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Save for a couple of mainstays of the cathedral repertoire (the carol *Dormi Jesu* and the *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis* in A flat), Edmund Rubbra’s choral music is shamefully little-known and seldom performed. His music is often harmonically challenging and vocally taxing yet, ultimately, so rewarding both for the performer and listener.

I first encountered Rubbra’s music as a chorister at Canterbury Cathedral, hence the inclusion on this recording of his *Missa Cantuariensis*—fabulously sonorous double choir writing, but my distinct memory was of the humour of the Gloria. I recall us all turning the pages over at great speed; if we hadn’t, we would have missed the next bar or entry. Not only is Rubbra’s metronome marking sprightly to say the least (\( \text{Tempo} = 138 \) and rising to 152), he also writes it in the longest note values possible (breves) and, since it’s for double choir, each page flies past within seconds – after all, it is *Allegro con brio*!

It is Rubbra’s love of counterpoint and his clever working of melody that makes him stand out from many of his contemporaries but, for me, the single attribute that makes his music so special is his sense of tonality. Enharmonic shifts are in abundance and his harmonic sense is always interesting but made very special by the way he spaces the chords. One need only look at *Amicus meus* from the Maundy Thursday Tenebrae – all parts to be sung softly with the tenor line to the fore, but very low in the register, resulting in an extraordinarily effective sonority. His subtle use of dynamics in general is quite fascinating and highly rewarding. It is in these settings of the Tenebrae Nocturns that we can feel Rubbra’s deep Catholic faith. They are intensely personal, highly charged with emotion which is at times mystical and at others seriously dramatic.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Adrian Yardley for not only making this recording possible, but also for giving me wonderful insights into his father’s music and indeed introducing me to so much of it.
EDMUND RUBBRA (1901-1986)

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Total playing time 73.11

Edmund Rubbra
photograph: Jane Bown
EDMUND RUBBRA

He was a pupil of Holst and Vaughan Williams, a close friend of Finzi, his music was performed at the coronation of Elizabeth II, and he was hailed by Adrian Boult as a composer of 'masterpieces,' yet his name – Edmund Rubbra – is today all but unknown. Why?

It is an almost impossible question, partly because there are too many answers and partly because there are none at all. Though a talented and idiosyncratic musician, Rubbra (1901-86) was, in many ways, the antithesis of the popular idea of a classical composer: working class, modest to a fault, a man who steadfastly – through no overt calculation or self-positioning – refused to play the public game, as many of his contemporaries did. It was Boult, again, who put his finger on this defining aspect of Rubbra's character, describing a composer 'who had never made any effort to popularise anything he has done'.

Rubbra's is a story of success against the odds, but his is a quiet victory, one that rejects assimilation into the 'working-class hero' narrative his life so clearly suggests. Born in Northampton in 1901 in a 'small, box-like, red-brick house', Rubbra was the child of keen amateur musicians – a mother who often performed solos with the local church choir, and a father who, though he couldn't read music, picked out popular tunes by ear at the piano.

But while they encouraged the young Rubbra's studies in music, his parents needed the boy's spare time to supplement the 'meagre' family income, first by working as an errand boy, and later by leaving school at 14, first to join the office of a boot and shoe manufacturers and then working as a clerk for a local railway company. It was dogged determination that kept Rubbra at his music through his teens. The composer recalls that it was only 'by getting up very early in the morning and working in the evening I managed somehow to keep up with my studies in harmony, counterpoint, piano and organ'.

But continue he did and, influenced by the unusually fertile amateur musical scene in Northampton (the same town that also produced Malcolm Arnold and William Alwyn), he developed a fascination with the music of Cyril Scott, and at the age of just 17 organised a concert of his music. The composer himself heard of the event, and afterwards took Rubbra on as a pupil. In less than two years he won a scholarship to study with Holst at University College, Reading, and, shortly after, another to the Royal College of Music, securing his future as a professional musician.

