Spem in alium
Music for Monarchs and Magnates
“A masterpiece of detective work, rare repertoire and artful editing, and a fitting celebration of The Sixteen’s first quarter-century devoted to early music.”

The Eton Choirbook Collection
Slipcase of all 5 of The Sixteen’s acclaimed CDs of the Eton Choirbook.
“Sit back and let these glorious sounds fill your ears and lift your spirits.”

Treasures of Tudor England
Parsons, White, Tye
“The awesome choir revive underrated masterpieces.”

The Sixteen - Sounds Sublime
The Essential Collection (2 CD set)
Some of the most celebrated recordings from Harry Christophers and his award-winning ensemble, these discs provide a definitive collection of familiar classics and lesser-known treasures.

To find out more about The Sixteen, concert tours, and to buy CDs visit www.thesixteen.com
We recorded this programme to celebrate the tenth anniversary of our Choral Pilgrimage in 2010. This was initially a millennium project aimed solely at bringing the great music of our heritage back to the buildings for which it was written. Thus, I have returned to that idea and focused on some of the finest music by three leading Tudor composers: John Sheppard, Thomas Tallis and William Byrd. Once again it is Sally Dunkley who has spent hours researching and, indeed, editing much of the music and I am indebted to her for introducing me to two quite staggering works.

At the heart of the programme is Sheppard's monumental *Media vita in morte sumus* and Byrd's deeply personal setting of *Infelix ego*. The works of Sheppard; both Sally and I were tutored by David when we were students at Oxford so it seems very fitting that we should include this great work on the disc. But it is Byrd's *Infelix ego* which I found to be a revelation; the text is a meditation on the famous *Miserere mei, Deus* psalm, written by the Italian friar, Savonarola, while he lay in prison, in a state of despair at not being strong enough to resist the pain of being tortured on the rack, only a few days before he was burned at the stake. Byrd, living in constant fear of persecution because of his devout Catholic faith, responds in such a personal manner, which is at times both reflective and explosive.

However, we also see Byrd's ebullient side in the joyful motets *Laudibus in sanctis* and *Haec dies*, alongside hymns by Tallis and Sheppard. One of the gems of this recording is Tallis's *Miserere nostri*; its brevity belies its complexity. It is based on a seventeen-note motif to commemorate the seventeenth year of Queen Elizabeth's reign. Of the seven vocal parts only one is not canonic, two are in strict canon, two are by inversion and the final two are canonic but with one part four times the speed of the other. It sounds complex and, quite frankly, it is, but technical feats like this can, in the hands of most composers, sound just that – technical and, ultimately, rather boring and academic. In the hands of Tallis, the result is mesmerisingly brilliant.

All three composers lived through decades of religious turmoil in sixteenth-century England and expressed in different ways their devotion to the Catholic faith.

These are exceptional works by any standard and I am just surprised that it has taken me so long finally to perform them. *Media vita* was perhaps the crowning achievement of David Wulstan's championing of
CEREMONY AND DEVOTION

Music for the Tudors focuses on sacred music by three leading Tudor composers: John Sheppard, Thomas Tallis and William Byrd. Writing during the period of religious strife that followed Henry VIII’s break with the church in Rome, these musicians – all of whom held appointments at the Chapel Royal – found themselves having to adapt to rapidly changing requirements as Henry was succeeded first by his young Protestant son Edward VI, then by his fervently Catholic daughter Mary, and finally by her half-sister Elizabeth I, who settled for a more moderate form of Protestantism.

In pre-Reformation England, church services were conducted according to the Sarum (Salisbury) rite, and enhanced by elaborate music, as is so spectacularly exemplified by Sheppard’s *Media vita in morte sumus*. Composers such as Sheppard and Tallis also provided music for the ritual Offices of Vespers and Compline, usually incorporating plainchant. As a young man, Byrd mastered these techniques but later on, as a recusant Catholic in Elizabethan England, he chose to set different kinds of Latin texts, including devotional motets that would have been sung by a few people in the private chapels and households of well-to-do Catholics, circumstances altogether different from the choirs that sang in Anglican cathedrals.

Biographical information for Sheppard, as for many musicians of this time, is sketchy; furthermore, as his name was a common one, several unflattering incidents were wrongly attributed to him. What is established is that he was *informator choristarum* at Magdalen College, Oxford, by 1543, and by some time after 1547 had been appointed a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, the monarch’s own musical establishment. The appropriate livery was ordered for his participation in the funeral of Mary Tudor in December 1558 and for the coronation of Elizabeth I a month later, but his death occurred around this time (probably as a result of an epidemic of ‘the new ague’), his will being proved on 31 January 1559.

