The Voices of The Sixteen Edition

The Sixteen Edition

Other Sixteen Edition recordings on CORO

The Eton Choirbook Collection
Slipcase of all 5 of The Sixteen’s recordings

Spem in alium
Music for Monarchs and Magnates

Philip & Mary
A Marriage of England & Spain

Music from the Chapel Royal
‘The King’s Musick’

To find out more about The Sixteen, concert tours, and to buy CDs, visit www.thesixteen.com
Having dedicated so much time in championing the music from the Eton Choirbook, that magnificent collection of Marian music emanating from Henry VI’s beautiful chapel at Eton College, I thought it only fitting that we should take a look at what had been happening more than four hundred miles away north of the border. There, another great choirbook has survived, believed to have been compiled by Robert Carver, who was at that time proving to be the most outstanding composer of the Scottish Chapel Royal.

His nineteen-part devotion to the name of Jesus, *O Bone Jesu*, is simply mesmeric, full of complex beauty and a staggering feat for any composer, let alone one from that turbulent age. The celebration of the Holy name of Jesus still has a special significance for Scottish Catholics today. However, it is his extraordinary ten-part Mass *Dum sacrum mysterium* which takes centre stage on this disc. Sally Dunkley, one of The Sixteen’s founder members, is not only a wonderful singer who, by her sheer presence, enhances the musical life of all around her, but is also an amazing scholar. Sally has spent many years editing this elaborate Mass. Ever the perfectionist, she was making refinements to underlay and other specifics which were unclear in the manuscript even up to the recording sessions. This mass is extraordinary, but one thing in particular that stands out is the phenomenal range of the vocal parts, thus making it unusually demanding on the tenors and basses.

The distribution of parts and the overall sound spectrum is very different from those in the Eton Choirbook. If you own one of our Eton Choirbook discs, it is well worth listening and comparing for yourself.

---

ROBERT CARVER  
(c.1487 - after 1566)

1. Plainsong: *Dum sacrum mysterium*  
2. Missa *Dum sacrum mysterium*  
   - Gloria 7.30  
   - Credo 9.11  
   - Sanctus 6.45  
   - Benedictus 5.31  
   - Agnus Dei 11.15  
3. Magnificat - 7th tone faburden (Anon from the Carver Choirbook) 14.02  
4. *O bone Jesu* a19 12.52  
5. Total playing time 68.10
Robert Carver (c.1487 - after 1566)

The king beand in the Chapell Royal and heirand the mese and ewin song, the quhilk everie day the saidis chaplans pryit for the kingis grace deploring and lamenting the deid of his father quhilk brought the king in Sterling to repentance...

[Robert Lindsay of Pitscottie]

James IV, King of Scots, established his Chapel Royal as a collegiate church with sixteen canons and six boys in 1501, soon afterwards expanding it to include a further ten canons. A glimpse of the polyphonic music performed by this, probably the largest collegiate church in Scotland at the time, is provided by a manuscript assembled by Robert Carver alias Arnot (c1487 – after 1566), a Canon of the Chapel Royal in Stirling and also of the Augustinian Abbey of Scone in Perthshire. The works on this recording illustrate different aspects of the Chapel Royal’s repertory during the last decade of James IV’s reign.

Circumstantial evidence suggests that the large-scale Missa Dum sacrum mysterium may have been sung at the coronation of James V on 21st September 1513. It is presented here, however, with the Salisbury Use plainchants for its original place in the calendar, 29th September, the Feast of St Michael. Salisbury Use had spread into Scottish cathedrals from the late twelfth century onwards and by the sixteenth century was established as the core of James IV’s Scottish use. The sumptuous polyphony has as its cantus firmus the Antiphon to the Magnificat at Vespers on St Michael’s Day.