Composition was just a small part of Rubbra's early work, fitted in alongside his roles as a pianist both for theatre and ballet, and as a music journalist and critic. It was a model of part-time composing that would continue throughout his life. A promising recital career developed through the 1930s, but was cut short by the war. In 1941 Rubbra was called up, but soon his duties took a musical turn. Ordered to form a music group to entertain the troops, he duly did, and The Army Classical Music Group was born, performing across the UK and internationally, before evolving post-war to become the Rubbra-Gruenberg-Pleeth Trio, only disbanding in the 1950s. From 1947
Paul Klee’s notion of drawing as ‘taking a line for a walk’ finds its musical echo in Rubbra’s music. Even his symphonies unfold with an organic spontaneity that is as unexpected as it is appealing. It is only on subsequent listens that the deeper contrapuntal and developmental processes at work become evident, lightly worn as they are by pieces whose lyricism is only their outer garment.

While Rubbra is known for his orchestral works, leaving 11 symphonies completed at his death, choral music was a constant throughout his career, and a genre of particular importance for a composer of strong spiritual conviction, who found himself drawn to the Eastern mysticism that so fascinated both Holst and Cyril Scott, and who would later convert to Catholicism in 1947.

‘I’m old-fashioned enough to believe,’ Rubbra himself explained, ‘that the highest function of music is to release one from personal preoccupation in order to know something of the Divine forces that shape all existence.’

Of the choral works recorded here, one (the Missa Cantuariensis) sets the Anglican liturgy, one the Catholic (Nine Tenebrae Motets), while the two groups of motets take a broader approach to spirituality, drawing respectively on the English metaphysical poets (Five Motets) and a selection of psalms, Biblical passages and sacred verse (Three Motets). It’s music that charts the shifting and developing of an intensely personal faith over almost three decades.

Though Rubbra is best-known for his orchestral works, leaving 11 symphonies completed at his death, choral music was a constant throughout his career, and a genre of particular importance for a composer of strong spiritual conviction, who found himself drawn to the Eastern mysticism that so fascinated both Holst and Cyril Scott, and who would later convert to Catholicism in 1947.

Rubbra himself explained it best: ‘I believe music is in the subconscious waiting for us to discover it; that the composer’s task is not the creation of something new, but actually the discovery of something that already exists.’
effective, especially when allied to an imitative texture that pays explicit homage to Renaissance polyphony – a combination of scholarly order and expressive spontaneity that characterises so much of Rubbra’s writing.

But in case all this seems too slight, too painterly, Rubbra juxtaposes it with _Vain wits and eyes_ – a piece of contrapuntal mastery so assured that, in barely more than a minute of music, it conjures not only the chattering vanity of the everyday, but does so in two separate four-voice canons sustained across the two choirs. It’s skill all the more exhilarating for being so lightly worn.

Both the double-choir texture of _Vain wits_ and the Tudor polyphony of _Eternitie_ find a more substantial echo some ten years later in the _Missa Cantuariensis_ (1945). This largest of Rubbra’s five Mass settings was commissioned for the spacious acoustic of Canterbury Cathedral, and it is a setting that places aural drama to the fore. The composer demands that his two choirs be ‘spatially separate’ to heighten their interplay – the tension between the competing and overlapping waves of sound (Kyrie), and ultimately their resolution into a single unified force (Gloria). The canonic Agnus is another example of Rubbra’s contrapuntal skill, a miracle of carefully crafted textures designed (even in the Canterbury acoustic) to create a texture translucent enough to let the listener hear the detail of its many layers.

Unity is achieved though the Mass by rather unusual means. Each movement begins on the note G, before heading off in its own direction. It is, as the composer explained, ‘based on G, but is not in G’. More potent a unifying force, perhaps, are the modal harmonies that dominate throughout – an anticipation, and later an echo of the Credo, with its strong sense of Gregorian chant. This movement is the heart of the Mass, set apart by the sudden presence of the organ. It is a startling, almost incongruous gesture, but it’s also one that underlines the difference between the collective act of faith represented by the Credo and the personal, singular prayers of the rest of the Mass.

