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Coro

**Tomás Luis de Victoria**

**Requiem 1605**

“...this is a simply magnificent performance...”

International Record Review

**The Sixteen**

**Tomás Luis de Victoria**

**The Call of the Beloved**

“...this is a beautifully prepared and rewarding recording that deepens our appreciation of one of the greatest masters of the Renaissance...”

Gramophone

**Francisco Guerrero**

**Missa de la batalla escoutez**

Janequin - La Guerre

“...his Mass is thus sophisticated and serene, with a stunningly beautiful eight-voice final Agnus Dei. The Sixteen luxuriate in his texture and phrase.”

The Sunday Times

**Philip & Mary**

**A Marriage of England & Spain**

Music by Spanish and English composers including Tallis’s great Mass Puer natus as it may have been performed by choirs from both countries on Christmas Day 1554.

**The Sixteen**

HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

**Tomás Luis de Victoria**

**Magnificat octavi toni**

**Litaniae Beatae Mariae Maior**

**Missa Alma Redemptoris Mater**

**The Sixteen Edition**

Hail, Mother of the Redeemer
I am constantly amazed at the quality of Tomás Luis de Victoria’s music. Like Palestrina, Victoria is a master craftsman but he is more than that - he brings to his music qualities which one simply does not find in other composers of this era. Perhaps the fact that he devoted his life to the service of God sets him apart from everyone else or perhaps, as one eminent critic so rightly wrote, it is simply that he is “a towering genius whose work hardly registers on the radar of normal musical life”.

Scholar, mystic, priest, singer, organist and composer - six persons all rolled into one. Although he began and ended his life in Spain, he spent most of his working years in Rome, soaking up the great tradition of polyphonic writing and immaculate counterpoint but always preserving his Iberian roots and bringing to his music a richness of texture and a perfect sense of line, allowing his music to constantly ebb and flow. He knew how to write for voices, how to explore subtleties of chording and when to pick out a particular vocal part for total expression.

On this recording, we explore some of the sumptuous music Victoria wrote in honour of the Virgin Mary. Whilst his glorious Missa Alma Redemptoris Mater forms the central part of the disc, it is some of the Marian motets I find to be intensely beautiful and which, for me, define Victoria as the greatest composer of the Renaissance. Just listen to the unique way he opens his 6 part Congratulamini mihi; it is a motet of rejoicing but the way he layers the chording with each part entering low in their range, makes me think of distant chanting waiting to explode into joy on the words “placui altissimo” (I have pleased the Highest). Sancta Maria is another gem; the simple 4 part texture belies the beseechingly plaintive manner he uses the voices to shape the Marian text. He employs simple nuances on such words as “refove” (revive) and rhetorical gestures for “ora pro populo” (pray for the people).

“Hail, Mother of the Redeemer” is a fitting tribute to a truly great composer who left Rome to return to his beloved Spain “to spend my time in the contemplation of the Divine, as befits a priest”.

Harry
Christopher.
Hail, Mother of the Redeemer

Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salve Regina a 5</td>
<td>Alma Redemptoris Mater a 5</td>
<td>Gratulamini mihi a 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.32</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>4.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sancta Maria</td>
<td>Gaude Maria</td>
<td>Missa Alma Redemptoris Mater a 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hymn: Ave maris stella</td>
<td>Magnificat octavi toni</td>
<td>Regina caeli a 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>8.45</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ne timeas Maria</td>
<td>Litaniae Beatæ Mariae a 8</td>
<td>Total running time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>7.22</td>
<td>72.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Born in 1548, Tomás Luis de Victoria was fortunate to live at the height of the Counter-Reformation, at a time of great vitality in the Roman Church. Music and musicians played a prominent role in encouraging religious regeneration, so there were many opportunities for a musician of Victoria’s talent. He followed in the footsteps of that master, Cristóbal de Morales, (the first Spaniard to have a truly international reputation), going to Rome around 1565, where he made himself famous with a flood of compositions, issued in sumptuous prints in Venice and Rome from 1572 on. Unlike Morales, however, Victoria did not become a singer in the Papal Chapel, but variously held posts at the Collegium Germanicum, the Church of Santa Maria de Monserrato and the Collegium Romanum, as organist, singer and teacher; yet in broader outline, his career still mirrored that of Morales, for they both returned to Spain for the rest of their lives (Morales in 1545 after 10 years; Victoria in 1586) to take up posts there. Morales died in 1553, so he will not have known Victoria; but Morales certainly taught and greatly influenced Francisco Guerrero, whose music was familiar to Victoria, for he included Guerrero’s Pastores loquebantur and Beata Dei genitrix in his own Roman 1585 print of motets.

