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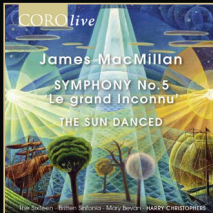


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CORO

Good night, beloved

The Sixteen

HARRY CHRISTOPHERS



First came across the title song of this album when I was at school singing in the Glee Club. There I was introduced to a wealth of what has commonly been called Victoriana: part songs by all sorts of composers and a genre which would encapsulate the likes of Pinsuti and Stanford. The latter's setting of *The Blue Bird* has to be one of the best-loved part songs ever written, its gorgeous soprano line floating effortlessly above the rest of the choir. Pieces which are full of tranquillity, peace and hope pervade in this collection. All those sentiments are captured brilliantly in Peter Maxwell Davies's *Lullabye for Lucy*; its gentle rocking rhythm and simple but beautiful tune personifies the celebration of the first child to be born on the island of Hoy for 32 years.



Photograph: Marco Borggreve

The four sacred works featured all contain themes relevant to the gift of children. Naylor's *Vox dicentis* prophesies the Messiah's coming and its reflective ending proclaiming the saviour's arrival could not be more different from the flourishes of ebullient "Alleluias" that take us to the final blazoned "Amen" of Bax's *Mater ora filium*. These works are quite staggering representations of the large-scale choral works so epitomised by our early-

20th-century composers. The choirs they wrote for must have been massive. At times, in *Mater ora filium*, Bax not only writes mostly for double choir but there are also moments where the sopranos of the first choir divide into three parts and a little later have to sustain a resounding top C for a staggering 16 beats. Two new works receive their premiere recordings – both were commissions for us by two of our patrons. James MacMillan's *Children are a heritage of the Lord* was commissioned by the Marquess and Marchioness of Salisbury and Will Todd's *Whisper Him my name* was written to celebrate John Studzinski's 60th birthday. I count ourselves very fortunate to have not only very special patrons but also a close working relationship and friendship with two such wonderful composers.

All the other pieces on this album are secular. The familiar folk tunes of *Londonderry Air* and *Eriskay Love Lilt* appear in brilliant arrangements by Bob Chilcott and Roderick Williams respectively, where the tune is enhanced not only by subtle harmonies, but also a piano accompaniment which is both descriptive and atmospheric. I love the way in which both Bob and Roddy are so respectful to those well-known tunes. For variety and so as not to lull the listener into too many lullabies, I have punctuated the album with some more raucous songs of an earlier age. Night-time is often preceded by revelry and what better way than to enjoy a drink or two where cheerfulness and good humour prevail than in *Hoyda, hoyda, jolly rutterkin* and *I am a jolly foster?* Both of these were written around the 1500s with Hayes' comic catch *Giles Jolt* written some quarter of a millennium later. I guarantee they will all bring a smile to your face.

Harry
Christophers,

Track list

1	Edward NAYLOR (1867-1934)	Vox dicentis	8.26
2	Sir Peter MAXWELL DAVIES (1934-2016)	Lullabye for Lucy	5.21
3	Anon	I am a jolly foster	3.21
4	Sir James MACMILLAN (b. 1959)	Children are a heritage of the Lord	4.20
5	Bob CHILCOTT (b. 1955)	Londonderry Air	4.08
6	Ciro PINSUTI (1829-88)	Good night, good night, beloved	3.51
7	William CORNYSH (1465-1523)	Hoyda, hoyda, jolly rutterkin	4.07
8	Will TODD (b. 1970)	Whisper Him my name	8.50
9	Sir Charles Villiers STANFORD (1852-1924)	The Blue Bird	3.33
10	William CORNYSH	Ah, Robin, gentle Robin	2.53
11	Eric WHITACRE (b. 1970)	Sleep	5.06
12	Roderick WILLIAMS (b. 1965)	Eriskay Love Lilt (<i>new commission</i>)	3.10
13	William HAYES (1708-77)	Giles Jolt	1.18
14	Sir Arnold BAX (1883-1953)	Mater ora filium	10.24
		Total Running Time:	68.48

Good night, beloved

Poetry, like the notes of a composer's score, remains dead on the page until it becomes sound. Imagine medieval monks singing *Sumer is icumen in* or a rough pedlar booming out a broadside ballad. Such vital connections between music and verse were forged long before poetry or history was first written, essential to a highly developed art of memory responsible for preserving ancient myths, laws and epic tales of distant ancestors. The practical need to memorise has been diminished in modern times by literacy, cheap paperbacks and now the internet's limitless store of instantly accessible information; yet there remains a deep spiritual need to recall memories of poetry, a need satisfied by prayers learned in childhood, a sonnet learned in middle age or a mantra chanted at the hour of our death.

