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Palestrina’s legacy and impact on sacred music worldwide is second to none. Composers through the centuries have studied and learnt from his gift for writing exquisite polyphony. Small wonder then that he has been called not only “the prince and father of music” but also “the saviour of church music”. At the final session of the Council of Trent, there were many discussions about the use of polyphony and whether or not it should be banned. In 1607, the composer Agostino Agazzari wrote “music of the older kind is no longer in use because of the confusion and Babel of the words”. He went on to say that this music would have come very near to being banished from the holy church by a sovereign pontiff had not Giovanni Palestrina found the remedy.

This is the first volume in our long-term project to honour Palestrina’s great art. I hasten to add that we are not endeavouring to record every note Palestrina penned – that would be more than a lifetime’s work considering he wrote 104 masses! But what we are doing is presenting each volume based around a single mass and theme relevant to that mass, in this case the Assumption, alongside some of his settings of the Song of Songs. Palestrina published 29 such settings. He apologised for possessing “light and vain ideas” and indeed “blushed and grieved” at presenting these sensual motets. Remember that the Song of Songs comes from that part of the Old Testament which was often considered too sensual and erotic to be read. It was originally Hebrew love poetry, written down possibly 300 years or so before the birth of Christ, but these are texts which in Renaissance times were used in praise of the Virgin Mary.

I have always regarded Palestrina as the master craftsman whose music composers of all ages have attempted to emulate. He shapes his music in a beautifully sonorous way using a lot of suspensions but always coming back into the line of the music. However it is this perfect craftsmanship that can sometimes make Palestrina’s music sound all too perfect and occasionally academic. We have attempted to achieve real ebb and flow in his music, not clipping the ends of phrases but allowing the music to breathe, to convey the real meaning of the words and making our breaths part of the music as a whole. There is a wealth of word painting in which to indulge, especially in his Song of Songs motets. Our aim has been to be sensitive to this wonderful poetry and inject an energy and beauty into our performances that I hope goes some way to honour Palestrina as “the celebrated light of music”. 
Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, holder of the most prestigious musical positions in the Roman Catholic Church, was by his death in 1594 regarded as the greatest composer of his time. If Helen of Troy was “the face that launched a thousand ships”, in the centuries after his death Palestrina was the composer who launched a thousand myths, and uniquely, even a full-length Romantic opera, Hans Pfitzner’s *Musikalische Legende: Palestrina*. He was portrayed, erroneously, as the archetypical solitary, tortured genius, the perfector, even the originator, of the “true” polyphonic style of the Late Renaissance, which was the basis for the subsequent progressive development and improvement of Music, and as the composer responsible for the “salvation” of church music.

Palestrina’s first biographer, the imaginative Abbé Giuseppe Baini, writing in 1828, offers the story that the *Missa Papae Marcelli* (probably Palestrina’s best known work today) was written specifically in accord with the Council of Trent’s admonition that polyphonic church music should present the text clearly; and how this Mass therefore convinced a committee of Cardinals not to abandon polyphony in favour of Gregorian chant in the celebration of the Liturgy. It is true that the Sistine Diaries record the singers of the Papal Chapel assembling in the house of a Cardinal Vitelli on the 28th April, 1565, to sing some music, including Masses, to test whether the words could be understood, “as their eminences desire”. This Mass could have been sung then; however, it is very probable that the Mass was written to celebrate the accession of Marcellus II in 1555 (he was Pope for a mere three weeks); and in style it simply reflects the general changes taking place in Palestrina’s music and in that of his contemporaries at that period. We have the advantage today of being able to judge his true achievement and his influence on the course of music history.
familiar with the music of Palestrina’s predecessors (among them Josquin des Prés, Morales, Gombert, Festa, Aniucida) and contemporaries, such as Lassus, the Anerio and Nanino brothers and Victoria. And we can see how church music changed over the century, with a tendency towards higher voicings, simpler vocal lines, and greater clarity of the text, partly influenced, it must be admitted, by the reforms of the Councils of Trent, which created a need for new music for revised and now standardised texts.