Like Tallis, Sheppard composed a certain amount of English-texted music for the Anglican church, but is most idiosyncratically represented by his Latin polyphony, both in quality and quantity. Virtually all the texts he set were liturgical, and the majority of these works must have been written for a large choir, as they are scored for five or six voices and households of well-to-do Catholics, circumstances altogether different from the choirs that sang in Anglican cathedrals.

Total running time

75.48

The Sixteen

SOPRANO Julie Cooper, Grace Davidson, Julia Doyle*, Kirsty Hopkins, Charlotte Mobbs

MEAN Sally Dunkley, Caroline Trevor†

ALTO Ian Aitkenhead, David Clegg, William Missin, Christopher Royall

TENOR Simon Berridge, Jeremy Budd, Mark Dobell, David Roy

BASS Ben Davies, Eamonn Dougan, Timothy Jones, Stuart Young

* all except Sacris solemnis iuncta sint gaudia; Media vita in morte sumus; Domine, praestolamur
† in Sacris solemnis iuncta sint gaudia; Media vita in morte sumus; Domine, praestolamur

Ceremony and Devotion

SOPRANO

Julie Cooper, Grace Davidson, Julia Doyle*, Kirsty Hopkins, Charlotte Mobbs

MEAN

Sally Dunkley, Caroline Trevor†

ALTO

Ian Aitkenhead, David Clegg, William Missin, Christopher Royall

TENOR

Simon Berridge, Jeremy Budd, Mark Dobell, David Roy

BASS

Ben Davies, Eamonn Dougan, Timothy Jones, Stuart Young

* all except Sacris solemnis iuncta sint gaudia; Media vita in morte sumus; Domine, praestolamur
† in Sacris solemnis iuncta sint gaudia; Media vita in morte sumus; Domine, praestolamur

Total running time

75.48
with an overall range often spanning three octaves and a note (noticeably more than was employed by continental composers).

By its length as well as its cumulative power, *Media vita in morte sumus* is unique. In technical terms it could be described as a Nunc dimittis enveloped by the antiphon *Media vita*, with three verses attached; its place in the Sarum liturgy was on the last three Sundays in Lent. The text was, of course, well known, and also set by composers including Gombert (published 1539: he also wrote a Mass based on his own motet) and Lassus (1573); it is worth mentioning, especially to those who attended the Sixteen's Choral Pilgrimage in 2009, that these same universally apposite words inspired Purcell and especially the martyring of the Jesuit priest Edmund Campion in 1581 ushered in a much more hostile climate. Byrd's wife and members of his family were fined again and again for failure to attend church services, and Byrd himself certainly courted danger by associating with recusant circles. Gatherings of these like-minded people took place in the houses of nobility and gentry, where Mass was celebrated in a private chapel, sometimes by a visiting priest. An account of one such event, held at Hurleyford in 1586 to welcome the arrival in England of two missionary Jesuits, recounts that there was 'an organ and other musical instruments, and choristers, male and female, members of [the] household. During those days it was just as if we were celebrating...a great feast. Mr Byrd, the very famous English musician and organist, was among the company'. It was undoubtedly for these kind of events that Byrd came to compose his cycle of Mass Propers *Gradualia* (1605 and 1607), but before that, in the late 1570s and 80s, he was much occupied with writing large-scale motets to a variety of texts, some of which were carefully chosen to express in metaphorical terms the plight of the English recusants; the fervent *Domine, praestolamur* is one of these, with its entreaties to 'lift the yoke that holds us captive' and to 'set your people free'.