Each work on this album contains lyrics ripe for memorisation, if not at first hearing

then certainly with repeated listening. They tell stories of life and love, of tranquillity and stillness, some naïve and simple, others infused with complex imagery. Many will know, or half-know, those of the *Londonderry Air* and the *Eriskay Love Lilt*, the former matched to its traditional tune on the eve of the Great War, the tune of the latter made famous between the two world wars by the Glasgow Orpheus Choir. The longest among them amounts to little more than a couple of dozen lines; the shortest speaks volumes within the space of seven.

After decades adrift in the doldrums of Victorian sentimentality, Anglican choral music regained its vigour in the first years of the last century. Edward Naylor's *Vox dicentis*, written in 1911 for the choir of King's College, Cambridge, carries the hallmarks of a composer in full command of his technique and the confidence of music written at the peak

of Britain's rule as a global superpower. Naylor was appointed assistant master at The Leys School in Cambridge and became organist at his nearby *alma mater*, Emmanuel College, in the late 1890s. *Vox dicentis* presents a striking initial dialogue between full chorus and unison basses, as preface to an expressive setting of the Latin text of Isaiah 40: 6-11, which prophesies the Messiah's coming. Naylor's feeling for dramatic contrasts extends not only to his frequent use of eight-part writing but also to the moments of silence that punctuate his motet's first half. His fugal setting of "*super montem*" surges forward like a grand imperial march before a sequence of antiphonal effects yields to the sonorous proclamation of the saviour's arrival in the work's more reflective second section.

Forty years ago an Orkney island's people, a poet and a composer celebrated Lucy Rendall's arrival into the world. Her birth in November 1980 was the first to be registered in Rackwick on the isle of Hoy

since the late 1940s; it signified the coming of new life to a place that had recently become home and haven to Peter Maxwell Davies. Rackwick also served as occasional retreat for the Scottish poet George Mackay Brown, resident of the Orkney town of Stromness. Brown's *Lullabye for Lucy* follows the ancient form of acrostic poetry, in which the initial letters of each line here combine to spell Lucy Rendall. Maxwell Davies's setting for unaccompanied SATB choir marries the symbolism of childhood innocence to the purity of the piano keyboard's white notes to create a piece untouched by chromatic complexity yet replete with yearning for lost youth. "I enjoyed writing the tune so much," the composer confessed, "I repeated all of the text in order to hear it twice."

Together with *Ah, Robin* the unattributed *I am a jolly foster* holds a place in *Henry VIII's Songbook*, a manuscript anthology of songs and instrumental pieces ascribed to Henry VIII and works by leading

composers of the early 1520s. *I am a jolly foster* (or forester) was perhaps written in response to *I have bene a foster*, a companion piece from the king's song collection originally included in a play presented by William Cornysh for the court at Windsor. While the double-entendres embedded in *I am a jolly foster* are less explicit than those of the bawdiest forester songs, they stand out in images of the hunter's horn and steady shot.

Thoughts of the protecting father, of the secure home and stable family blessed by God, flow through James MacMillan's setting of Psalm 127. *Children are a heritage of the Lord*, named for one of the psalmist's chief concerns here – the gift of children – unfolds as a chordal recitation of the biblical text, its harmonies shimmering in and out of focus to suggest the contrast between a life devoted to God and the vanities of life lived for material gain. Stray soprano lines break from the choral pack bearing the words

"Children are the heritage of the Lord" and transforming the work's texture like a shaft of light penetrating a sombre chapel. MacMillan builds his own monument to the blessings of children, touching ecstasy before echoing the work's title as a repeated refrain, voiced at the last with the grace of folksong. *Children are a heritage of the Lord* was commissioned by the Marquess and Marchioness of Salisbury to mark the quatercentenary of Hatfield House and was first performed there by Harry Christophers and The Sixteen in September 2011.