Music printing (at least of polyphony) was still in its infancy when Morales was young, yet his reputation was enhanced so much by the widespread distribution of his music in print, that he became the most famous Spanish composer of the middle years of the 16th century, and later. His works were printed often and in a wide range of places, and Morales himself was instrumental in developing the distribution pathways, particularly to Spain, which were to be essential for composers such as Victoria, Guerrero, and others, later in the century.

The Venetian Ottaviano Petrucci was the first to issue polyphony in print, using movable type, with his Harmonice Musices Odhecaton in 1501, a part-book collection of secular songs by Franco-Flemish composers. It was 1516 before the first Roman print of sacred polyphony...
appeared, Antico’s *Liber Quindecim*, a choirbook volume of Masses, also by Franco-Flemish masters: Josquin dez Pres, Pierre de la Rue, Brumel, Mouton, Pipelare and Roselli. Apparently it took 3 years to prepare the woodblocks from which the pages were pressed, which gives some indication of the expense involved in these early days. Yet this was a most successful issue, and many copies made their way to Spain (where it was generally known, erroneously, as ’las quince misas de Josquin - the fifteen masses of Josquin’).

By the time of Victoria's maiden publication (Venice, 1572), the financial risk must still have been high, for although he was a prodigious talent, yet he was relatively unknown. However it seems likely that Victoria’s 1572 volume was successful. For one reason the subsequent publication: *Thomae Ludovici/De Victoria Abulensis/Collegii Germanici in Urbe/Romae Musicae Moderatoris./Liber Primus./Qui missas, Psalmos, Magnificat,/Ad Virginem Dei Matrem Salutiones...*, Venice, 1576, is more of a hotch-potch, like a collection of what Victoria had managed to accumulate in the interim, and an ‘ad hoc’ hastily assembled collection responding to the demand created by the steady, or perhaps runaway, success of the 1572 book (of course containing some of Victoria’s greatest inspirations). The 1576 contents are twenty-seven pieces, twenty-one unpublished before: five Masses, a single Hymn, six Magnificats, a *Salve* for 6 voices, several new motets, and six reprinted from 1572.

In contrast subsequent volumes were more organised: 1581 (2 prints, sets of Office Hymns; and of Magnificats and Marian Antiphons); 1583 (2 prints, one of nine Masses, four new, including a *Missa pro defunctis*; and a comprehensive reprint of Motets, with a substantial content of double choir pieces, and one for 12 voices, *Laetatus sum*); 1585 (2 prints: Holy Week music, Lamentations, Responsories, Hymns in the Spanish style; and Motets for the Church year, mainly reprints, but including two by Francisco Guerrero and one by Soriano).

Then Victoria retired from his busy life in Rome, in 1586/87, taking up the post of chaplain to the Dowager Empress Maria, a sister of Philip II and the widow of Maximilian II, in Madrid. His publications thereafter were few, at least the ones under his own aegis. 1592 saw the issue, in Rome, of a book of Masses, virtually all new compositions, probably accumulating from before Victoria left for Spain. After that, a book of Masses in 1600, and the famous *Officium Defunctorum* of 1605, his tribute to his employer, the Dowager Empress, and his own swan song. Both these were printed in Madrid. That however is not the whole story, for two volumes of Motets appeared in 1589, printed in Milan and in Dillingen, and one in Venice in 1603; and a volume of Hymns, again in Venice. Did Victoria have a hand in any of these? Given that they contain nothing new, it seems more likely that they were independent publications, taking advantage of his fame, for there was no copyright protection in those far-off times.

It is clear that fame and fortune for composers during Victoria’s lifetime was very dependent upon the publication of their music. No doubt this was a chicken-and-egg situation: which came first, fame or publication? Palestrina, perhaps the greatest composer of the time, with a vast output, was printed and reprinted through his life and long after his death, as was Lassus. Yet Victoria’s compositions
were hardly reprinted at all after his death, possibly because he moved away from Rome to a relative backwater, Spain.