Written in 1952 to mark the 250th anniversary of the Friends’ School at Saffron Walden, the _Three Motets_ are a triptych of compact miniatures. Compared to the expansive, festal _Missa Cantuariensis_ they seem almost terse. But, once again, the austerity of word-setting that is largely syllabic, and the almost recitative-like simplicity of _Let us now praise famous men_, is balanced by the interest of fretful harmonies that refuse to settle (just look at the sideways glances and shifts of _There is a spirit_ and the textural interest of the relationship between the individual (a solo soprano, with her own separate text) and the collective, the choir who chant _The Beatitudes_ beneath her in _There is a spirit_. Counterpoint makes a welcome return in the final motet, _Except the Lord build the house_, in another sophisticated nod to Rubbra’s Tudor forebears – a clever take on an inverted canon.

Rubbra’s conversion to Catholicism in 1947 would change more than just his religion, as the nine _Tenebrae Motets_ so potently demonstrate. These dark, troubled texts, taken from the service of Matins on Maundy Thursday, carry huge emotional weight – representing the nadir not just of Holy Week but the Church year. It’s this extremity, this desperate searching after spiritual light that draws from Rubbra some of his most powerful music – works whose harmonic daring, equal to anything by Poulenc or Frank Martin, gives the lie to any who would call him a musical reactionary.
With ten years dividing the motets of the First Nocturn (1951) from the Second and Third (1961), the works were not conceived as a coherent liturgical set, but, gathered together by the composer under a single opus number, there is some suggestion that he did view them as a complete triptych.

Yet each trio of motets also represents a dramatic arc in itself, with the central movement offering an intimacy, a fragility both of text and music, not seen in the framing panels. In Tristis est anima mea, for example, a solo voice, rendered in deceitful chromatic convulsions, abandons Christ in the garden (‘Vos fugam’), a wonderfully vivid portrait of human weakness. In the Second Nocturn’s Judas mercator pessimus the horror of betrayal is captured in insistent augmented fourths, awkward and increasingly hysterical as they rise higher in the voices. Against this discomfort is set the illusory reassurance of the suddenly consonant Versicle (‘Si natus...’), in which the music briefly muses that it might have been better had Judas never been born.

Dominating the Third Nocturn is the first movement Eram quasi agnus innocens, in which Rubbra uses the simplest of musical tools – a scalar phrase, four-part texture – to capture with painful specificity the tensions of a text that sets the ‘innocent lamb’ of Christ (represented in the sudden stab of a semitone clash at ‘agnus’) against enemies whose musical words are so seductive (‘Venite’) that even we who know their horror cannot resist their seeming sweetness. As a gesture it is pure Rubbra: succinct, restrained, but dramatically telling, deploying the sparsest of musical tools to powerful spiritual ends.

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2016

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

TENEBRAE – First Nocturn Op. 72, Nos. 1-3

1. In monte Oliveti
Soloists: Kirsty Hopkins soprano, Kim Porter alto, Mark Dobell tenor

Responsorium:
In monte Oliveti oravit ad Patrem:
Pater si fieri potest transeat a me calix iste.
Spiritus quidem promptus est caro autem infirma.

Versus:
Vigilate et orate ut non intretis in tentationem.
Spiritus quidem promptus est caro autem infirma.

Responsor:
He prayed to his Father on Mount Olivet:
Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.
The Spirit indeed is ready but the flesh is weak.

Verse:
Watch and pray, that ye may not enter into temptation.
The Spirit indeed is ready but the flesh is weak.
2. *Tristis est anima mea*

Soloist: Kirsty Hopkins soprano

*Responsorium:*

*Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem:*

*sustainete hic, et vigilate mecum:*

*nunc videbitis turbam, quae circumdabit me.*

*Vos fugam capietis, et ego vadam immolari pro vobis.*

*Versus:*

*Ecce appropinquat hora, et Filius hominis tradetur in manus peccatorum.*

*Vos fugam capietis, et ego vadam immolari pro vobis.*

My soul is sorrowful to death:

stay here and watch with me:

now ye shall see a multitude that will surround me.

Ye shall run away, and I will go to be sacrificed for you.

Verse:

Behold the time draws near, and the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of sinners.

Ye shall run away, and I will go to be sacrificed for you.

3. *Ecce vidimus eum*

*Responsorium:*

*Ecce vidimus eum non habentem speciem, neque decorum:*

*aspectus eius in eo non est:*

*hic peccata nostra portavit, et pro nobis dolet:*

*ipse autem vulneratus est, propter iniquitates nostras,*

*cuius livore sanati sumus.*

*Versus:*

*Vere languores nostros ipse tulit et dolores nostros ipse portavit.*

*Cuius livore sanati sumus.*

Behold we have seen him disfigured and without beauty:

his aspect is gone from him:

he has borne our sins and suffered for us:

and he was wounded for our iniquities,

and by his stripes we are healed.

