

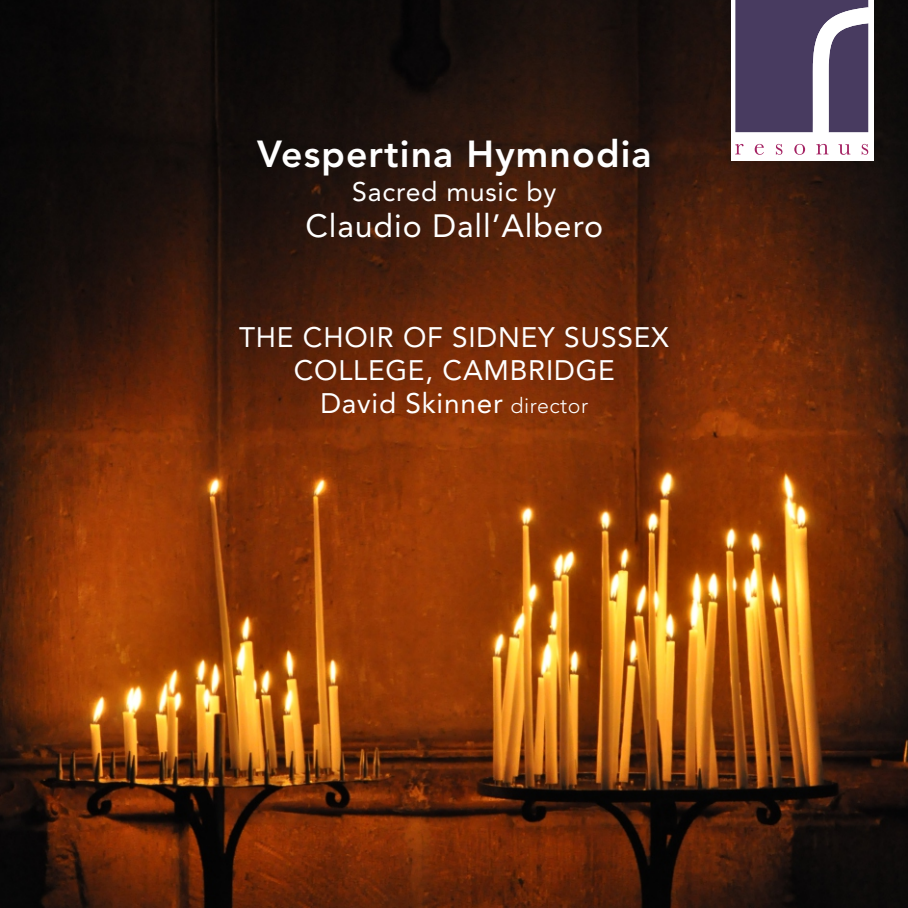


Vespertina Hymnodia

Sacred music by
Claudio Dall'Albero

THE CHOIR OF SIDNEY SUSSEX
COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

David Skinner *director*



Vespertina Hymnodia

Sacred Music by Claudio Dall'Albero

The Choir of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge

David Skinner *director*

Rachel Haworth *soprano*

Octavia Henderson-Cleland *alto*

Jack Yates *tenor*

Claudio Dall'Albero

Five Hymns for Vespers

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| 1. Creator alme siderum | [4:17] |
| 2. Salvete flores Martyrum | [3:37] |
| 3. Veni Creator Spiritus | [6:45] |
| 4. Pange lingua | [6:35] |
| 5. Ave maris stella | [6:46] |

6. Pater noster	[4:30]
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Total playing time	[32:35]
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About The Choir of Sidney Sussex College and David Skinner:

'They sing with as much sensitivity and soul as many more famous rivals'

Gramophone

'There's both freshness and fire in these accounts, Skinner underscoring the music's dramatic and madrigalian qualities, and enhancing dynamic and textural contrasts to elating effect.'