Almost certainly Victoria played a major role in a successful promotion and distribution of his music in Italy, as Morales had done all those years before in Spain. Copies of prints issued during Victoria’s Roman years surviving today are overwhelmingly in Italian institutions, with insignificant numbers in Spain; and when Victoria retired to Spain he became more of a priest, seeking a quiet life of contemplation, composing and publishing next to nothing. Did Victoria take some copies of his latest publication with him when he retired to Madrid in 1586/87? For with the 1585 book of motets, while eleven copies remain in Italy today, no fewer than eight are found in the Peninsula. Clearly Victoria’s presence in Rome was necessary to maintain interest in his music.

Settings of Marian texts inspired all the great Renaissance composers to write their greatest music. The Marian Antiphons were obviously very important to Victoria, since he composed two settings each of Alma Redemptoris, Ave Regina and Regina caeli, for 5 and for 8 voices, and no less than four of Salve Regina, two for 5 voices, and one each for 6 and 8. All these were immensely popular in his lifetime, reprinted many times, for they contain glorious music. The influence and direct quotation of the Antiphon plainchants shape the vocal lines in all these settings. The 5-voice Salve Regina performed here was first published in 1576, and it is an alternatim setting, the stately polyphony paraphrasing the chant in all the voices. Alma Redemptoris and Regina caeli were first published in Victoria’s maiden publication of 1572. Alma Redemptoris reverentially praises the Virgin, slowing the polyphony in quasi-chordal textures to emphasise the words “stella maris” and “Virgo prius”. Regina caeli is more joyous than prayerful, with its running scales and extended Alleluias.

The Missa Alma Redemptoris, for two 4-part choirs (there is also an optional organ part), is one of the series of Masses that Victoria based on his own versions of the great Marian Antiphons: the Missa Salve was published in 1592; the Missa Ave Regina and the Missa Alma Redemptoris in that great collection of double and triple-choir music of 1600. It is posterity’s loss that Victoria never composed a Missa Regina caeli.

It is well known that composers of Victoria’s time and earlier commonly borrowed music from either their own or from another’s compositions, adding to, varying, or reproducing exactly the whole polyphonic texture when writing a Mass. Palestrina devoted much of his output of Masses to this procedure; Lassus likewise, Morales, Guerrero and Victoria too. What is less generally known is that this also occurred with other pieces: Lassus and later Michael Praetorius composed parody Magnificats, using madrigals as models, for example. Of the accompanying group of motets on Marian texts, the 4-voice Sancta Maria is of particular interest: Stephen Rice has recently pointed out that a series of settings of this text by Verdelot, Morales, Guerrero and Victoria are all related by musical borrowings.

Missa Alma Redemptoris is a parody mainly on Victoria’s own 8-voice setting; however in the reduced-voice sections such as Christe and Benedictus, it is the long-limbed, lyrical lines of the 5-voice Alma Redemptoris that Victoria borrows. The influence and direct quotation of plainchant is obvious in the vocal lines of the models and much of this aura is carried over into the Mass. However there is also much new material, and some unusual touches, for the two “Osannas” are not, as one might generally expect, separate fast triple-time sections (often the same music repeated) but brief and continuous, in duple time, with the second in the reduced voicing of the Benedictus.

Victoria published in 1581 a complete set of Office Hymns, including, of course, a setting of Ave maris stella. However, the present version, for 4 voices, was not published until as late as 1600. The odd verses are polyphonic, quite varied in their character, reducing to 3 voices for
“Virgo singularis”... concluding with the final verse, not as is often the case, with augmented voices, but with a change from duple to triple time. Throughout, the plainchant stamps its character firmly on the music, and this is also so in the 4-voice Magnificat octavi toni, published in 1576 in advance of the complete set Victoria issued in 1581. In this even-verse setting, the concluding verse is augmented to 6 voices, with a canon between the 2nd Tenor and the 2nd Soprano, which quotes the plainchant almost verbatim.

