Claudio Monteverdi
Selva morale e spirituale Vol. I

"These are some of the most spirited and individual performances of this repertory available." 
BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

Claudio Monteverdi
Selva morale e spirituale Vol. II

"There is a sense of deep familiarity with the music in this recording, a feeling of easiness with Monteverdi’s harmonic and, especially, rhythmic vocabulary that lends a tripping lightness to the performances..." 
INTERNATIONAL RECORD REVIEW

Claudio Monteverdi
Selva morale e spirituale Vol. III

"As we might expect, The Sixteen performances are lively and nicely tuned... the instrumental playing is sensitive and supportive.” 
BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

Palestrina Volume 5

"The energy The Sixteen bring to their Palestrina is admirable.” 
GRAMOPHONE

To find out more about The Sixteen, concert tours, and to buy CDs visit
www.thesixteen.com
Monteverdi’s Vespers of 1610 is quite simply one of the greatest works of sacred music ever written and without doubt the most varied and inspired before Handel and Bach began composing their oratorios and passions. Where it was written, why it was written and who it was written for are actually immaterial – suffice it to say it was quite simply his calling card for the big job, Choirmaster at the resplendent Basilica of St Mark in Venice. Its variety alone makes it unique – thrilling psalm settings with virtuosic writing for both multi-part choir and instrumentalists to exotic and sensual settings of texts from the Song of Songs for solo voices. Every movement is full of luscious harmonies, drama and an evocative musical language which is so beautifully constructed for all concerned.

Monteverdi’s music is virtuosic; he stretches every singer’s versatility to the limit, yet his demands have an exhilarating effect. His dictum is simple: *recitar cantando* (speak through singing) and this allows us the most amazing licence. As a result, time relationships do not become mechanical. They are intuitively felt, thus giving us the freedom to be expressive and interpret the words, just as any great actor recites Shakespeare. A set of words, often repeated many times, can have different inflections, a different gesture each time. But it isn’t just the singers who are stretched; his writing for the solo strings, cornets and sackbuts is both ceremonial and celestial, full of rhythmic vitality and, in true baroque fashion, the continuo section (in our case of organ, harp and chittarone) can luxuriate in Monteverdi’s harmonic language: the variety of textures and sonorities they achieve are quite extraordinary.

For those of you who are interested in pitch and temperament, we used pitch 440’ with a temperament of 5th comma meantone. This means when you tune a circle of thirds absolutely pure and beatless, the note you end with is not the same as the note you started with. The difference is sufficient to make you wince and is called a ‘comma’. The comma needs to be hidden amongst keys that this music almost never visits, so you are left to enjoy pure intervals whilst the ‘rogues’ get lost in the surrounding woodwork. Or in simpler terms, by tuning in this 17th-century meantone temperament we are therefore encouraging a much enhanced resonance in both choir and orchestra, with all major chords performed with pure thirds.

There has been much scholarly debate about the pitch of *Lauda Ierusalem* and the *Magnificat*. These are notated in the part books in a combination of “high” (chiavetti) clefs which dictates a downward transposition of a fourth. For this recording I decided to include both versions, one at high pitch and one at low, so that you the listener can determine your own preference.

This recording was the culmination of weeks immersed in the joy that Monteverdi’s music brings us. Concert performances, a documentary for BBC2 on the Vespers with our great friend, the actor Simon Russell Beale, culminating in the recording sessions. I am so fortunate to have within The Sixteen’s ranks soloists, both vocal and instrumental, who are alert to these wonderful texts, but above all bring this glorious music to life.

This recording was made possible by the generous support of the following:

- Charles Bridge
- Sir Thomas Hughes-Hallett
- Mark Loveday
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- The Sixteen Ambassadors
Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

VESPERs of 1610

CD 1  Total playing time 66.15

1 Deus in adiutorium  meum intende  2.04
   tenor  Mark Dobell
2 Dixit Dominus  7.08
   soprano  Grace Davidson
   Charlotte Mobbs
   tenor  Mark Dobell
   Jeremy Budd
3 Nigra sum  3.35
   tenor  Mark Dobell
4 Laudate pueri  6.01
   soprano  Grace Davidson
   Charlotte Mobbs
   tenor  Mark Dobell
   Jeremy Budd
   bass  Ben Davies
   Eamonn Dougan
5 Pulchra es  3.58
   soprano  Grace Davidson
   Charlotte Mobbs