BBC Music Magazine



Claudio Dall'Albero

Claudio Dall'Albero: Vespertina Hymnodia

Following our debut recording of choral music by Claudio Dall'Albero (*Polyphonia in excelsis*) we continue our exploration of his unique mixture of ancient and modern musical styles forged during his many years at the Vatican. The Choir of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, has long had a close connection with Rome, regularly touring in the spring months and singing in the great basilicas of St Peter's, St Mary Major, St Paul's and St John's, as well as in other churches and concert halls. At home in Cambridge, in addition to the usual run of Choral Evensongs, the choir also offers a weekly Latin Choral Vespers which enables us to explore less familiar repertoire from the sixteenth-century Europe. It was only too tempting to ask Dall'Albero to write a set of Vespers Hymns as well as a *Pater noster* for our services and this recording is the result.

The seeds of Claudio Dall'Albero's musical idiom can be traced to the work of those Roman composers who from the Renaissance onwards have been specially concerned with how sounds cohere with text, signifier with signified. The music is never at odds with the sense of the words, but instead constantly emphasises their deepest essence. Its dissonances are at

times soft, in passages of sweet melancholy, at times harsh, when the pain of the human breaks into the spiritual context of the divine. The original modal layout of the monodic source is fully respected, and supported by a rigorous contrapuntal technique. The dissonances, the superimposed fourths, the clashes in contrary motion, the pedals, all of these are further extensions of ancient rules codified by the musical practice and theory of centuries past. This is a compositional language that does not seek the impressionistic effects found in much of the musical literature of the last hundred years. Each harmony, each imitation, each moment of vocal pungency has its own purpose, as part of a deeply rooted and always consequential aesthetic rationale.

The **Five Hymns for Vespers**, written in the characteristic alternatim form, belong within Dall'Albero's output of sacred music. Respectful of tradition, the modal handling of the music is always in keeping with the Gregorian source of the given monodic material.

'Creator alme siderum' is the hymn of the first Sunday of Advent, in the hypophrygian mode. This work is distinguished by a severe contrapuntal logic, and features a section in three voices with a canon in *subdiatessaron* between sopranos and contraltos.

The delicate 'Salve flores martyrum' is the hymn of the feast of the Holy Innocents, or the Holy Little Innocents as it is called in Rome. In an authentic doric *protus*, the hymn begins with a homorhythmic motion in ternary time, of a gentle quietness. The final verse, by contrast, is polyphonic: the voices harmonise, or clash in agreeable dissonances, until the lively ternary in *sempiterna saecula* which leads into the final *Amen*.

'Veni creator Spiritus' is the hymn of the Vespers of Pentecost. Dall'Albero's setting is in *tetrardus* motion. After a homorhythmic first verse, the following verse is a characteristic polyphonic trio, traditional in structure, while the third, in four voices, is a classical paraphrase reminiscent of Palestrina. The hymn ends with a five-part *Deo Patri sit Gloria*, in which the tenors are in dialogue with the rest of the choir; after the urgent 'surrexit', troubled harmonies lead on to a very gentle *Amen*.

During Vespers on the feast of Corpus Christi, the 'Pange Lingua' was sung. This hymn in the third mode is particularly famous, well-known even today to the faithful. Dall'Albero's setting of the three verses enhances the lamenting character of the mode. In the concluding five-voice canon, the *dux* in the bass is scrupulously imitated by the comes in the soprano, a twelfth

higher, while the other voices complete the harmony with their imitations and comments.

The last work in this cycle of hymns is the 'Ave Maris Stella'. The chant from which it takes inspiration is in the doric mode. At the words 'mala nostra pelle' ('drive away our ills'), the harmony moves away from what is customary in this mode and becomes remote. The following verse is perhaps the most striking moment of the whole collection. The solo soprano sweetly declaims the text on a melodic line which is then picked up and repeated by the other voices, to hypnotic and almost dreamlike effect. A weighty chorale in six voices, followed by an *Amen*, provides a solemn conclusion to the Five Hymns.