The Litany was a form of prayer in use in the Christian worship from an early date. It underwent a major revival in the later part of the 16th century, when many composers made fine polyphonic settings of one or other of the variety of texts which had come into use over the years. By the end of the century there were so many settings that Georg Victorinus was able to publish a Thesaurus Litaniarum in 1596, containing a large number of Litanies in various styles, from utilitarian, simple chordal to complex polyphonic. Pope Clement VIII even had to intervene, in 1601, to limit publication to certain approved texts, as by that time there were perhaps 80 different forms in circulation. Lassus and Palestrina left several settings, often to ambitious music of the highest quality; some others, such as Felice Anerio and Juan Gutierrez de Padilla, and Victoria, wrote only one. Rarely performed, Victoria’s fine setting, for 8 voices, is of a selection of the verses and responses from the standard Roman text of the Litany of Loreto. The double choir form is ideally suited to such a text, and Victoria makes full use of the antiphonal possibilities here. It concludes with a brief Agnus Dei.

Gaude Maria, for 5 voices, designated “In Festo Sanctae Mariae ad Nives” or just “De Beata Virgine”, is notable for its canon at the unison between the 2 top voices, rather in the manner of Guerrero’s famous Ave Virgo sanctissima. Congratulamini mihi, a sonorous 6-voice setting of a text designated both “In Festo Nativitas B. M” or “In visitatione B. M”, makes use of the brightness of 2 Sopranos against the rich, deeper sonorities of 2 Tenors. Palestrina commonly wrote for 2 Tenors, for example in his twenty-nine “Song of Songs” settings; however Victoria generally seems to favour a bright top register, as in this motet, and notably in his most famous work, the 1605 Officium Defunctorum.

Ne timeas Maria, for 4 voices, sets the word of the Angel at the Annunciation. Never short of imagination, even in these shorter, sometimes brief, pieces, Victoria always manages to write interesting themes, combining and recombining them, imitating from voice to voice. Every motet demonstrates a technical ease and facility that is never dull or routine. Victoria impresses us with that freshness and perfection of his music which continues to ensure his popularity with listeners and singers even 400 years after his death.

On this 400th anniversary of Victoria’s death, it is perhaps worthwhile to comment on his place in the musical ‘hall of fame’. Renowned in his own time, how is he regarded today? We may compare him to Palestrina who: “... is the oldest composer present continuously in the history of the Western art tradition since his death over 4 centuries ago.” (Clara Marvin). In contrast, other Renaissance composers sank without trace, or at best remained shadowy figures, known only to a select few during that time. And Victoria’s star dimmed too, until Pedrell’s late 19th century Complete Works revitalized interest. Today, though Victoria had a relatively small output compared to the vast compass of Palestrina, yet, ironically, it seems that a greater range of his music is regularly sung. Only a small number of works by Palestrina spring immediately to mind, but surely it is easy to more than match and surpass this for Victoria? Perhaps harmony and harmonic rhythm in Victoria’s music is closer to the major/minor tonal character of 18th, 19th and 20th century music, still the mainstream listening and playing experience of most musical people. Palestrina, with all his perfection remains yet somewhat alien and intangible to us, Victoria perhaps seems more familiar.

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Salve Regina, mater misericordiae:
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 our 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 Mary, ever Virgin.

Sancta Maria
Holy Mary, succour the wretched,
help the faint-hearted, revive the weeping,
pray for the people, intercede for the clergy,
and for the faithful feminine sex.
May all feel your help,
whoever celebrates your holy Feast.
Credo

Credo in unum Deum
Patrem omnipotentem,
factorem caeli et terrae,
visibilium omnium et invisibilium.
Et in unum Dominum, Iesum 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.
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 Pilato;
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 in Spiritum Sanctum
Dominum et vivificantem,
Qui ex Patre Filioque procedit; qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur; qui locutus est per Prophetas. Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam. Confitetur unum baptisma in remissionem mortuorum et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

Hymn: Ave maris stella
1. Ave maris stella, Dei Mater alma, Atque semper Virgo, Felix caeli porta.
2. Sumens illud Ave Gabriels ore: Funda nos in pace, Mutans Evae nomen.
3. Solve vincla reis, Profer lumen caecis, Mala nostra pelle, Bona cuncta posce.
4. Monstra te esse matrem: Sumat per te preces, Qui pro nobis natus, Tultit esse tuus.
5. Virgo singularis, Inter omnes mitis, Nos, culpis solutos, Mites fac et castos.
7. Sit laus Deo Patri, Summo Christo decus, Spiritui Sancto, Tribus honor unus. Amen.