But there were other factors at work as well, not least the improvements in printing technology throughout the 16th century, which made printed music books cheaper; and the rise of a monied middle-class, an educated laity, who bought not only Books of Hours, but volumes of polyphonic music, for extra-liturgical activities, for personal or group devotions. In the early part of the century, church music had been the realm of the highly trained male professional, the music itself in obscure, arcane notation, copied in expensive manuscripts, mostly inaccessible to the amateur. By the mid-century, however there was an ever expanding market for music books, of madrigals and other secular music, and religious music too, which had to be suitable for any kind of singing group, accessible to the average man on the street.

Palestrina’s four books of Madrigals, published in 1555, 1581, 1586 and 1594, were a contribution to this market, with some success, for the first book was reprinted no less than eight times by 1605. The 1594 volume was of Madrigali Spirituali and served the same sort of purpose as his fourth book of Motets of 1583/84, (on texts from The Song of Songs), which was so successful that it had no less than 11 reprints up to 1613. One of the results of the Counter Reformation was the popularisation of informal devotions and observances outside the services of the Church. St. Philip Neri (b. Florence, 1515, d. 1595, beatified 1615) had been at the forefront of transforming Rome’s spiritual and cultural life in this way since 1564, and Palestrina’s music must have played a significant role too.

The Song of Songs has been a rich and stimulating source of texts for music in praise of the Virgin, favoured by composers, even into our own times. 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; or as St. John of the Cross alludes to it: “the exercise of love between the Soul and Jesus Christ, its Spouse”.

Yet it was hazardous territory for any who sought to go beyond the approved Latin version of the texts. Fray Luis de León, a Spaniard, was imprisoned for translating The Song into Castilian. Both St. Teresa of Ávila and St. John of the Cross were persecuted for their ecstatic writings. In Teresa’s case, she had to burn her Meditation on the Song of Songs. Clearly the Church felt that the allegories could be convincingly spiritual in Latin, but in the vernacular they would be dangerously erotic and carnal. For any writer or composer, there was a thin dividing line between spiritual ecstasy and sexual passion.

In light of this, Palestrina’s dedication of the Motettorum Quinque Vocibus Liber Quartus ex Canticis Salomonis to Gregory XIII is of interest to us. The dedication begins: ‘There are far too many poems with no other subject than love of a kind quite alien to the Christian Faith’, (“Extant nimis multarum poetarum carmina...”). Palestrina goes on to apologise for having lavished his art on such things and for having associated with others corrupted by such passions (“I would have been of their number, and I blush, and I am sad...”... “... ex eo numero aliquandi fuisses me, et erubesco, et doleo...”).

For this Palestrina has been accused of hypocrisy by some commentators; at the very least he was ambivalent. A man of the world, and not without business acumen, he had been married since 1547 to one Lucrezia Gori, with three sons born ca.1549, 1551 and 1558, two of them dying young in 1571 and 1572. His wife died suddenly in August, 1580. In November Palestrina petitioned the Pope, Gregory XIII, to be allowed to enter the Priesthood, receiving minor orders in December. However on 24th and 26th February, and on 5th March 1581, banns were published, and on 28th March, Palestrina married...
Virginia Dormoli, a young widow. His new wife brought with her a substantial dowry and an established wine and fur business, which gave Palestrina financial security for the rest of his life.

In any case it is clear Palestrina loved these texts, whatever way he experienced their meaning, for he was perhaps unique in publishing as many as 29 settings at once. and in our time these pieces have been widely appreciated, by singers and listeners alike, both for their poetry and for Palestrina’s felicitous music. In this series of recordings by The Sixteen, a selection from the set, (and also from the Offertories), will be included on each CD.

The two Offertory Motets included here, Diffusa est gratia and Assumpta est Maria a 6, come from a two-volume collection of 68 for all the seasons of the year, published by Palestrina near the end of his life in 1593. As with The Song of Songs motets, Palestrina’s favourite vocal sonority (SATB) predominates. With Lassus, who also composed a cycle, Palestrina was the first to present such texts in free-motet style; the few earlier polyphonic examples had been chant-based.