It was the English barrister and lyricist Frederic Edward Weatherly who coined one of the most famous of all 'Irish' songs. In 1913 he set his ballad *Danny Boy* to the traditional melody of a tune from County Derry, first collected by George Petrie in the mid-1800s and published soon after in *The Ancient Music of Ireland*. Bob Chilcott's arrangement of the *Londonderry Air* grows from a lilting piano prelude to

embrace unison voices and full-fat choral harmony, its vocal lines commingling with the keyboard's wistful accompaniment.

Ciro Pinsuti, a native of Tuscany, was a prodigiously gifted pianist and composer. He studied in London and with Rossini in Bologna, before returning to London to work as a private vocal coach and teach at the Royal Academy of Music. Pinsuti's setting of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Good night, good night, beloved* became a staple of the British choral society repertoire in arrangements for various permutations of voices. Originally published in the late 1860s by Cassell, Petter and Galpin, it reached a wider audience following its appearance in 1873 in an issue of *The Musical Times*, an indispensable source of affordable sheet music.

Who was William Cornysh? The records suggest that there were two musical Cornyshes, probably father and son. The older William, whose works appear

in the Eton Choirbook, instructed the choristers at Westminster Abbey from 1479 to 1491; William the younger, meanwhile, made his way as a musician, poet, actor, entrepreneur and Gentleman of the Chapel Royal. It seems likely that *Ah, Robin, gentle Robin* and *Hoyda, hoyda, jolly rutterkin* were composed by the junior Cornysh, who was briefly confined to the Fleet prison in 1504 for an unknown offence and later took part in the funeral of Henry VII and coronation of Henry VIII. The words of *Ah, Robin* were probably written by Sir Thomas Wyatt, the man who introduced the sonnet to England from Italy. Its three-part setting, perhaps based on an existing popular tune, projects a debate in which the gentle robin appears as champion of female love and its constancy.

John Skelton, tutor to the future Henry VIII, rector of Diss in Norfolk and holder of the degrees of poet laureate of the universities of Oxford, Cambridge and

Louvain, forged a breathless metrical form that earned him the nickname of 'helter-skelter John'. In later years he penned biting satires intended to wound the worldly Cardinal Wolsey, *Colyn Cloute* and *Why Come Ye nat to Courte?* among them. *Hoyda, hoyda, jolly rutterkin*, almost certainly by Skelton, receives suitably roistering treatment from Cornysh, whose setting revels in the swaggering antics of bullyboy Rutterkin and his unfeasibly capacious bladder.

Whisper Him my name, commissioned by the Genesis Foundation for The Sixteen, generates a rich spectrum of sonorities across its three interlinked parts. Will Todd and his long-term collaborator Ben Dunwell turned to a devotional prayer to St Joseph, the quiet, supremely diligent figure of the gospels of Matthew and Luke, legal father of Jesus and protector of the holy child. The work for double choir catches the spirit of an ancient novena traditionally believed to date from the saint's lifetime, magnifying

its expression of loving-kindness and sharpening its plea for intercession with reassuring images of everlasting life. Harry Christophers and The Sixteen gave the work's first performance at the Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista in Venice in April 2016.

Mary Elizabeth Coleridge, a great-grandniece of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, among the originators of English Romanticism, received an education privileged by access to many of Victorian England's sages, John Ruskin and Alfred, Lord Tennyson among them. A prodigious scholar and linguist, she made her name as a novelist, essayist and critic, but is best known today for poetry that contemplates the nature of change, loss and renewal. In 1910 Charles Villiers Stanford, professor of composition at the Royal College of Music in London, set eight of Mary Coleridge's poems as unaccompanied part-songs. *The Blue Bird*, the third of his Op.119 collection,

stands high above its companions, a masterly miniature of choral part-writing. Stanford's sumptuous harmonies both complement and transcend Coleridge's simple descriptive imagery.