6 Laetatus sum  6.32

7 Duo Seraphim  5.48
   tenor  Mark Dobell
   Jeremy Budd
   Ben Davies

8 Nisi Dominus  4.48

9 Audi coelum  7.55
   tenor  Jeremy Budd
   Mark Dobell (echo)

10 Lauda Ierusalem (high)  4.13

11 Sonata sopra Sancta Maria  6.15

12 Ave maris stella  7.57
   soprano  Grace Davidson
   Charlotte Mobbs
   bass  Eamonn Dougan

CD 2  Total playing time 39.51

MAGNIFICAT (high)

1 Magnificat  0.42
2 Et exultavit  1.15
   tenor  Mark Dobell
   Jeremy Budd
3 Quia respexit  1.13
4 Quia fecit mihi magna  1.06
   bass  Ben Davies
   Eamonn Dougan
5 Et misericordia  1.54
6 Fecit potentiam  1.00
7 Deposuit potentes  2.27
8 Esurientes  1.22
9 Suscepit Israel  1.18
   soprano  Grace Davidson
   Charlotte Mobbs
10 Sicut locutus est  0.55
11 Gloria Patri  2.33
   tenor  Jeremy Budd
   Mark Dobell (echo)
12 Sicut erat  2.07
13 Lauda Ierusalem (low)  4.17

MAGNIFICAT (low)

14 Magnificat  0.39
15 Et exultavit  1.14
   tenor  Mark Dobell
   Jeremy Budd
16 Quia respexit  1.15
17 Quia fecit mihi magna  1.06
   bass  Ben Davies
   Eamonn Dougan
18 Et misericordia  1.49
19 Fecit potentiam  0.58
20 Deposuit potentes  2.24
21 Esurientes  1.21
22 Suscepit Israel  1.20
   soprano  Grace Davidson
   Charlotte Mobbs
23 Sicut locutus est  0.55
24 Gloria Patri  2.37
   tenor  Jeremy Budd
   Mark Dobell (echo)
25 Sicut erat  2.00

Vespers of 1610  Total playing time 66.15
the singing of which the altar of the church was ceremonially censed. These are the main items that were set by Monteverdi and published in his Missa...ac Vespera... cum nonnullis sacris concentibus (Mass and Vespers, with some sacred concertos) (Venice, 1610). Venice was then the main centre of music publishing in Italy.

Latin Vespers was the main evening service of the Catholic church in Monteverdi’s day and it was the service which, together with Mass, prompted composers to produce their most elaborate sacred music. The musical items of Latin Vespers consisted of an introductory versicle and response – Deus in adiutorium meum intende – Domine ad adiuvandum me festina (‘O God make speed to save us. O Lord make haste to help us’, as it was (mis)translated for the Anglican service of Evensong) – followed by five psalms, a hymn and a setting of the canticle Magnificat during Vespers of 1610 Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

The sumptuous collection of music for Vespers published by Claudio Monteverdi in 1610 is an essential item in any record collection. It was first recorded complete under Sir Anthony Lewis in 1953 and has subsequently been recorded many times and in many guises.

In a celebration of Vespers, between the psalms and the hymn there was a short biblical reading, and following the Magnificat a prayer and dismissal. On most days in the church calendar all the texts of Vespers were sung to plainsong, and the whole service would have appeared as an almost seamless stream of music. The choice of psalms depended on the position of the service within the church calendar. For the feast of a female saint like the Blessed Virgin the five psalms were those that Monteverdi sets,
and each would have been preceded and followed by a plainsong antiphon, the text of which was related to the specific feast day. The hymn Ave maris stella was sung at all feasts of the Blessed Virgin. On major feast days various of the texts usually sung to plainsong would be treated to more elaborate musical settings, varying from simple harmonisations of the plainsong through to full-blown polyphony with organ, strings, cornets and sackbuts.