Sanctus

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

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

Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spake by the prophets. And I believe in one holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

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

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

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

1. Hail, star of the sea, bountiful Mother of God and eternal Virgin, happy gateway to heaven.
2. By that "Ave" from the mouth of Gabriel, establish us in peace, changing Eve's name around.
3. Throw off the bonds, bring light to the blind, banish our ills, intercede for all good things.
4. Show thyself a mother, let Him receive our prayers through thee, He who was born for us and is called thy son.
5. O peerless Virgin, gentle above all others, make us, freed from sin, meek and pure.
6. Through thy perfect life, protect our way that, seeing Jesus, we may rejoice always.
7. Praise to God the Father, glory to Christ on high, and to the Holy Spirit, honour Three in One.
Magnificat octavi toni

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;
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.

Magnificat anima mea Dominum:
et exultavit spiritus meus
in Deo salutari meo.

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae:
ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes
generationes.

Quia fecit mihi magna, qui potens est:
et sanctum nomen eius.

Et misericordiae eius, a progenie in
genesis: timentibus eum.

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo:
dispersit superbos,
mente cordis sui.

Deposuit potentes de sede:
et exaltavit humiles.

Esurientes implevit 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, saeculorum. Amen.

Regina caeli a 5

Regina caeli laetare, alleluia:
quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia.
Resurrexit, sicut dixit, alleluia.
Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.

Ne timeas Maria

Ne timeas, Maria:
invenisti enim gratiam apud Dominum:
ecce concipies in utero,
et paries filium,
et vocabitur altissimi filius.

Litaniae Beatae Mariae a 8

Kyrie eleison.
Christe audi nos.
Christe exaudi nos.
Pater de caelis, Deus: miserere nobis.
Fili Redemptor mundi Deus: miserere nobis.
Spiritus Sancte Deus: miserere nobis.
Sancta Trinitas unus Deus: miserere nobis.
Sancta Maria: ora pro nobis.
Sancta Dei Genitrix: ora pro nobis.
Sancta Virgo virginum: ora pro nobis.
Mater Christi: ora pro nobis.
Mater divina gratiae: ora pro nobis.
Mater purissima: ora pro nobis.
Mater castissima: ora pro nobis.

Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia:
for He whom you were chosen to bear, alleluia.
He has risen, as He said, alleluia.
Pray for us to God, alleluia.

Fear not, Mary,
for thou hast found favour in the sight of the Lord:
behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb
and give birth to a son,
Who shall be called Son of the Highest.

Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.
God the Father of Heaven, have mercy on us.
God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.
God the Holy Ghost, have mercy on us.
Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us.
Holy Mary, pray for us.
Holy Mother of God, pray for us.
Holy Virgin of virgins, pray for us.
Mother of Christ, pray for us.
Mother of divine grace, pray for us.
Mother most pure, pray for us.
Mother most chaste, pray for us.
Virgo veneranda: ora pro nobis.
Virgo praedicanda: ora pro nobis.
Causa nostra laetitiae: ora pro nobis.
Stella matutina: ora pro nobis.
Salus infirmorum: ora pro nobis.
Desiderium collium aeternorum: ora pro nobis.
Paradisus voluptatis: ora pro nobis.
Regina Angelorum: ora pro nobis.
Regina Patriarcharum: ora pro nobis.
Regina Apostolorum: ora pro nobis.
Regina Martyrum: ora pro nobis.
Regina Confessorum: ora pro nobis.
Regina Virginum: ora pro nobis.
Regina Sanctorum omnium: ora pro nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi: parce nobis, Domine.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi: exaudi nos, Domine.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi: miserere nobis.

Virgin venerable, pray for us.
Virgin renowned, pray for us.
Cause of our joy, pray for us.
Morning star, pray for us.
Health of the sick, pray for us.
Longing for the Eternal Hills: pray for us.
Paradise of pleasure: pray for us.
Queen of Angels, pray for us.
Queen of Patriarchs, pray for us.
Queen of Apostles, pray for us.
Queen of Martyrs, pray for us.
Queen of Confessors, pray for us.
Queen of Virgins, pray for us.
Queen of all Saints, pray for us.

Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, spare us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, graciously hear us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

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 both the Granada Symphony Orchestra and the Orquesta de la Comunidad de Madrid. 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 has also 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.
After three decades of world-wide performance and recording, The Sixteen is recognised 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 Bridgewater Hall, Manchester. 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.