Both Sheppard and Tallis were active writing hymns and responds for the major feasts of the church's year, so much so that it has been mooted that there may have been a cycle of Office music for the Chapel Royal in Mary's reign. The hymns normally followed the *alternatim* pattern, with the odd-numbered verses sung to plainchant and the even-numbered ones to polyphony built around a plainchant cantus firmus. Sheppard's setting of the profound words of St Thomas Aquinas, *Sacris sollemnibus iuncta sint gaudia*, for the feast of Corpus Christi, reflects the importance of this feast in its unusually elaborate scoring for six voices, several of which divide further to polyphony built around a plainchant cantus firmus. Sheppard's setting of the profound words of St Thomas Aquinas, *Sacris solemniis iuncta sint gaudia*, for the feast of Corpus Christi, reflects the importance of this feast in its unusually elaborate scoring for six voices, several of which divide further to polyphony built around a plainchant cantus firmus. Sheppard's setting of the profound words of St Thomas Aquinas, *Sacris solemniis iuncta sint gaudia*, for the feast of Corpus Christi, reflects the importance of this feast in its unusually elaborate scoring for six voices, several of which divide further to polyphony built around a plainchant cantus firmus. Sheppard's setting of the profound words of St Thomas Aquinas, *Sacris solemniis iuncta sint gaudia*, for the feast of Corpus Christi, reflects the importance of this feast in its unusually elaborate scoring for six voices, several of which divide further to polyphony built around a plainchant cantus firmus. Sheppard's setting of the profound words of St Thomas Aquinas, *Sacris solemniis iuncta sint gaudia*, for the feast of Corpus Christi, reflects the importance of this feast in its unusually elaborate scoring for six voices, several of which divide further to polyphony built around a plainchant cantus firmus.
While only five out of a total of thirty-seven motets in the 1589 and 1591 Cantiones sacrae collections have cheerful texts, Byrd nevertheless demonstrated that he could express such sentiments with great verve, as in Haec dies and Laudibus in sanctis. Vitality abounds in Haec dies (an Easter text), from the busy opening bars through the scurrying energy and cross-rhythms of ‘et laetemur’ to the extended ‘Alleluia’ that concludes the motet. For Laudibus in sanctis he chose an elegiac paraphrase of Psalm 150, perfectly reflecting the accentual qualities of the words in his music. The text gave him ample opportunity to show off his madrigalian vocabulary, with nimble-footed dancing set in contrast to the stately concluding ‘tempus in omne’ (a clever reference to slower-moving notation).

With Infelix ego Byrd turned to a deeply penitential text expressed in the first-person singular, part of a lengthy meditation on Psalm 50 (‘Miserere mei, Deus’) written by the fifteenth-century Italian friar Girolamo Savonarola during his final imprisonment, as he awaited a painful death at the stake. Translations of Savonarola’s meditations had reached the printing presses in England by the 1530s, but recent research has identified a more specific source for the Latin text, much closer to Byrd. The dedicatee of Byrd’s Cantiones sacrae of 1591, Lord Lumley, scholar and Catholic, not only assembled in his library a considerable collection of music but also possessed a tiny hand-written prayer book ‘gathered by...Lord Lumley for his use’, containing the complete text Infelix ego. Among the many sets of partbooks in his library were settings of that same text by Clemens and Lassus, but Byrd’s far surpasses them in its musical invention and intellectual scope. The three sections of this magisterial work culminate in words directly from the psalm, ‘Miserere mei, Deus’ – traditionally the final words spoken by those about to be hanged, hence the epithet ‘the neck verse’ – which are highlighted in dramatic block chords and reiterated so that they cannot be missed; and they introduce a musical quotation, a little tag associated with these words ever since Josquin used it as a motto in his motet in the early 1500s. Byrd redoubles this cry with another gesture, as the final phrase ‘misericordiam tuam’ leads up to a bold harmonic shift. This is surely a work of deeply personal expression, emanating from circumstances far distant from the ritual of a decade or two earlier.

Sally Dunkley © 2009

**TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Veni, Creator Spiritus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Veni, Creator Spiritus</strong>,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mentes tuorum visita:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Imple superna gratia</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quos tu creasti pectora.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qui Paraclitus diceris,</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Donum Dei Altissimi,</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fons vivus, ignis, caritas</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Et spiritualis unctio.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tu septiformis munere,</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dextae Dei tu digitus:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tu rite promissum Patris</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sermone ditans guttura.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accende lumen sensibus,</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infunde amorem cordibus</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infirma nostri corporis</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Virtute firmans perpetim.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hostem repellas longius</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pacemque dones protinus:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ductore sic te praevio</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vitemus omne noxium.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

plainchant, Sarum use

Come, Holy Spirit, the Creator, and visit the minds of your people: fill with heavenly grace the hearts you have made.

You who are called the Comforter, the gift of the Most High God, the living fountain, the fire, the source of love and the balm of the spirit.

You are sevenfold in your gifts, you are the finger of God’s right hand: you are the fulfilment of the Father’s promise as you endow the throat with holy speech.

Kindle your light in our senses and pour love into our hearts, making our mortal weakness always firmer by your strength.

Drive far away our foe and grant us lasting peace: and so, with you going before to lead us, may we escape all harm.

Through you may we know the Father and acknowledge the Son, and in you, the Spirit of both, may we believe all our days.

In sacred praises celebrate the Most High Lord, and let the heavens proclaim the glorious works of God. Sing of the glorious works of God, and with pious voice applaud again and again the power of the Almighty.

Let the martial trumpet sound the great name of the Lord – join the celebration of the Lord upon the Muses’ lyre. Let booming drums sound in praise of God Most High, and loud organs resound the praise of God Most Holy.