Verse:

He has truly borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows.

And by his stripes we are healed.
THREE MOTETS Op. 76, Nos. 1-3

1. *Let us now praise famous men*

Soloist: Daniel Collins *alto*

Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us. Such as did bear rule in their kingdoms, men renowned for their power. Leaders of the people by their counsels and by their knowledge. Such as found out musical tunes, and recited verses in writing. All these were honoured in their generations, and were the glory of their times. And some there be which have no memorial; who are perished as though they had never been. Their bodies are buried in peace; but their name liveth for evermore.

*Ecclesiasticus 44*

2. *There is a spirit*

Soloist: Julie Cooper *soprano*

_Solo soprano_

There is a spirit which I feel that delights to do no evil, nor to revenge any wrong, but delights to endure all things, in hope to enjoy its own in the end.

Its hope is to outlive all wrath and contention and to weary out all exaltation and cruelty. It sees to the end of all temptations. If it be betrayed it bears it, for its ground and spring is the mercies and forgiveness of God.

Its crown is meekness, its life is everlasting love unfeigned; it takes its kingdom with entreaty and not with contention and keeps it by lowliness of mind. In God alone it can rejoice.

Praise the Lord, O my soul.

_Main choir_

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek:
for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness:
for they shall be filled.
Blessed are the merciful:
for they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart:
for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers:
for they shall be called the children of God.
Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake:
for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.
Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you
and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.

Thou wast with me when I fled from the face of mine enemies:
then didst Thou warn me in the night:
Thou carriedst me in Thy power into the hiding place Thou hadst prepared for me;
there Thou coverdst me with Thy hand,
that in time Thou mightst bring me forth a rock before all the world.
When I was weak Thou stayedst me with Thy hand,
that in Thy time Thou mightst present me to the world in Thy strength,
in which I stand and cannot be moved.

Adapted by the composer from James Nayler (Early Quaker writer, 1616-60) and Matthew 5: 3-11

3. Except the Lord build the house

Except the Lord build the house,
they labour in vain that build it;
except the Lord keep the city,
the watchman waketh but in vain.

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us,
but unto Thy name give glory.
We will bless the Lord
from this time forth and for evermore.

Psalms 127 &115

TENEBRAE – Second Nocturn Op. 72, Nos. 4-6

4. Amicus meus

Responsorium:
Amicus meus osculi me tradidit signo.
Quem osculatus fuero, ipse est, tenete eum:
hoc malum fecit signum, qui per osculum adimplevit homicidium.
Infelix praetermisit pretium sanguinis, et in fine laqueo se suspendit.

Versus:
Bonum erat ei, si natus non fuit homo ille.
Infelix praetermisit pretium sanguinis, et in fine laqueo se suspendit.

Responsory:
My friend betrayed me with a kiss.
Whom I shall kiss, that is he: hold him fast.
That was the wicked token which he gave, who by a kiss accomplished murder.
Unhappy man, he relinquished the price of blood, and in the end hanged himself.
Verse:
It had been good for that man if he had never been born.
Unhappy man, he relinquished the price of blood, and in the end hanged himself.

Responsorium:
Unus ex discipulis meis tradet me hodie:
vae illi per quem tradar ego.
Melius illi erat si natus non fuisset.

Responsory:
Judas mercator pessimus,
osculo petiit Dominum:
ille, ut agrus innocens,
non negavit Judae osculum.

Denario numero
Christum Judaeis tradidit.
Versus:
Melius illi erat si natus non fuisset.

Verse:
It were better for him had he never been born.

6. Unus ex discipulis

Responsorium:
Unus ex discipulis meis tradet me hodie:
vae illi per quem tradar ego.
Melius illi erat si natus non fuisset.

Versus:
Qui intingit mecum manum in paropside,
hic me tradirerus est in manus peccatorum.
Melius illi erat si natus non fuisset.