Dall'Albero's setting of the **Pater Noster** is for five-voice polyphonic choir. After the brief introduction, in which the well-known melodic line is given to the soprano, pairwise imitations follow, set against different vocal combinations and leading by way of moments of dissonance that alternate with moments of respite to an expectant pause. Here begins the verse 'Panem nostrum cotidianum', in which the melodic-harmonic shape of the opening returns. A fleeting ternary episode then leads by way of a sequence of velvety contrapuntal clashes

into the affecting finale. The *Amen* provides a solemn conclusion to this example of sacred composition in the twenty-first century.

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Texts & Translations

Five Hymns for Vespers

1. Creator alme siderum
Aeternae lux credential
Iesu, redemptor omnia
Intende votis supplicum

*Creator, maker of the stars
Eternal light of the faithful
Jesus, redeemer of all
Hear the prayers of thy supplicants.*

Qui demonis ne fraudibus
Periret orbis impetu
Amoris actus, languidi
Mundi medela factus es

*Thou who, to avoid the Devil's deceits,
Should destroy the entire universe,
Moved by an act of love,
Became the healer of the ailing world.*

Commune qui mundi nefas
Ut expiaries, ad crucem
E Virginis sacrario
Intacta prodis victima

*To atone for the sins of the world,
On the cross,
Thou came from the Virgin's womb
As a spotless Victim.*

Cuisu potestas gloriae
Nomenque cum primum sonat
Et caelites et inferi
Tremante curvantur genu

*When thy glorious power
And name are heard,
The inhabitants of Heaven and Hell
Trembling bend their knees*

Te deprecamur, ultimae
Magnum diei ludicem
Armis supernae gratiae
Defende nos ab hostias

*We beseech thee, finally
Great Judge of the last day
With the weapons of heavenly grace
Defend us from our enemies*

Virtus, honor, laus, gloria
Deo Patri cum Filio
Sancto simul Paraclito
In saeculorum saecula. Amen.

*Power, honour, praise and glory,
To the Father and to the Son
And to the Holy Comforter
Forever and ever. Amen*

2. Salvete flores Martyrum
Quos lucis ipso in limine
Christi in secutur sustulit
Ceum turbo nascentes rosas

*Hail, flowers of the Martyrs,
Whom on the very threshold of life
The persecutor of Christ snatched away
Even as the whirlwind, the budding roses*

Vos prima Christi victima
Grex immolatorum tener
Aram sub ipsam simplices
Palma et coronis luditis

*As the first sacrifice for Christ,
A tender flock of victims,
With sweet simplicity, you play
At the altar-side, with your palms and crowns.*

Iesu, tibi sit gloria
Qui natus es de Virgine
Cum Patre et almo Spiritu
In sempiternal saecula. Amen

*Jesu, all glory to thee,
Who is born of a Virgin,
With the Father and the nurturing Spirit
For ever and ever. Amen.*

3. Veni Creator Spiritus
Mentes tuorum visita
Imple superna gratia
Quae tu creasti pectora

*Come, Creator Spirit
Visit the souls of thy people,
Fill with grace from on high
The hearts which thou hast created.*

Qui diceris Paraclitus
Donum Dei altissimi
Fons vivus, ignis, caritas
Et spiritalis unctio

*Thou who art called the Comforter,
Gift of the most high God
Living fountain, fire, love,
And anointment of souls*

Tu septiformis munere
Digitus paternae dexteræ
Tu rite promissum Patris
Sermonem ditans guttura

*Sevenfold in thy gifts,
Finger of thy Father's right hand,
Thou promised truly by the Father,
Giving speech to tongues.*

Accende lumen sensibus
Infunde amorem cordibus
Infirma nostri corporis
Virtute firmans perpeti

*Inflame our senses with thy light,
Pour thy love into our hearts,
Strengthen our weak bodies
With lasting strength.*

Hostem repellas longius
Pacemque dones protinus
Ductore sic te praevio
Vitemus omne noxium