Diffusa est gratia, for the Feast of the Purification, opens with a strong motif of a rising 4th, repeated by each of the five voices in turn. Likewise Assumpta est Maria begins with a rising 5th. In both cases, Palestrina shows his sensitivity to tonality, setting out the two important notes within the mode, not in fact so far from modern tonic/dominant. Earlier composers were generally much more vague in this sense in the construction of their motifs.

Assumpta est Maria a 5, the Offertory, is of course for the Feast of the Assumption (15th August) and the eponymous six-voice Mass and Motet are for the same occasion. Neither of the latter were printed in Palestrina’s lifetime, nor afterwards, until modern editions appeared in the 19th and 20th centuries. Probably the earliest source for the Motet is the Roman Cappella Sistina choirbook seventy-six, dating from 1585-1599. Both pieces are almost certainly late works, written by a great master at the height of his powers, demonstrating his concern for sonority and colour, diversity of voice groupings and contrasts. Notable too is the sophistication and the naturalness of his word setting.

Once again, as with so many Marian pieces by composers throughout the Renaissance, we note the influence of The Song of Songs. The Motet Assumpta est Maria a 6 takes its text from several plainchant antiphons, and includes this well-known quotation from The Song at the beginning of part 2: Quae est ista...acies ordinata? The melodic outlines of the motifs used by Palestrina are derived from or influenced by the plainchant (as with the rising phrase sung by the sopranos at the very beginning). The choice of voicing, with two tenors, gives a solidity and richness to the middle of the texture, which balances well with the brilliance of the two sopranos. Palestrina repeats the substantial closing section of part I (beginning at the triple-time Gaudete...) at the close of part II, so that the overall shape and balance is very satisfying.

The Mass Assumpta est Maria is based mostly on musical material from the Motet. For instance the opening sequence at part two of the Motet is reworked in several places in the Mass, such as at Christe and at Benedictus. Perhaps 50 of Palestrina’s 105 Masses use this ‘parody’ technique, borrowing and rearranging, developing musical motifs and textures taken from another composition.

The Salve Regina, which opens this recital, was printed in the fifth book of Motets of 1584, and is one of five for 5, 6, 8 or 12 voices attributed to Palestrina. It is through-composed, (rather than alternatim polyphony/chant), as so many of these settings were by the end of the century. After the opening chant incipit, it proceeds in the style of a motet in two parts. The chant is as usual paraphrased in all the vocal lines, and the verse structure is still clearly apparent in the music. The words Et iesum are emphasised (as was the fashion of the time): Palestrina momentarily silences all the voices, then continues with three bars of almost plain chords (likewise at O clemens) for this important part of the text. The Antiphon is scored, once again, for Palestrina’s favourite SATTB voice combination.

With the growth in the use of polyphony in churches from the late 15th century on, the diverse uses of the Salve in the Liturgy meant settings of it soon far exceeded in number those of the three other great Marian Antiphons. As the changes
instigated by the Council of Trent filtered through to the dioceses, composers now were also required to give equal emphasis to Ave Regina, Alma Redemptoris and Regina caeli. Ave Maria too was honoured by composers with more settings, a variety being provided for differing occasions and resources. Palestrina wrote four versions of both Ave Regina cælorum and Ave Maria; Lassus was rather more prolific, certainly with Regina caeli.

The Ave Regina recorded here, once again with two tenor parts, is chant-based, in elegant imitative polyphony throughout the two partes. All the five voices allude to the chant without any lengthy quotation. Ave Maria is in brighter voicing, with two sopranos for variety. The opening theme is instantly familiar, imitated in all voices, quoting the first four notes of the well-known chant. The flattened fifth note of the chant is slightly delayed, until the 4th bar (soprano two) and then again until the 8th (tenor), an effective subtlety typical of Palestrina, and is only sung by these two voices. Elsewhere reference to the chant is by allusion, fragmented in some or all of the voices rather than direct quotation.

Palestrina’s word setting is exemplary: his subtle variation in voice groupings, in note-against-note and more irregular polyphonic intertwining of the parts, permits the text to stay at the forefront of our experience of the music. For example, at “fructus ventris tui”, the three lower voices sing note-against-note; Palestrina then repeats the text in the three upper voices, varied by decoration with a counterpoint in the tenor. Similarly at “Regina caeli” and “O Mater Dei”, the three lower voices sing first. And at “Ora pro nobis” all five voices come together, with the topmost voice, singing at the top of its range, slightly delayed to great effect.