Responsory:
Judas, the vile merchant,
required a kiss from the Lord:
who, like an innocent lamb,
did not deny the kiss to Judas.
For a large amount of denarii,
he betrayed Christ to the Jews.

Verse:
It were better for him had he never been born.
FIVE MOTETS Op. 37, Nos. 1-5

1. Eternitie

O yeares! and Age! Farewell:
Behold I go,
Where I do know
Infinitie to dwell. (Farewell.)

And these mine eyes shall see
All times, how they
Are lost in the sea
Of vast Eternitie. (O yeares! and Age! Farewell.)

Where never Moone shall sway
The Starres; but she,
And Night, shall be
Drown’d in one endless Day. (Farewell.)

Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

2. Vain wits and eyes

Vain wits and eyes
Leave, and be wise:
Abuse not, shun not holy fire,
But with true tears wash off your mire.
Tears and these flames will soon grow kinde,
And mix an eye-salve for the blinde.

Tears cleanse and supple without fail,
And fire will purge your callous veyl,
Then comes the light which when you spy,
And see your nakedness thereby,
Praise him who dealt his gifts so free
In tears to you, in fire to me.

Henry Vaughan (1621-95)

3. A Hymn to God the Father

Wilt thou forgive that sinne where I begunne,
Which is my sinne, though it were done before?
Wilt thou forgive those sinnes, through which I runne,
And do run still: though still I do deplore?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For, I have more.

Will thou forgive that sinne by which I’have wonne
Others to sinne? And made my sinne their doore?
Wilt thou forgive that sinne which I did shunne
A yeare or two, but wallowed in a score?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For, I have more.

I have a sinne of feare, that when I have spunne
My last thred, I shall perish on the shore:
Sweare by thyself that at my death thy sonne
Shall shine as he shines now and heretofore;
And having done that, thou hast done,
I feare no more.

John Donne (1572-1631)
4. The Search

Leave, leave, thy gadding thoughts;
Who pores
and spies
Still out of doors,

descries
Within them nought.

The skinne, and shell of things
Though faire,
are not
Thy wish, nor pray'r,
but got
By meer Despair
of wings.

To rack old Elements,
or Dust
and say
Sure here he must
needs stay,
Is not the way,

nor just.

Search well another world; Who studies this,
Travels in clouds, Seeks manna where none is.

Henry Vaughan

5. A Song

Lord, when the sense of thy sweet grace
Sends up my soul to seek thy face,
Thy blessed eyes breed such desire,
I dy in love's delicious Fire.
O love, I am thy sacrifice.
Be still triumphant, blessed eyes.
Still shine on me, fair suns! that I
Still may behold, though still I dy.

Though still I dy, I live again;
Still longing so to be still slain,
So gainfull is such losse of breath.
I dy even in desire of death.
Still live in me this loving strife
Of living Death and dying Life.
For while thou sweetly slayest me
Dead to my selfe, I live in Thee.

Richard Crashaw (1613-49)
7. Eram quasi agnus innocens

**Responsory:**
Eram quasi agnus innocens;  
ductus sum ad immolandum, et nesciebam:  
consilium fecerunt inimici mei adversum me, dicentes:  
Venite, mittamus lignum in panem eius,  
et eradamus eum de terra viventium.

**Versus:**
Omnes inimici mei adversum me cogitabant mala mihi;  
verbum iniquum mandaverunt adversum me dicentes:  
Venite, mittamus lignum in panem eius,  
et eradamus eum de terra viventium.

**Respansory:**
Behold, I was like an innocent lamb;  
I was led to the slaughter, and I knew it not:  
My enemies have conspired together against me, saying:  
Come, let us put poison into his bread,  
and let us cut him off out of the land of the living.

**Verse:**
All my enemies have thought evil things about me;  
They have spoken evil words against me, saying:  
Come, let us put poison into his bread,  
and let us cut him off out of the land of the living.

8. Una hora non potuistis

**Responsory:**
Una hora non potuistis vigilare mecum,  
qui exhortabamini mori pro me?  
Vel Judam non videtis quomodo non dormit,  
sest festinat tradere me Judaeis?

**Versus:**
Quid dormitis? Surgite et orate,  
ne intretis in tentationem.  
Vel Judam non videtis quomodo non dormit,  
sed festinat tradere me Judaeis?