Eric Whitacre's *Sleep*, commissioned as a memorial piece and first performed in October 2000, was conceived as a setting of Robert Frost's *Stopping by woods on a snowy evening* and ended as such when its composer discovered that the Robert Frost Estate, strict guardians of the poet's work, had recently banned all musical settings or other uses of the poem. Whitacre invited his friend Charles Anthony Silvestri to match new words to *Sleep's* existing music. "This was an enormous task," the American composer recalls, "because I was asking him to not only write a poem that had the exact structure of the Frost, but that would even incorporate key words from *Stopping*, like "sleep". Tony wrote an absolutely exquisite poem, finding a completely different (but equally beautiful) message in the music

I had already written." *Sleep* mirrors the margins between waking and sleeping in its subtle textural contrasts, gentle yet probing dissonances and final murmured choral incantation of the word "sleep".

Before embarking on a distinguished career as baritone and composer, Roderick Williams worked for three years as a school music teacher. His feeling for lyrics and line, the rhythms and colours of words bears witness to the talents of a natural communicator, generous and open in expression but never forceful in the business of evoking emotions. *Eriskay Love Lilt*, commissioned by and dedicated to Harry Christophers and The Sixteen, was written at the beginning of 2020, a year in which so many of us sought solace in the natural world. Its melody and Gaelic words, first notated in the early 1900s by Marjory Kennedy-Fraser from the singing of Mary MacInnes on the isle of Eriskay in the Outer Hebrides, were published in 1909 in the first volume of *Songs of the*

Hebrides and Other Celtic Songs from the Highlands of Scotland. Williams's setting enhances the melody's natural rise and fall with an undulating piano accompaniment and exquisite variations in vocal and instrumental textures.

Gloucester-born William Hayes, organist and *Informator Choristarum* of Oxford's Magdalen College, was elected to the university professorship in music in 1741 and became one of his adopted city's leading composers. In the preface to his first volume of *Catches, Glees, Canons*, printed in Oxford in 1757, having noted "how frequently I am engaged in matters of much higher consequence", Hayes explains he intended his book to promote "cheerfulness and good-humour, friendship and a love of harmony" and "harmonise the minds, as well as voices, of those who shall think them worth their notice." *Giles Jolt*, a highlight of the collection, is a comic catch or round for three voices, modelled on those of Henry Purcell.

During the First World War Arnold Bax lost his passion for the works of Richard Strauss and all 'Teutonic' music. He found fresh inspiration closer to home in the early 1920s while attending a performance of Byrd's *Mass for Five Voices* at one of Harriet Cohen's so-called 'serenades' at Wyndham Place. Bax chose to emulate the glories of Tudor polyphony by setting an anonymous medieval text for unaccompanied double-choir. *Mater ora filium* was completed in the spring of 1921 and dedicated to Charles Kennedy Scott, who conducted the Oriana Madrigal Society in the work's first performance in November 1922. The spirit of Tudor church music, if not the letter, is preserved and heightened in *Mater ora filium*, which reveals its composer's extraordinary ability to spin rhapsodic contrapuntal lines and handle eight-part choral scoring.

Andrew Stewart

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1 Edward NAYLOR (1867-1934)

Vox dicentis

Soli: Alexandra Kidgell soprano Mark Dobell tenor

*Vox dicentis, clama;
Quid clamabo?
Omnis caro foenum,
et omnis gloria eius quasi flos agri.
Vere foenum est populus.
Exsiccatum est foenum,
et cecidit flos.
Verbum autem Domini manet in aeternum.
Super montem excelsum ascende tu,
qui evangelizas Sion.
Exalta vocem tuam in fortitudine,
noli timere. Dic civitatibus Judae,
ecce Deus vester:
ecce Dominus Deus in fortitudine veniet,
et brachium eius dominabitur:
ecce merces eius cum eo,
et opus illius coram illo.
Opus illius, merces eius cum eo.
Sicut pastor gregem suum pascet,
in brachio suo congregabit agnos,
et in sinu suo levabit,
foetas ipse portabit.*

The voice of one saying 'Cry aloud!
What shall I cry?
All flesh is straw,
and all its glory is like the flower of the field.
Truly, the people are straw:
the straw has withered
and the flower has fallen.
But the word of the Lord remains for ever.
Up to the high mountain ascend,
you who tell good tidings to Zion:
Lift up your voice with courage,
do not be afraid. Say to the cities of Judah,
behold your God.
Behold, the Lord God will come in might
and His arm will prevail:
Behold, His reward is with Him
and His work is before His face.
His work, His reward is with Him.
As a shepherd He will feed His flock;
in His arm He will gather the lambs
and raise them to His bosom,
the new-born He will carry Himself.