Palestrina was, and is, renowned for the greatness of his Mass settings, Lassus more so for his Motets; but surely neither Lassus, nor anyone else, wrote anything better than these ravishing pieces.

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Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, che tenne le posizioni musicali più prestigiose all'interno della Chiesa Cattolica, alla sua morte, avvenuta nel 1594, veniva considerato il più grande compositore del suo tempo. Se Elena di Troia fu “il volto che lanciò mille navi”, nei secoli a venire Palestrina fu il compositore che lanciò mille miti, e, singolarmente, anche un’intera opera Romantica, cioè Musikalische Legende: Palestrina di Hans Pfiztner. Venne erroneamente ritratto, quale l’archetipo del genio tormentato e solitario, il perfezionatore, anzi l’originatore del “vero” stile polifonico del Tardo Rinascimento, che fu la base del susseguente sviluppo e miglioramento della Musica, e quale il compositore responsabile della “salvezza” della musica sacra.

Il primo biografo di Palestrina, il fantasioso abate Giuseppe Baini, scrivendo nel 1828, offre la storia che la Missa Papae Marcelli (oggigiorno il lavoro meglio conosciuto di Palestrina) fu scritto specificamente secondo le ammonizioni del Concilio di Trento, che la musica polifonica ecclesiastica presentasse il testo in maniera chiara; inoltre questa Messa, secondo l’Abate, convinse un gruppo di Cardinali a non abbandonare la polifonia in favore del Canto Gregoriano nella celebrazione della Liturgia. È ben vero che i Diari della Sistina riportano i cantori della Cappella Papale riuniti nella casa del Cardinal Vitelli il 28 aprile 1565, per cantare della musica, tra cui delle Messe, e per comprovare se le parole venissero capite, “come desiderano le loro Eminenze”. Questa Messa potrebbe essere stata cantata allora; Comunque è molto probabile che la Messa fosse stata scritta per celebrare l’accessione di Marcelllo II nel 1555 (fu Papa per 3 sole settimane); e nello stile riflette semplicemente i cambiamenti generali, presenti nella musica di Palestrina e dei suoi contemporanei, in quel periodo di tempo. Oggi abbiamo il vantaggio di conoscere bene la musica dei suoi predecessori (tra i quali nominiamo Josquin de Près, Morales, Gombert, Festa, Animuccia), e dei suoi contemporanei, quali Lasso, Anerio, e i fratelli Nanino e Victoria. E possiamo vedere
come la musica ecclesiastica è cambiata nel corso di un secolo, con la tendenza verso i registri acuti, linee vocali più semplici, e una maggiore chiarezza del testo, in parte influenzata, deve essere ammesso, dalle Riforme del Concilio di Trento, che creò la necessità di musica nuova per un testo revisionato e standardizzato.

C’erano però anche altri fattori in gioco, e non di meno i miglioramenti nella tecnica della stampa attraverso il XVII sec, che resero più economici i libri di musica stampati; e l’ascesa di un ceto medio affluente, un laicato colto, che non solo comprava i libri delle ore, ma anche volumi di musica polifonica per attività extra liturgiche, per uso devozionale personale o per gruppi di preghiera. Agli inizi del secolo la musica ecclesiastica era stata il dominio dell’assai istruito professionista, di sesso maschile, e ecclesiastica era stata interpretata fin d’allora, sia da ebrei originariamente poesia d’amore ebraica, che Cristiani, quale un’allegoria religiosa, venne annotata forse 300 anni a.C., ed è stata interpretata fin d’allora, sia da Ebrei che Cristiani, quale un’allegoria religiosa, nonostante il suo carattere erotico; nella Liturgia Cattolica come descrizione dell’amore tra Cristo e la Chiesa, Maria e il Figlio, o il fedele e Maria; oppure nel modo in cui San Giovanni della Croce vi si riferisce “L’esercizio dell’amore tra l’Anima e Gesù Cristo, suo Sposo”.