**Responsory:**
Could ye not watch one hour with me,  
ye that were ready to die for me?  
Or see ye not Judas, how he sleepeoth not,  
how he maketh haste to betray me to the Jews?

**Verse:**
Why sleepe ye? Arise and pray,  
lest ye enter into temptation.  
Or see ye not Judas, how he sleepeoth not,  
how he maketh haste to betray me to the Jews?
9. Seniores populi

**Responsorium:**
Seniores populi consilium fecerunt,
ut Jesum dolo tenerunt, et occiderent:
cum gladiis et fustibus exierunt tamquam ad latronem.

**Versus:**
Collegerunt pontifices et pharisaei concilium,
ut Jesum dolo tenerent, et occiderent:
cum gladiis et fustibus exierunt tamquam ad latronem.

Responsory:
The elders of the people discussed,
that they might by craft apprehend Jesus and kill him:
they came out with swords and clubs as against a robber.

Verse:
Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council,
that they might by craft apprehend Jesus and kill him:
they came out with swords and clubs as against a robber.

**MISSA CANTUARIENSIS Op. 59**

**Kyrie**
Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

**Responses**
Lord, have mercy upon us,
and incline our hearts to keep this law.
Lord, have mercy upon us,
and write all these Thy laws in our hearts,
we beseech Thee.

* First recording. In the traditional Anglican liturgy
each response follows a reading of the Ten Commandments,
the first response being repeated 9 times.

**Credo**
Soloists: Jeremy Budd *tenor*, Eamonn Dougan *bass*
I believe in one God,
The Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible:
and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds. God from God, light from 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 on the right hand of the Father, and He shall come again with glory to judge 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 is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the Prophets. And I believe one 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.

2 Sanctus
Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts. Heav'n and earth are full of Thy glory. Glory be to Thee, O Lord most high.

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

2 Agnus Dei
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world: have mercy upon us. O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world: have mercy upon us. O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world: grant us Thy peace.
Glory be to God on high,
And in earth peace, good will towards men.

We praise Thee. We bless Thee.
We worship Thee. We glorify Thee.
We give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory.

O Lord God, heavenly King,
God the Father almighty.
O Lord God, only-begotten Son, Jesu Christ;
Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
that taketh away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.
Thou that taketh away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.
Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father,
have mercy on us.

For Thou only art holy,
Thou only art the Lord,
Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost,
art most high in the glory of the Father.
Amen.

Harry Christophers is known internationally as founder and
conductor of The Sixteen as well as being 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 Asia-Pacific, gaining a
distinguished reputation for his work in Renaissance, Baroque and
20th- and 21st-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. The Pilgrimage in
the UK is now central to The Sixteen’s annual artistic programme.

Since 2008 Harry Christophers has been 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 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. With The Sixteen he is an Associate Artist at The Bridgewater Hall in Manchester
and features in the highly successful BBC television series Sacred Music, presented by
Simon Russell Beale.

Harry has conducted numerous productions for Lisbon Opera and English National
Opera as well as conducting the UK premiere of Messager’s opera Fortunio for Grange Park
Opera. He is a regular conductor at Buxton Opera where he initiated a very successful
cycle of Handel’s operas and oratorios including Semele, Samson, Saul and Jephtha.

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 by the University of Leicester. He was awarded a CBE in the 2012
Queen’s Birthday Honours.
After three decades of worldwide 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 20th- and 21st-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 The Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, Artistic Associate of Kings Place and hold a 2015-2016 Artist Residency at Wigmore Hall. 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 *The Fairy Queen* in Tel Aviv and London, a fully staged production of Purcell's *King Arthur* in Lisbon’s Belém 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 150 recordings reflect The Sixteen’s quality in a range of work spanning the music of 500 years. In 2009 the group won the coveted Classic FM Gramophone Artist of the Year Award and the Baroque Vocal Award for Handel's *Coronation Anthems*.

The Sixteen also features in the highly successful BBC television series, *Sacred Music*, presented by Simon Russell Beale.

In 2011, with the support of the Genesis Foundation, 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.

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.com

Also available as a studio master quality download at www.thesixteendigital.com

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