Isaiah 40: 6-11

2 Sir Peter MAXWELL DAVIES (1934-2016)

Lullabye for Lucy

Let all the plants and creatures of the valley now
Unite,
Calling a new
Young one to join the celebration.

Rowan and lamb and waters salt and sweet,
Entreat the
New child to the brimming
Dance of the valley,
A pledge and a promise.
Lonely they were long, the creatures of Rackwick, till
Lucy came among them, all brightness and light.

George Mackay Brown

3 Anon **I am a jolly foster**

Soli: Mark Dobell, George Pooley *tenor* Rob Macdonald *bass*

I am a jolly foster
And have been many a day;
And foster will I be still
For shoot right well I may.

Wherefore should I hang up my horn
Upon the greenwood tree?
I can blow the death of a deer
As any that ever I see.

Wherefore should I tie up my hound
Unto the greenwood spray?
I can judge and make a suit
As well as any in may.

④ Sir James MACMILLAN (b. 1959)
Children are a heritage of the Lord

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.

It is vain for you to rise up early,
to sit up late,
to eat the bread of sorrows:
for so He giveth His beloved sleep.

Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord,
and the fruit of the womb is His reward.

As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man,
so are children of the youth.

Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed,
but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

Psalm 127

⑤ Bob CHILCOTT (b. 1955)
Londonderry Air

O Danny Boy, the pipes, the pipes are calling,
From glen to glen, and down the mountain side,
The summer's gone and all the roses falling,
'Tis you, 'tis you must go and I must bide.
But come ye back when summer's in the meadow,
Or when the valley's hushed and white with snow,
'Tis I'll be there in sunshine or in shadow,
O Danny Boy, O Danny Boy, I love you so!

And when you come, and all the flowers are dying,
If I am dead, as dead I well may be,
Ye'll come and find the place where I am lying,
And kneel and say an Ave there for me.
And I shall hear though soft you tread above me,
And o'er my grave shall warmer, sweeter be,
For you will bend and tell me that you love me,
And I shall sleep in peace until you come to me.

Frederick Edward Weatherly

6] **Ciro PINSUTI** (1829-88)

Good night, good night, beloved

Good night, good night, beloved!
I come to watch o'er thee!
To be near thee, alone is peace for me.
Thine eyes are stars of morning,
Thy lips are crimson flow'rs.
Good night, good night, beloved!
While I count the weary hours.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

7] **William CORNYSH** (1465-1523)

Hoyda, hoyda, jolly rutterkin

Soli: Mark Dobell, George Pooley *tenor* Rob Macdonald *bass*

Hoyda, hoyda, jolly rutterkin.
Hoyda, hoyda! Like a rutterkin.

Rutterkin is come unto our town,
In a cloak without coat or gown,
Save a ragged hood to cover his crown.

Rutterkin can speak none English.
His tongue runneth all on buttered fish
Besmeared with grease about his dish.

Rutterkin shall bring you all good luck,
A stoup of beer up at a pluck,
Till his brain be as wise as a duck.

When Rutterkin from board will rise,
He will piss a gallon-pot full at twice,
And the over plus under the table of the new guise.

attrib. John Skelton

⑧ Will TODD (b. 1970)

Whisper Him my name

PART I Sancte Joseph,
O loving Joseph, in your arms I see the Father's only Son.
Whisper Him my name and kiss His head,
For I will come no closer while He sleeps,
But watch with you forever.

PART II	Whisper Him my name... Pray for me, protect me, Stay with me and hold me.	Whisper Him my name... Pray for me, that I may do the will of God This day and forever. Sancte Joseph, So close before the throne of God, I place in you my thanks And prayers to the Father.
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PART III Here below in my last hour hear my prayer,
At the hour of my death.
Stay with me.
Stay with me in the hour of my death.
In your arms I see the Father's only Son:
Sleeping Child,
Child of God.
Whisper Him my name
And kiss His head,
That He may give back my kiss,
And I may feel His kiss at the hour of my death.