Eppure era territorio pericoloso per chiunque cercasse di andar oltre la approvata versione latina del testo. Fra Luis de León, spagnolo, fu imprigionato per aver tradotto il Cantico in castigliano. Ambedue Teresa d’Avila e San Giovanni della Croce furono perseguitati per i loro scritti estatici. Nel caso di Teresa, lei dovette bruciare le sue Meditazioni sul Cantico dei Cantici. È chiaro che la Chiesa sentiva che tali allegorie potevano essere spirituali in maniera convincente in latino, mentre nel vernacolo sarebbero diventate pericolosamente erotiche e carnali. Per ogni scrittore o compositore che fosse, c’era una sottile linea di separazione tra l’estasi spirituale e la passione sessuale.

Il Cantico dei Cantici è stato fonte ricca e stimolante di ispirazione testuale per musiche a lode della Vergine, privilegiato dai compositori anche nei nostri tempi. Originariamente poesia d’amore ebraica, venne annotata forse 300 anni a.C., ed è stata interpretata fin d’allora, sia da Ebrei che Cristiani, quale un’allegoria religiosa, nonostante il suo carattere erotico; nella
Ad ogni modo é ben chiaro che Palestrina amava questi testi, in qualunque modo ne apprezzasse il significato, in quanto fu forse unico nel pubblicarne ventinove contemporanee interpretazioni musicali. Ai nostri tempi inoltre questi pezzi sono stati grandemente apprezzati, dai cantanti quanto dagli ascoltatori, sia per la loro poesia che per la ben appropriata musica di Palestrina. In questa nuova serie di registrazioni di The Sixteen, una scelta selezionata dal gruppo (e anche dagli Offertori) verrá inclusa in ogni CD.

I due Mottetti da offertorio qui inclusi, Diffusa est gratia ed Assumpta est Maria a 6 derivano da una collezione in due volumi di sessant’otto mottetti, per tutte le stagioni dell’anno, pubblicati da Palestrina verso la fine della sua vita nel 1593. Come per i mottetti del Cantico dei Cantici, predominava la preferita sonorità vocale di Palestrina (SaTTB). L’insieme a lasso, che ne compose un ciclo, Palestrina fu il primo a presentare tali testi in stile di mottetto libero; i più antichi esempi polifonici erano basati su canoni gregoriani.

Diffusa est gratia per la Festa della Purificazione, si apre con un forte tema di quarta ascendente ripetuta, a turno, da ognuna delle cinque voci. Similmente Assumpta est Maria comincia con una quinta ascendente. In tutti e due i casi Palestrina mostra la sua sensibilità alla tonalità, esponendo le due note importanti all’interno del modo, infatti non così distante dal moderno rapporto tonica/dominante. I compositori precedenti erano in generale molto più vaghi in questo senso nella costruzione dei temi.

L’offertorio Assumpta est Maria a 5 è naturalmente per la Festa dell’Assunzione (15 Agosto) e la Messa e Mottetto a sei voci, che portano lo stesso titolo, sono per la medesima occasione. Nessuno dei due fu stampato durante la vita di Palestrina, e nemmeno dopo, fino a che edizioni moderne ne apparvero nel XVIII e XX secolo. Probabilmente la fonte più antica del mottetto é nel libro del Coro 76 della Cappella Sistina datato 1585-1599. Ambedue i pezzi sono quasi certamente opere tarde, scritte da un gran maestro al sommo delle proprie capacità creative, che rivela la sua attenzione a sonorità e colore, diversità di raggruppamenti di voce e contrasti. Notevole anche é la sofisticatezza e la naturalezza della messa in musica del testo.

Ancora una volta, come accade per molti pezzi Mariani del Rinascimento, notiamo l’influsso del Cantico dei Cantici. Il testo del mottetto Assumpta est Maria a 6 viene ripreso da varie antifone in canto gregoriano, e include questa ben nota citazione dal Cantico all’inizio della seconda parte: Quae est ista…acies ordinata? La linea melodica dei temi usati da Palestrina é derivata o influenzata dal gregoriano (come nella frase ascendente cantata dai soprani all’inizio). La scelta dei registri, con due tenori, rende una solidità e ricchezza al centro della tessitura, che si equilibra bene con la brillantezza dei soprani. Palestrina ripete la notevole sezione di chiusura della prima parte (che comincia al tempo ternario di Gaudete...) alla fine della parte seconda cosicché la forma e l’equilibrio del tutto sono assai soddisfacenti.