Let high psalteries with slender strings sing of Him, and let the fleet foot in joyful dance give praise to Him. Let hollow cymbals pour forth the divine praises, and sweet-sounding cymbals be full of the praise of God. Let every thing in the world that feeds on heaven’s air at all times sing Alleluia to God.

Sacris solemniis iuncta sint gaudia, et ex praecordiis sonent praecomia; recendant vetera, nova sint omnia, corda voces et opera. Noctis recolitur cena novissima, qua Christus creditur agnum et azyma dedisse fratribus, iuxta legitima priscis indulta patribus.

Let this solemn feast be kept with joy, and let praises sound from every heart; Let all that is old give way, let all be new in heart and hand and voice.

We recall that last supper, when Christ, as we believe, gave bread and meat to His brothers, according to the rites laid down by the ancient fathers.
And when the ritual meal of the lamb was done, the body of the Lord was given to the disciples, whole to all as whole to each, by His own hands, we here avow.

To frail man he gave His body to eat, to wretched man His blood to drink, saying, take this cup I give to you; drink you all from it.

Thus He instituted the sacrifice whose celebration He willed to be performed by priests alone, for whom it is fitting that they should partake, and give to others.

The bread of angels becomes man’s food; the heavenly bread fulfils all former symbols.

We pray you, Godhead three and one, that, as you come to us and we recall your grace, you lead us in your ways, by which we come to that light wherein you dwell. Amen.

O maker of all time and Lord of the passing hours, renew our bodies, tired with toil, in the restful quiet of the night.

That while in this burdensome body we must remain however short a stay, our flesh may take such rest as keeps the mind awake in Christ.

We pray you here upon our knees to free us from the enemy, lest he prove strong to lead astray those whom you have redeemed with your blood.

We beseech you, Author of all things, in the joy of this Easter season, from any threat of death defend your people here.

Glory to you Lord, who have risen from the dead, and to the Father and Holy Spirit throughout endless ages. Amen
Sancte Deus, Sancte fortis, Sancte et misericors Salvator, amarae morti ne tradas nos.


Ne proicias nos in tempore senectutis; cum defecerit virtus nostra ne derelinquas nos Domine. Sancte Deus, Sancte fortis, Sancte et misericors Salvator, amarae morti ne tradas nos.

Noli claudere aures tuas ad preces nostras. Sancte fortis, Sancte et misericors Salvator, amarae morti ne tradas nos.

Holy God, Holy and mighty, Holy and merciful Saviour, deliver us not to the bitterness of death.

Now, Lord, you let your servant depart in peace according to your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation: which you have prepared in the sight of all peoples. A light to lighten the gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Do not cast us away in our old age; when our strength fails us do not abandon us, Lord.

Holy God, Holy and mighty, Holy and merciful Saviour, deliver us not to the bitterness of death.

Do not close your ears to our prayers.

Holy and mighty, Holy and merciful Saviour, deliver us not to the bitterness of death.

Qui cognoscis occulta cordis, parce peccatis nostris. Sancte et misericors Salvator, amarae morti ne tradas nos.

Miserere nostri
Miserere nostri, Domine.

Domine, praestolamur
Domine, praestolamur adventum tuum ut cito venias et dissolvas iugum captivitatis nostrae. Veni, Domine, noli tardare, relaxa facinora plebi tueae et libera populum tuum.

Iam Christus astra ascenderat
Iam Christus astra ascenderat, Regressus unde venerat, Promisso Patris munere Sanctum daturus Spiritum.

You who know the secrets of our hearts, forgive us our sins.

Holy and merciful Saviour, deliver us not to the bitterness of death.

Thomas Tallis
Have mercy on us, Lord.

William Byrd
Lord, we look for your coming; would that you would come quickly and lift the yoke that holds us captive.

Come, Lord, and do not delay; relieve your folk of their burden of sin and set your people free.

Thomas Tallis
Now Christ had risen to the stars, returning to the place from whence He had come, according to the Father’s promised gift to send to us the Holy Spirit.
Solemnis urgebatis dies
Quo mistico septemplici
Orbis voluit aus septies
Signat beata tempora:
Dum hora cunctis tertia
Repente mundus intonat,
Orantibus apostolis
Deum venisse nuntiat.
De Patris ergo lumine
Decorus ignis almus est
Qui fida Christi pectora
Calore verbi compleat.
Dudum sacrata pectora
Tua replesti gratia,
Dimitte nunc peccamina
Et da quieta tempora.
Sit laus Patri cum Filio
Sancto simul Paracleto,
Nobisque mittat Filius
Carisma Sancti Spiritus. Amen.