A Prayer to St Joseph adapted by Ben Dunwell

⑨ Sir Charles Villiers STANFORD (1852-1924)

The Blue Bird

The lake lay blue below the hill.
O'er it, as I looked, there flew
Across the waters, cold and still,
A bird whose wings were palest blue.

The sky above was blue at last,
The sky beneath me blue in blue.
A moment, ere the bird had passed,
It caught his image as he flew.

Mary Elizabeth Coleridge

10 William CORNYSH

Ah, Robin, gentle Robin

Soli: Mark Dobell, Jeremy Budd *tenor* Ben Davies *bass*

Ah, Robin, gentle Robin,
Tell me how thy leman doth,
And thou shalt know of mine.

Ah, Robin ...

My lady is unkind, iwis,
Alac, why is she so?
She lov'th another better than me,
And yet she will say no.

Ah, Robin ...

I cannot think such doubleness,
For I find women true;
In faith my lady lov'th me well;
She will change for no new.

Ah, Robin ...

attrib. Sir Thomas Wyatt

11 Eric WHITACRE (b. 1970)

Sleep

The evening hangs beneath the moon,
A silver thread on darkened dune.
With closing eyes and resting head
I know that sleep is coming soon.

Upon my pillow, safe in bed,
A thousand pictures fill my head.
I cannot sleep, my mind's a-flight;
And yet my limbs seem made of lead.

If there are noises in the night,
A frightening shadow, flickering light;
Then I surrender unto sleep,
Where clouds of dream give second sight.

What dreams may come, both dark and deep,
Of flying wings and soaring leap
As I surrender unto sleep,
As I surrender unto sleep.

Charles Anthony Silvestri, b. 1965

12 Roderick WILLIAMS (b. 1965)

Eriskay Love Lilt

Soli: Julie Cooper *soprano* Jeremy Budd *tenor*

Bheir me o, horo van o,
Bheir me o, horo van ee,
Bheir me o, o horo ho,
Sad am I without thee.

When I'm lonely, dear white heart,
Black the night and wild the sea,
By love's light, my foot finds
The old pathway to thee.
Bheir me o...

In the morning, when I go
To the white and shining sea,
In the calling of the seals,
Thy soft calling to me.
Bheir me o...

Thou art the music of my heart;
Harp of joy, o cruit mo chruidh;
Moon of guidance by night;
Strength and light thou art to me.
Bheir me o...

Traditional Gaelic

13 William HAYES (1708-77)

Giles Jolt

Soli: Mark Dobell, George Pooley *tenor* Ben Davies *bass*

Giles jolt, as sleeping in his car he lay,
Some pilfring villains stole his team, stole his team away.

Giles wakes and cries, what's here, what's here, what's here?
a Dickens what? Why, how now, am I Giles? or am I not?

If he, I've lost six geldings to my smart;
If not, Ods buddikins, Ods buddikins, I've found a cart.

14 Sir Arnold BAX (1883-1953) **Mater ora filium**

Soli: Julie Cooper, Kirsty Hopkins *soprano* Jeremy Budd *tenor*

Mater ora filium
Ut post hoc exilium
Nobis donet gaudium
Beatorum omnium.
Amen.

[Translation: Mother, pray thy son
that, after His exile,
He may grant us the joy
of all the blessed ones.
Amen.]

Fair Maiden, Who is this bairn
That thou bearest in thine arm?
Sir, it is a kinges son
That in Heaven above both wone.
Mater ora filium...

Man to father He had none
But Himself God alone
Of a maiden He would be born
To save mankind that was forlorn.
Mater ora filium...

The kings brought Him presents
Gold, myrrh, and frankincense
To my son full of might. Alleluia.
King of kings and Lord of Right.
Mater ora filium...

Fair Maiden, Pray for us
Unto thy Son, Sweet Jesus
That He may send us of His grace.
In heav'n on high to have a place.
Mater ora filium...