La Messa Assumpta est Maria é basata per lo piú su materiale musicale dal mottetto. Per esempio la sequenza di apertura della seconda parte del Mottetto viene rielaborata in diversi punti della Messa, come per esempio al Christe e al Benedictus. Forse ben cinquanta delle centocinque messe di Palestrina usano la tecnica della parodia, prendendo a prestito e riarrangiando, sviluppando motivi musicali e tessiture prese da altre composizioni.

Il Salve regina, con cui si apre questo recital fu stampato nel quinto libro dei mottetti del 1584, ed é uno dei cinque a 5, 6, 8 o a 12 voci attribuiti a Palestrina. È composto integralmente (invece che alternando polifonia e gregoriano) come erano molte composizioni su tale testo, verso la fine del secolo. Dopo l’incipit gregoriano d’apertura, procede nello stile di un mottetto a due parti. Il gregoriano viene come al solito parafrazato in tutte le linee vocali, e la struttura del verso é ancora chiaramente apparente nella musica. Le parole Et Jesum vengono enfatizzate (secondo la moda del tempo): Palestrina momentaneamente mette a tacere tutte le voci, poi continua con tre battute di quasi semplici accordi (come in O Clemens ) per questa parte importante del testo. L’antifona é ancora una volta messa in musica per SATTB, la combinazione vocale preferita da Palestrina.

Con l’accrescere dell’uso di polifonia nelle chiese dal tardo XV sec. in poi, l’uso disparato del Salve nella Liturgia significò che tali versioni presto eccedettero in
numero quelle delle tre altre grandi antifone Mariane. Mentre i cambiamenti istigati dal Concilio di Trento filtravano fino alle diocesi, ai compositori veniva richiesto di dare enfasi uguale all’Ave Regina, Alma Redemptoris e Regina Caeli. Anche l’Ave Maria venne onorata dai compositori con più messe in musica, e una svariata quantità veniva creata per sopprimerne a diverse occasioni e risorse. Palestrina scrisse quattro versioni per ambedue l’Ave Regina Coelorum e l’Ave Maria. Lasso fu assai più prolifico, certamente con il Regina Caeli.

L’Ave Regina qui registrato ancora una volta con due parti per tenore, è basato sul gregoriano, in un’elegante polifonia imitativa per tutte le due parti. Tutte le cinque voci alludono al canto gregoriano senza alcuna lunga citazione.

L’Ave Maria è in una vocalità di registri più chiara, con due soprani, per cambiare. Il tema di apertura è immediatamente familiare, imitato in tutte le voci, citando le prime quattro note del ben noto canto gregoriano. La quinta nota del canto, abbassata di un semitono, del gregoriano è leggermente ritardata, fino alla quarta battuta (secondo soprano) e poi ancora fino all’ottava (tenore), una sottigliezza d’effetto tipica di Palestrina, ed è cantata soltanto da queste due voci. Ogni riferimento al gregoriano, altrove, vien fatto per allusione, frammentato in alcune se non in tutte le voci, piuttosto che in una citazione diretta. La messa in musica del testo di Palestrina è esemplare: la minima variazione nel mettere insieme le voci, nel nota-contro-nota, e negli intrecci polifonici delle parti più irregolari, permette al testo di restare all’avanguardia del nostro apprezzamento della musica. Per esempio, al “fructus ventris tui”, le tre voci inferiori cantano nota-contro-nota; Palestrina poi ripete il testo nelle tre voci superiori, variate con abbellimenti e un contrappunto nel tenore. Similmente nel Regina Caeli e nel Mater Dei le tre voci inferiori cantano prima. E all’Ora pro nobis, tutte le cinque voci si riuniscono insieme, con la più acuta, cantando alla sommità dell’estensione, con appena un ritardo, per ottenere un maggiore effetto.