English influence can be seen in the Mass, in particular in the omission of the Credo text ‘et in Spiritum Sanctum...in remissionem peccatorum’. Figurative details and contrasting textures owe much to the English Eton Choirbook style, but there are several features that are characteristic of a Scottish tradition in this period. The contrast between the reduced and full sections is not only of texture but also of style. In the ten-part sections, the tenor is more slow-moving than elsewhere, with changes in the tenor note dictating the harmonic rhythm to a great extent. The harmony itself in these sections, when it does move, often does so by a root movement of a major second, more so than in the reduced sections. The result is that the full sections, propelled almost entirely by their complex rhythms and constantly changing sonority, give the impression of a sort of improvisation upon the chant; clashes of decorative notes and obvious parallel motion in the figuration add to this impression.

Apart from a short passage in the Credo, imitation does not play a significant part until ‘Pleni sunt coeli’, where there is a canon at the lower ninth, after which point the Mass does make some further use of imitation in places. Textural effects in the Gloria and Credo such as block polyphony and rondellus-like passages are replaced in later movements by linear counterparts of these effects, such as antiphony between single lines and the slow hocket of the cantus firmus among the tenor parts in the third Agnus Dei.

The immense nineteen-part votive antiphon O bone Jesu was a vast ornamentation of the private prayers of James IV. He had been the unwilling figurehead of a rebellion that resulted in the death of his father, James III, at the Battle of Sauchieburn in 1488. Throughout his life, James IV felt responsible for his father’s death. He sought spiritual comfort from the Dean of the Chapel Royal and attended Mass and evening services. O bone Jesu would have been part of a Devotion of the Name of Jesus that he would have heard in the evening after Compline.

The Scottish characteristics of slow harmonic rhythm and root movement by second are again found here. With so many parts, a problem of coherence emerges in the full sections, which Carver overcomes by imitation of small figures across the whole texture. The construction of the motet, in short sections generally ending with fermatas
on the two syllables of 'Jesu', is probably similar to that of the Fayrfax setting of a related text, judging by the surviving part of the latter.

The wedding in 1503 of Princess Margaret Tudor of England, daughter of Henry VII, to James IV of Scotland, occasioned a flurry of English activity at the Scottish court. The anonymous seventh-tone Magnificat has certain characteristics that indicate very strongly that it may be English. It conforms to the textural and metrical plan of the surviving Eton Choirbook Magnificats, with only the even numbered verses set in polyphony in alternating full and solo sections within an overall triple-duple-triple metrical structure. Also English is the use of a particular type of cantus firmus. Whilst the monophonic verses are sung to the Salisbury seventh Magnificat tone, the polyphonic sections are based not upon this tone itself, but on a paraphrase of a line that commonly harmonises it, known as the seventh-tone 'faburden'. This particular version of the seventh-tone faburden however, most clearly heard in the tenor line on the words 'Fecit potentiam' in verse 6, has a long melodic descent at the end of the phrase, which is a Scottish variant. Clues to the identity of the composer are few. In style, this Magnificat seems to be contemporary with the late Eton Choirbook pieces but is rather conservative in outlook. Perhaps it was written by a Scottish composer in the English style, or by an English composer writing specifically for a Scottish occasion. James IV tried in many ways to make his young Queen feel at home; having English-style music performed in the Chapel Royal may have been one of them.

The early sixteenth-century flourishing of polyphony at the Chapel Royal ended abruptly after James IV’s death at the Battle of Flodden. Although polyphonic music was to return to it later in the century, the stylistic peculiarities of works such as O bone Jesu and the Missa Dum sacrum mysterium, with their monumental vision and mesmeric shifting sonorities, never returned; they belong only to the brief period of prosperity before 1513.

© Isobel Preece

The Sixteen

Missa Dum sacrum mysterium

SOPRANO 1 Ruth Dean, Carolyn Sampson SOPRANO 2 Carys Lane, Rebecca Outram TENOR 1 Neil MacKenzie TENOR 2 Matthew Vine TENOR 3 David Roy ALTO 1 Sally Dunkley ALTO 2 Caroline Trevor BASS 1 Robert Evans BASS 2 Simon Birchall BASS 3 Francis Steele

Magnificat

SOPRANO Carys Lane (verse), Rebecca Outram (verse), Ruth Dean ALTO Caroline Trevor (verse), Sally Dunkley, Michael Lees TENOR Neil MacKenzie (verse), Matthew Vine (verse), David Roy BASS Robert Evans (verse), Simon Birchall, Francis Steele

O bone Jesu

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.