*Drive far away the enemy
Grant peace at all times
So under thy guidance
We may avoid all evil*

Per te sciamus da Patrem
Noscamus atque Filium
Te utriusque Spiritum
Credamus omni tempore

*Grant us by thee to know the Father
And to know the Son,
And in thee, Spirit of both,
May we also believe*

Deo Patri sit gloria
Et Filio, cuius a mortuis
Surrexit, ac Paraclito
In saeculorum saecula. Amen

*Glory be to God the Father
And to the Son, who from the dead
Rose up, and to the Comforter
Forever and ever. Amen*

4. Pange lingua
Pange lingua gloriosi
Corporis mysterium
Sanguinis que pretiosi
Quem in mundi pretium
Fructus ventris generosi
Rex effudit gentium.

*Speak, O tongue, of the glorious
Body's mystery,
And of the precious Blood,
Which, to rescue the world,
As the fruit of a generous Womb,
The King the Nations poured.*

Nobis datus, nobis natus
Ex intacta Virgine
Et in mundo conversatus
Spargo verbi semine,
Sui moras incolatus
Miro clausit ordine

*Given to us, born for us,
From the untouched Virgin,
And dwelling in the world
After the seed of the Word had been scattered.
His inhabiting ended the delays
With wonderful order.*

In supremae nocte coenae
Recumbens cum fratribus,
Observata lege plene
Cibus in legalibus
Cibum turbae duodenae
Se dat suis manibus.

*On the night of the Last Supper,
Reclining with His brethren,
Once the Law had been fully observed
With the prescribed foods,
As food to the crowd of Twelve
He gives Himself with His hands.*

Verbum caro, panem verum
Verbo carnem efficit
Fitque sanguis Christi merum
Et si sensus deficit
Ad firmandum cor sincerum
Sola fides sufficit

*The Word as Flesh makes true bread
Into flesh by a word
And the wine becomes the Blood of Christ.
And if sense is deficient
To strengthen a sincere heart
Faith alone suffices.*

Tantum ergo sacramentum
Veneremur cernui
Et antiquum documentum
Novo cedat ritui
Praestet fides supplementum
Sensum defectui

*Therefore, the great Sacrament
Let us reverence, prostrate:
And let the old Covenant
Give way to a new rite.
Let faith stand forth as substitute
For defect of the senses.*

Geniroti genitoque
Laus et jubilatio
Salus, honor, virtus quoque
Sit et benedictio
Procedenti ab utroque
Compar sit laudatio. Amen

*To Begetter and Begotten
Be praise and jubilation,
Health, honour, strength also
And blessing.
To the One who proceeds from Both
Be praise as well. Amen*

5. Ave maris stella
Dei Mater alma,
Atque semper virgo,
Felix caeli porta.

*Hail, O Star of the sea,
Nurturing Mother of God,
And ever Virgin,
Happy gate of Heaven.*

Sumens illud Ave,
Gabrielis ore,
Funda nos in pace,
Mutans Evae nomen.

*Taking as ours that Ave,
With which Gabriel saluted You,
Establish us in peace,
Changing the name of Eve.*

Solve vincla reis,
Profer lumen caecis,
Mala nostra pelle,
Bona cuncta posce.

*Break the chains of our sins,
Give light to our blindness,
Expel evil from us,
And pray for all blessings.*

Monstra te esse matrem,
Sumat per te precem,
Qui pro nobis natus,
Tulit esse tuus.

*Show yourself to be a Mother:
Take the prayers we offer you,
To Him, who was born for us,
So that He accepts them as yours.*

Virgo singularis,
Inter omnes mitis,
Nos culpae solutos,
Mite fac et castos.

*O most excellent Virgin,
Mildest of the mild,
Absolve our guilt,
Make us mild and chaste.*

Vitam praesta puram,
Iter para tutum,
Ut videntes Jesum,
Semper collaetemur.

