gressus tui,
filia principis.
Collum tuum sicut turris eburnea.
Oculi tui divini,
et comae capitis tui
sicut purpura regis.
Quam pulchra es,
et quam decora, carissima!
Alleluia.*

⑤ Trahe me post te

*Trahe me post te,
et curremus
in odorem unguentorum tuorum,
Alleluia.*

for that the King chose me
and led me into his bedchamber,
and he said to me:
rise up, my love, and come:
for the winter is past,
the rains are over and gone:
the flowers bloom in our land
and the time for pruning has come.

How beautiful are thy footsteps,
O prince's daughter!
Thy neck is like a tower of ivory.
Thine eyes are divine,
and the hair of thy head
like the purple of a king.
How beautiful you are,
and how gracious, dearest one!
Alleluia.

Draw me along after thee,
and let us run
towards the scent of thine ointments.
Alleluia.

⑥ Ave Regina caelorum a 8 (text as track ②)

7 The Second Lesson of Matins of the Dead (Job 10, 1-7)

*Taedet animam meam vitae meae,
dimittam adversum me eloquium meum,
loquar in amaritudine animae meae.
Dicam Deo: Noli me condemnare:
indica mihi, cur me ita iudices.
Numquid bonum tibi videtur,
si calumniaris, et opprimas me,
opus manuum tuarum,
et consilium impiorum adiuves?
Numquid oculi carni tibi sunt:
aut sicut videt homo, et tu vides?
Numquid sicut dies hominis dies tui,
et anni tui sicut humana sunt tempora,
ut quaeras iniquitatem meam,
et peccatum meum scruteris?
Et scias, quia nihil impium fecerim,
cum sit nemo, qui de manu tua possit eruere.*

My soul is weary of my life;
I will let go my speech against myself,
and express the bitterness in my soul.
I shall say to God: Do not condemn me,
but show me why Thou judgest me in this manner.
Shall it seem a good thing to Thee
to cheapen me and oppress me,
the work of Thine own hands,
and to support the schemes of the wicked?
Are Thine eyes of flesh?
Dost Thou even see only as men do?
Is Thy life like the life of men,
and do Thy years pass like the days of men,
that Thou shouldst enquire after my iniquity,
and investigate my sins?
Surely Thou knowest that I have done no wrong
and there is no man that can deliver me from
Thy hand.

Missa pro defunctis a 6 (1605)

8 Introit

*Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Te decet hymnus Deus in Sion,
et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem:
exaudi orationem meam,
ad te omnis caro veniet.*

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
and let light perpetual shine upon them.
A hymn, O God, becometh Thee in Sion,
and a vow shall be paid to Thee in Jerusalem:
give ear to my supplication,
unto Thee shall all flesh come.

9 Kyrie

Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison. Kyrie eleison.

Lord have mercy upon us.
Christ have mercy upon us.
Lord have mercy upon us.

10 Gradual

*Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.
In memoria aeterna erit justus:
ab auditione mala non timebit.*

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
and let light perpetual shine upon them.
The just man shall remain in memory everlasting:
of ill report he shall not be afraid.

11 Offertory

*Domine Iesu Christe, Rex gloriae,
libera animas omnium fidelium defunctorum
de poenis inferni, et de profundo lacu.
Libera eas de ore leonis,
ne absorbeat eas tartarus,
ne cadant in obscurum:
sed signifer Sanctus Michael
repraesentet eas in lucem sanctam:
Quam olim Abrahae promisisti et semini eius.
Hostias et preces tibi, Domine,
laudis offerimus:
tu suscipe pro animabus illis,
quarum hodie memoriam facimus:
fac eas, Domine, de morte transire ad vitam.
Quam olim Abrahae promisisti et semini eius.*

Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory,
deliver the souls of all who died in the faith
from the pains of hell and from the deep pit.
Deliver them from the lion's mouth,
lest the jaws of hell swallow them,
lest they fall into everlasting darkness.
But let Saint Michael, the leader of hosts,
bring them forth into Thy holy light,
as Thou promised before to Abraham and to his seed.
We offer sacrifice and prayers of praise
unto Thee, O Lord:
receive them on behalf of those souls
whom we remember this day:
grant them, O Lord, to pass over from death to life,
as Thou promised before to Abraham and to his seed.

12 Sanctus & Benedictus

*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,
Dominus Deus Sabaoth,
pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Osanna in excelsis.*

*Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Osanna in excelsis.*

13 Agnus Dei I, II & III

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi
dona eis requiem.*

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi
dona eis requiem.*

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi
dona eis requiem sempiternam.*

14 Communion

*Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine,
cum sanctis tuis, in aeternum:
quia pius es.*

*Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis
cum sanctis tuis in aeternum,
quia pius es.
Requiescant in pace. Amen*

Holy, Holy, Holy,
Lord God of Sabaoth,
the heavens and the earth are full of Thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
grant them rest.

Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
grant them rest.

Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
grant them eternal rest.

Let light perpetual shine upon them, O Lord,
in the company of Thy saints for evermore;
because Thou art merciful.

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
and let light perpetual shine upon them
in the company of Thy saints for evermore,
because Thou art merciful.
Let them rest in peace. Amen.

15 Funeral Motet: Versa est in luctum

*Versa est in luctum cithara mea
et organum meum in vocem flentium.
Parce mihi, Domine, nihil enim sunt dies mei.*

My harp is turned to mourning
and my organ into the voice of those that weep.
Spare me, O Lord, for my days are nothing.

16 Responsory: Libera me

*Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna,
in die illa tremenda:
Quando caeli movendi sunt et terra
dum veneris judicare saeculum per ignem.*

*Tremens factus sum ego, et timeo,
dum discussio venerit, atque ventura ira.
Quando caeli movendi sunt et terra.*

*Dies illa, dies irae, calamitatis et miseriae,
dies magna et amara valde:
Dum veneris judicare saeculum per ignem.*

*Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.*

*Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna,
in die illa tremenda:
Quando caeli movendi sunt et terra:
Dum veneris judicare saeculum per ignem.*

Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison. Kyrie eleison.

Deliver me, O Lord, from everlasting death
on that fearful day,
when the heavens and the earth shall be moved
and Thou shalt come to judge the world by fire.

I am seized with trembling, I am sore afraid
for the day of judgement and for the wrath to come,
when the heavens and the earth shall be moved.

That day, a day of wrath, calamity and woe,
a great day and bitter indeed,
when Thou shalt come to judge the world by fire.

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
and let light perpetual shine upon them.

Deliver me, O Lord, from everlasting death,
on that fearful day
when the heavens and the earth shall be moved,
and Thou shalt come to judge the world by fire.

Lord have mercy upon us.
Christ have mercy upon us.
Lord have mercy upon us.

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HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

After twenty-five years of world-wide performance and recording, **The Sixteen** is recognised as one of the world's greatest vocal ensembles. Its special reputation for performing early English polyphony, masterpieces of the Renaissance and a diversity of 20th century music is drawn from the passions of conductor and founder, **Harry Christophers**. Over eighty recordings, many prize-winning, reflect The Sixteen's quality in a range of work spanning the music of six hundred years.

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The choir is enhanced by the existence of its own period instrument orchestra, The Symphony of Harmony and Invention, and through it Harry Christophers brings fresh insights to music including that of Purcell, Monteverdi, JS Bach and Handel. 2004 witnessed the launch of the group's annual Handel in Oxford Festival, a weekend of concerts and events dedicated to the life of this great composer.



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Recording Engineer: Mike Hatch (Floating Earth)
Recorded at Saint Silas the Martyr, London
25-27 April, 2005

Project Development: Mark Wiggins

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