Plainchant antiphon - Dum sacrum mysterium

Dum sacrum mysterium cerneret 
Johannes, archangelus Michael tuba 
cecinit, ignoscet domine deus noster qui 
aperis librum et solvis signacula eius. 
Alleluia.

Missa Dum sacrum mysterium
(with plainchant for Mass on St Michael's Day according to Salisbury Use)

Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo. 
Et in terra pax 
hominibus bonae voluntatis. 
Laudamus te, benedicimus te, 
adoramus te, glorificamus te. 
Gratias agimus tibi 
propter magnam gloriam tuam. 
Domine Deus, Rex caelestis, 
Deus Pater omnipotens. 
Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe. 
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.

Glory be to God on high. 
And on earth peace 
to men of good will. 
We praise Thee, we bless Thee, 
we worship Thee, we glorify Thee. 
We give thanks to Thee 
for Thy great glory. 
Lord God, heavenly King, 
God the Father almighty. 
O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. 
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.

Credo

Credo in unum Deum 
Patrem omnipotentem, 
factorem caeli et terrae, 
visibilium omnium et invisibilium. 
Et in unum Dominum, Jesum 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.

I believe in 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.
Qui, propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem, descendit de caelis. Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria virgine, et homo factus est. Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilate; passus et sepultus est. Et resurrexit tertia die, secundum scripturas; et ascendit in caelum, 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.

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.

 Sanctus
Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis.

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

 Benedicitus
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis.

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

 Agnus Dei
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, give us peace.

 Magnificat
Magnificat anima mea Dominum. Et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo. Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae sui: ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicient omnes generationes. Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est: et sanctum nomen eius. Et misericordia eius a progenie in progenies timentibus eum. Fecit potentiam in brachio suo: My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done great things to me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is from generation unto generation, unto them that fear him. He hath showed strength with his arm;
dispersit superbos
mente cordis sui.
Deposuit potentes de sede,
et exaltavit humiles.
Esurientes impelit bonis:
et divites dimisit inanes.
Suscepit Israel puerum suum
recordatus misericordiae suae.
Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros,
Abraham et semini eius in saecula.
Gloria Patri, et Filio,
et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum.
Amen.

he hath scattered the proud
in the imagination of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their
seat and exalted the humble.
He hath filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he hath sent empty away.
He hath received Israel, his servant,
being mindful of his mercy.
As he spoke to our forefathers,
to Abraham and his seed for ever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever
shall be, world without end.
Amen.

O bone Jesu
O bone Jesu,
O piissime Jesu,
O dulcissime Jesu,
O Jesu fili virginis Mariae
plenus pietate.
O dulcis Jesu, secundum magnum
misericordiam tuam, miserere mei.
O clementissime Jesu, deprecor te,
per illum sanguinem pretiosum quem
pro peccatoribus effundere voluisti,
ut ablas 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 peream
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, secundum
misericordiam tuam, miserere mei.
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.
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 ninety recordings reflect The Sixteen’s quality in a range of work spanning the music of five hundred years, winning many awards including a Grand Prix du Disque for Handel’s Messiah, numerous Schallplattenkritik, the coveted Gramophone Award for Early Music for the Eton Choirbook, and most recently the prestigious Classical Brit Award 2005 for ‘Renaissance’.

The Sixteen tours throughout Europe, Japan, Australia and the Americas and has given regular performances at major concert halls and festivals worldwide, including the Barbican Centre, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Sydney Opera House, and Vienna Musikverein; also the BBC Proms, and the festivals of Salzburg, Granada, Lucerne and Istanbul. The group promotes The Choral Pilgrimage in some of the UK’s finest cathedrals, bringing music back to the buildings for which it was written.

The Sixteen are Associate Artists of London’s Southbank Centre and also well known as the ‘The Voices of Classic FM’. The Sixteen’s own CD label CORO now releases most of the group’s recordings.