*Give us a pure life,
Make our path secure,
So that we may find in Jesus,
The perpetual joy.*

Sit laus Deo Patri,
Summo Christo decus,
Spiritui Sancto,
Tribus honor unus. Amen.

*Praise to God the Father,
To the Most High Christ glory,
To the Holy Spirit,
The same one honor to the Three. Amen*

6. Pater noster

Pater Noster, qui es in caelis,
sanctificetur nomen tuum.
Adveniat regnum tuum.
Fiat voluntas tua,
sicut in caelo et in terra.
Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie,
et dimitte nobis debita nostra,
sicut et nos
dimittimus debitoribus nostris.
Et ne nos inducas in tentationem:
sed libera nos a malo. Amen

*Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done
in earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass
against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.*

The Choir of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge

Sidney Sussex College rose from the ruins of the Cambridge Greyfriars in 1596 and has long been a nest for professional musicians. Indeed, the large chapel that stood on this site in pre-Reformation times was the regular venue for University ceremonies and was where a number of early English composers took their degrees, including Robert Fayrfax (MusB, 1501; DMus 1504) and Christopher Tye (MusB, 1536). Later, the great Elizabethan composer William Byrd would have been well-known to the foundress, Lady Frances Sidney, and two very fine elegies by Byrd survive for her nephew, the poet and courtier Sir Philip Sidney.

It is thought that a dedicated chapel choir must have existed in some form since the foundation of the College on St Valentine's Day 1596. Since the admission of women to the college in 1976, the Choir of Sidney Sussex has blossomed into one of the most esteemed choral groups in Oxbridge. In 2009, the American composer Eric Whitacre was appointed as Sidney Sussex's first Composer in Residence; in 2015, that mantle was assumed by British composer and Choir alumnus Joanna Marsh.

Aside from the abundant contribution the Choir makes to the musical life of the College,

Sidney is home to a wealth of musical ensembles and choral groups, and Fellows with both academic and practical expertise. The College boasts an active Music Society which organises weekly chamber recitals with guest appearances. Small-scale operas and musicals are often staged in the Master's Garden in Easter Term. Currently resident in the College are Dr Christopher Page (1991), founder and former director of the multi-award-winning Gothic Voices, and Dr David Skinner (2006).

David Skinner (director)

David Skinner divides his time equally as a scholar and choral director. An engaging presenter he has worked extensively for BBC radio, appearing in and writing a variety of shows on Radio 3 and 4. He acted as music advisor for the Music and Monarchy series on BBC 2 with David Starkey, and was Music Consultant for the BBC4 documentary Evensong with Lucy Worsley. He has published widely on music and musicians of early Tudor England, and his latest publications include an historical introduction for a facsimile publication of Royal College of Music, MS 1070 — The Anne Boleyn Music Book — as well as a collected edition of Tallis's Latin church music for Early English Church Music (Stainer & Bell).

David is Fellow and Osborn Director of Music at Sidney Sussex College in the University of Cambridge where he teaches historical and practical topics from the medieval and renaissance periods. He directs the Choir of Sidney Sussex College, with whom he has toured and made highly acclaimed recordings, and is frequently invited to lecture, lead workshops and coach choirs throughout Europe and the USA.

The Choir of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge

Sopranos

Bryony Armstrong
Cosima Ballance
Sofia Clini
Saskia Frisby
Emma Grainger
Rachel Haworth
Alexandra LaGuardia
Caroline Woods

Altos

Charlotte Bailey
Hannah Bostock
Octavia Henderson-Cleland
Annika Maus
Hugh Rowlands
Leila Varzi

Tenors

Jacob Henstridge
Wilf Jones
Richard Walmsley
Jack Yates

Basses

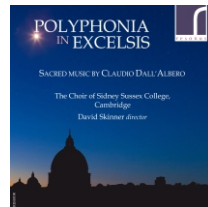
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'This is a rather startling disc. [...] David Skinner leads his young singers skilfully through these testing yet pleasing pieces that are both refreshingly new and comfortingly familiar.'
The Observer

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