Carol (from a Manuscript at
Balliol College, Oxford)

§ The Sixteen

SOPRANO	ALTO	TENOR	BASS
Julie Cooper	Ian Aitkenhead #	Simon Berridge	Ben Davies
Camilla Harris *	Daniel Collins	Jeremy Budd	Robert Evans #
Katy Hill	Edward McMullan	Mark Dobell	Tim Jones
Kirsty Hopkins	Elisabeth Paul	Steven Harrold #	Rob Macdonald
Alexandra Kidgell	Kim Porter	George Pooley	Angus McPhee #
Charlotte Mobbs			Stuart Young
Emilia Morton	PIANO		
Ruth Provost *	Christopher Glynn		

* Track **14** only

Tracks **4** & **8** only

Harry Christophers stands among today's great champions of choral music. In partnership with The Sixteen, the ensemble he founded almost 40 years ago, he has set benchmark standards for the performance of everything from late medieval polyphony to important new works by contemporary composers. His international influence is supported by more than 150 recordings and has been enhanced by his work as Artistic Director of Boston's Handel and Haydn Society and as guest conductor worldwide.

The Sixteen's soundworld, rich in tonal variety and expressive nuance, reflects Christophers' determination to create a vibrant choral instrument from the blend of adult professional singers. Under his leadership The Sixteen has established its annual Choral Pilgrimage to cathedrals, churches and other UK venues, created the *Sacred Music* series for BBC television, and developed an acclaimed period-instrument orchestra. Highlights of their recent work include an Artist Residency at Wigmore Hall, a large-scale tour of Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*, and the world premiere of James MacMillan's *Symphony No. 5, 'Le grand Inconnu'*; their future projects, meanwhile, comprise a new series devoted to Purcell and an ongoing survey of Handel's dramatic oratorios.

Harry has served as Artistic Director of the Handel and Haydn Society since 2008. He was also appointed as Principal Guest Conductor of the City of Granada Orchestra in 2008 and has worked as guest conductor with, among others, the London Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and the Deutsches Kammerphilharmonie. Christophers' extensive commitment to opera has



Photograph: Marco Borggreve

embraced productions for English National Opera and Lisbon Opera and work with the Granada, Buxton and Grange festivals.

He recently collaborated with BBC Radio 3 presenter Sara Mohr-Pietsch to produce a book published by Faber & Faber entitled *A New Heaven: Choral Conversations* in celebration of the group's 40th anniversary.

He was appointed a CBE in the Queen's 2012 Birthday Honours for his services to music. He is an Honorary Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, as well as the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, and has Honorary Doctorates in Music from the Universities of Leicester, Northumbria, Canterbury Christ Church and Kent.

§ The Sixteen

Whether performing a simple medieval hymn or expressing the complex musical and emotional language of a contemporary choral composition, The Sixteen does so with qualities common to all great ensembles. Tonal warmth, rhythmic precision and immaculate intonation are clearly essential to the mix. But it is the courage and intensity with which The Sixteen makes music that speak above all to so many people.



Photograph: Firedog

The Sixteen gave its first concert in 1979 under the direction of Founder and Conductor Harry Christophers CBE. Their pioneering work since has made a profound impact on the performance of choral music and attracted a large new audience, not least as 'The Voices of Classic FM' and through BBC television's *Sacred Music* series.

The voices and period-instrument players of The Sixteen are at home in over five centuries of music, a breadth reflected in their annual Choral Pilgrimage to Britain's great cathedrals and sacred spaces, regular appearances at the world's leading concert halls, and award-winning recordings for The Sixteen's CORO and other labels.

Recent highlights include the world premiere of James MacMillan's Symphony No. 5, *Le grand Inconnu*, commissioned for The Sixteen by the Genesis Foundation, an ambitious ongoing series of Handel oratorios, and a debut tour of China.

RECORDING PRODUCER: Mark Brown

RECORDING ENGINEER: Mike Hatch (Floating Earth)

RECORDED AT: Church of St Augustine, Kilburn, London, 7-9 October 2020
Tracks 4 & 8 recorded 14 November 2018

COVER IMAGE: *Acrasia*, c.1888, oil and gold paint on canvas (detail)
by John Melhuish Strudwick (1849-1937) © Bridgeman Images

DESIGN: Andrew Giles: discoyd@aegidius.org.uk



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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

www.thesixteen.com