Infelix ego
Infelix ego, omnium auxilio destitutus,
qui coelum terramque offendi;
Quo ibo? quo me vertam?
ad quem confugiam? quis mei miserebitur?
Ad coelum levare oculos non audeo,
quia ei graviter peccavi;
in terra refugium non invenio,
quia ei scandalum fui.

Quid igitur faciam? desperabo? Absit.
Misericors est Deus, pius est salvator meus.
Solus igitur Deus refugium meum;
ipse non despiciet opus suum,
non repellet imaginem suam.

Ad te igitur, piissime Deus,
tristis ac moerens venio,
quoniam tu solus spes mea,
tu solus refugium meum.
Quid autem dicam tibi,
cum oculos levare non audeo?
Verba doloris effundam,
misericordiam tuam implorabo, et dicam:
Miserere mei, Deus,
secdum magnam misericordiam tuam.

William Byrd
Unhappy I, bereft of all succour,
who have offended against heaven and earth!
Whither should I go? Where shall I turn?
To whom can I fly? Who will have pity on me?
To heaven I dare not lift my eyes,
for against her I have grievously sinned;
on earth I find no refuge,
for I have become an outrage to her.

What then shall I do? Shall I despair? Let it not be.
Merciful is God, loving is my Saviour;
therefore God alone shall be my refuge;
He will not despise the work of His hands,
will not reject what He has made in His image.

To you, then, most loving God,
sad and sorrowing I come,
for you alone art my hope,
You alone my refuge.
But what should I say to you,
since I dare not raise my eyes?
I shall pour out words of sorrow;
I shall implore your mercy and shall say:
Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your great mercy.

translating Jeremy White ©2009
Harry Christophers is known internationally as founder and conductor of The Sixteen as well as a regular guest conductor for many of the major symphony orchestras and opera companies worldwide. He has directed The Sixteen choir and orchestra throughout Europe, America and the Far East gaining a distinguished reputation for his work in Renaissance, Baroque and twentieth-century music. In 2000 he instituted the Choral Pilgrimage, a national tour of English cathedrals from York to Canterbury in music from the pre-Reformation, as The Sixteen's contribution to the millennium celebrations. It raised awareness of this historic repertoire so successfully that the Choral Pilgrimage in the UK is now central to The Sixteen's annual artistic programme.

In 2008 Harry Christophers was appointed Artistic Director of Boston’s Handel and Haydn Society; he is also Principal Guest Conductor of the Granada Symphony Orchestra as well as enjoying a very special partnership with the BBC Philharmonic with whom he won a Diapason d’Or. He is a regular guest conductor with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and the Orquestra de la Comunidad de Madrid and he has conducted the Hallé, the London Symphony Orchestra and the San Francisco Symphony.

Increasingly busy in opera, Harry Christophers has conducted Monteverdi’s Il ritorno d’Ulisse, Gluck’s Orfeo, Mozart’s Die Zauberflöte, Purcell’s King Arthur and Rameau’s Platée for Lisbon Opera. After an acclaimed English National Opera debut with The Coronation of Poppea he has since returned for Gluck’s Orfeo and Handel’s Ariodante, as well as conducting the UK premiere of Messager’s opera Fortunio for Grange Park Opera. He conducts regularly at Buxton Opera.

Harry Christophers is an Honorary Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford as well as the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and has been awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Music from the University of Leicester.

The Sixteen is recognized as one of the world’s greatest ensembles. Its special reputation for performing early English polyphony, masterpieces of the Renaissance, Baroque and early Classical periods, and a diversity of twentieth-century music, all stems from the passions of conductor and founder, Harry Christophers.

The Sixteen tours internationally giving regular performances at the major concert halls and festivals. At home in the UK, The Sixteen are “The Voices of Classic FM” as well as Associate Artists of Southbank Centre, London. The group also promotes the Choral Pilgrimage, an annual tour of the UK’s finest cathedrals.

The Sixteen’s period-instrument orchestra has taken part in acclaimed semi-staged performances of Purcell’s Fairy Queen in Tel Aviv and London, a fully-staged production of Purcell’s King Arthur in Lisbon’s Belem Centre, and new productions of Monteverdi’s Il ritorno d’Ulisse at Lisbon Opera House and The Coronation of Poppea at English National Opera.

Over one hundred recordings reflect The Sixteen’s quality in a range of work spanning the music of five hundred years. In 2009 they won the coveted Classic FM Gramophone Artist of the Year Award and the Baroque Vocal Award for Handel’s Coronation Anthems. The Sixteen also feature in the highly successful BBC television series, Sacred Music, presented by Simon Russell Beale.