In Monteverdi’s publication, each of his polyphonic psalm settings is followed by one of the pieces that he calls ‘sacred concertos’: that is, motets in which voices and instruments perform together, whether just a solo voice and continuo or just chitarrone, as in the case of Nigra sum, or a full panoply of instruments with a single vocal line, as in the splendid Sonata sopra Sancta Maria. Various arguments have been rehearsed as to the function of these pieces within Vespers, since they do not appear as part of the official liturgy of the church. One view holds them to be substitutes for the repeated antiphon after the psalm (which leaves the performer with one antiphon substitute too few, since there is none provided for the Magnificat); another view holds that they are simply extra pieces to be performed between the psalms, perhaps allowing the Sonata to be played and sung after the last psalm, where it is placed in the book, or perhaps before or after the Magnificat.

The music that Monteverdi published in 1610 was probably written at various times during the years in which he served in the chapel of Vincenzo Gonzaga, duke of Mantua in northern Italy. It gives the impression of unity since, as Monteverdi boasted at the head of the collection, these were Vespers ‘composed on cantus firmi’: that is, all the strictly liturgical items – the psalms, hymn and Magnificat – incorporate within their textures an appropriate plainsong, whether a psalm or Magnificat tone, or a hymn melody. Nevertheless, the collection may never have been performed as a whole in Monteverdi’s time; like most publications of church music, it was at one level a resource book, from which choirmasters who had the resources to tackle the music that it contained would have chosen as few or as many settings as they needed.

Monteverdi joined the duke’s chapel probably early in 1590, and though we are mainly aware of his secular music from the Mantuan period – madrigals, a ballet and two operas – much of his daily work must have involved singing, playing and composing for the daily round of services that the duke would have attended. He was evidently a trusted figure in this respect, for as early as 1595 the duke took him on a military expedition against the Turks as choirmaster in charge of a group of singers, and in the camp, on the order of the duke, ‘on solemn [days] Vespers was sung with music by singers and an organ which he had brought with him.’ In December 1601 Monteverdi was appointed the duke’s choirmaster, in charge of both sacred and secular music at the Mantuan court, though not in the ducal basilica of Santa Barbara, for which a separate musical establishment was maintained. The choirs for which he wrote church music would have consisted entirely of men, with castratos singing the upper parts; and for most occasions there would have been one voice per part. As is apparent from the 1610 Vespers settings, Monteverdi’s singers were a group of highly trained virtuosos, as we might expect of one of the richest courts in Italy.

The reasons why Monteverdi published only one collection of church music at Mantua can be sought in his growing dissatisfaction with his employment there after 1608. In addition to his work as a church musician, he was expected to supply secular music for the court; and from 1607 this included the new genre of opera. For a royal wedding in 1608 he wrote and rehearsed not only an opera – Arianna – but also a ballet and incidental music for a play. While there is no doubt that Monteverdi relished his
work in these fields he felt that he was taken for granted and rewarded far less than either the duke's star women singers or visiting composers. By the time the wedding festivities were over, in July 1608 he was ill with overwork and retired to his father's house in Cremona. His father wrote to the duke asking that he should be released from the duke's service or, at least, his work confined to church music. The request was refused. For Monteverdi then the choice was limited. He could not look for employment in another royal household without the duke's permission; but he might present himself as capable of holding a major church post. His 1610 Vespers can be seen in this light as a portfolio of his work, with its contents presented in the liturgical order of a Vespers of the Blessed Virgin and it was certainly viewed as a recommendation by the audition panel that appointed Monteverdi to the post of choirmaster of San Marco, Venice, in 1613, following his dismissal from Mantua in 1612. A modern concert performance of 'The Vespers' is, then, our way of reviewing and appreciating Monteverdi's portfolio.

Monteverdi's portfolio opens with one of the collection's most magnificent pieces. After the priest's 'Deus in adiutorium', the choir chants the response on a single chord surrounded by music for strings, wind and brass developed from the 'Toccata' – the call to attention that opened Monteverdi's opera Orfeo in 1607. The setting, therefore, has Mantuan resonances; perhaps a diplomatic gesture in a volume that Monteverdi dedicated to the pope, for with papal acceptance who would dare to argue against him as a church composer. Between the phrases of the response, and its concluding Gloria Patri, the instruments play a brief ritornello into which is woven the first plainsong phrase of the psalm Dixit Dominus; this ritornello then forms the basis of the concluding, triumphant Alleluia. Dixit Dominus is then an object lesson in ways of singing psalms in the 17th century. Its underlying plainsong is a psalm tone – two short phrases that are used respectively to chant each half of the psalm verse. In verse 1 Monteverdi presents the first half of the psalm tone, rhythmicised, for a single vocal part, as though sung by the priest, then immediately clothes it with counterpoint. The second part of the tone, for sede a dextris, is then presented chordally with a wonderful slide from G natural to G sharp in the harmony at meis. Verse 2 is set in falsobordone, a technique that was often used at Sunday Vespers. There is no plainsong here. Instead, the choir chants the text to an unmeasured chord which then flowers into an imitative texture for the final two syllables; the same procedure, with a different chord and imitative phrase for the cadence is used for the second half verse. For verse 3 the plainsong is placed first in the bass of the organ, with imitative phrases above it for two sopranos, and then given to the bass voice under the sopranos. The approaches used for verses 2 and 3 are then alternated, with increasingly complex textures, for the remaining verses.