Palestrina fu, ed è ancora, rinomato per la magnificenza delle sue Messe, Lasso più per i motetti; ma di sicuro né Lasso né alcun altro compositore, scrisse mai niente che potesse essere migliore di questi pezzi affascinanti.

Salve Regina


Hail, Queen 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.
Assumpta est Maria

Assumpta est Maria in caelum: gaudent Angeli, laudantes benedictum Dominum.

Gaudete et exsultate omnes recti corde. Quia hodie Maria Virgo cum Christo regnat in aeternum.

Quae est ista quae prograditur quasi aurora consurgens, pulchra ut luna, electa ut sol, terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata?

Gaudete et exsultate omnes recti corde. Quia hodie Maria Virgo cum Christo regnat in aeternum.

Kyrie

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

Lord have mercy on us.
Christ have mercy on us.
Lord have mercy on us.

Gloria


Credo

Credo in unum Deum Patrem omnipotentem, factorem caeli et terrae, I believe in God the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,
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,  
consubstantalem 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  
judicare 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

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.  
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 believe in the Holy Ghost  
the Lord and giver of life,  
Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son;  
Who with the Father and the Son together

adoratur et conglorificatur;  
qui locutus est per Prophetas.  
Et unam sanctam catholicam  
et apostolicam ecclesiam.  
Confiteor unam baptismam  
in remissionem peccatorum.  
Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum  
et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

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

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

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

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

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

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.
SONG OF SONGS  ~ nos. 9-11

5 Tota pulchra es, amica mea

All fair thou art, my love, there is no fault in thee.
Come forth from Lebanon, my bride, come from Lebanon, come, thou shalt be crowned, come from the peak of Amana, from the heights of Sanir and Hermon, from the lairs of lions and the mountains of the leopards.

(Canticum Canticorum IV, 7-8)

9 Ave Regina caelorum

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

Veni de Libano, sponsa mea,
veni de Libano, veni coronaberis,
de capite Amana, de vertice Sanir et Hermon,
de cubilibus leonum, de montibus pardorum.

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

10 Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea

Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my bride, thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, and with one hair of thy neck. How beautiful are thy breasts, my sister, my bride. Thy breasts are more beautiful than wine, and the fragrance of thy scent is above all perfumes.

11 Sicut lilium inter spinas

As the lily among the thorns, so is my love among the maidens. As the apple tree among the woods, so is my beloved among young men. I sat beneath the shadows of him whom I desired, and his fruit was sweet to my tongue.


(Canticum Canticorum IV, 7-8)


(Canticum Canticorum IV, 9-10)

Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias. Sicut malus inter ligna silvarum, sic dílectus meus inter filios. Sub umbra illius quem desideraveram sedi, et fructus eius dulcis gutturi meo.

(Canticum Canticorum II, 2-3)
Diffusa est gratia

Grateful praise pours forth from your lips, since God has blessed you for eternity, and through the age of ages.

Assumpta est Maria a 5 (Offertory)

Mary has been taken up to heaven: the Angels rejoice, they bless the Lord praising him. Alleluia.

Ave Maria

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord be with you. Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Queen of Heaven, sweet and faithful, O Mother of God, pray for us sinners, that we may see thee with the chosen.

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. In 2011 the group launched a new training programme for young singers called Genesis Sixteen. Aimed at 18 to 23 year-olds, this is the UK's first fully-funded choral programme for young singers designed specifically to bridge the gap from student to professional practitioner.

**Soprano** Julie Cooper, Grace Davidson, Sally Dunkley, Kirsty Hopkins, Alexandra Kidgell, Charlotte Mobbs
**Alto** Ian Aitkenhead, David Clegg, William Missin, Christopher Royall
**Tenor** Simon Berridge, Jeremy Budd/Tom Raskin, Mark Dobell, Matthew Long
**Bass** Ben Davies, Eamonn Dougan, Tim Jones, Rob Macdonald

For further information about recordings on CORO or live performances and tours by The Sixteen, call: +44 (0) 20 7936 3420 or email: coro@thesixteen.org.uk

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