Verse by verse setting also characterises the other psalm settings, the hymn and the Magnificat, and one of the pleasures of listening to the Vespers is the sheer variety and ingenuity that Monteverdi brings to this basically simple procedure. In Laudate pueri, for example, the psalm tone is heard in every verse. In verses 4 and 5 it represents God by soaring above the tenor and bass duets that accompany it; and in verse 7 it can be heard peeping through as a faster line in the middle of a rich texture, perhaps representing the poor man set among princes. In Laetatus sum the bouncing bass line with which the setting begins is only one of three contrasting basses (heard first at verses 1, 2 and 4), all of which harmonise the psalm tone, which is sometimes present (verses 1 and 4, for example), sometimes absent (verses 2 and 3). The second of the basses is actually one that was used by improvising singers and players in the 16th and 17th centuries – the so-called Romanesca – and by using it to set verses 2 and 6 Monteverdi may have intended to flatter papal Rome as the new Jerusalem.
Nisi Dominus is a massive piece for two five-part choirs in which the opening and closing sections are scored for the full ten-part ensemble; between these choir 1 sings a verse and choir 2 then repeats it to build a large-scale structure. Again, after its striking opening call to praise, Laudà Ierusalem also uses dialogue between ensembles, though this time with trios of voices around the plainsong in the tenor.

As we approach the climax of Vespers we hear first the exquisite harmonisation of the plainsong hymn Ave maris stella, whose first and last verses present a complex tapestry of voices, and then the Magnificat, every verse of which is treated to an individual texture, sometimes simple, as in verse 1, sometimes with a variety of instruments, including ornamental string and wind lines seemingly borrowed from the opera Orfeo, as in verse 7 and the beginning of the Gloria Patri whose spine tingling opening for solo tenor gives way to a single soprano line with an echo accompaniment.

Both Laudà Ierusalem and the Magnificat are scored with a combination of 'high' clefs (chiavetti) – with (usually) a treble clef for the topmost line and a baritone clef for the lowest. This type of cleffing is thought to have been a signal to the performers to transpose their parts down the interval of a fourth (singers and instrumentalists of the time were adept at transposition). On this recording both settings are performed at written pitch (CD1 track 10; CD 2 tracks 1-12) and transposed down (CD 2 tracks 13-25), for comparison.

The first two of the sacred concertos, Nigra sum and Pulchra es, employ texts from the Song of Songs. This biblical book is an anthology of love lyrics; it was interpreted allegorically in the church as representing either Christ’s relationship with his church or with the beloved representing the Virgin Mary. Monteverdi’s setting of Nigra sum, for solo tenor, though it is a woman’s utterance, unleashes the full power of the new form of accompanied solo song, with phrases repeated and varied for rhetorical effect and an impassioned setting of surge amica mea that could have come straight from the new form of opera. Pulchra es, a man’s expression of love, begins as a lyrical duet for two sopranos (males in the 17th century), but again has a more passionate continuation as the man begs his beloved to avert the eyes that make him flee.

Audi coelum again expresses devotion to the Virgin through the medium of an echo madrigal in which the last syllables of a line are transformed into a different word, reflected back by a heavenly voice. Some of the imagery here may be unfamiliar. The prophet Ezekiel spoke of the eastern gate of the temple as the one through which God entered; this was later interpreted as a reference to Mary, the door through which Christ entered the world.

Duo Seraphim is the one work in the collection that has no connection with the Virgin and thus tends to confirm the idea that Monteverdi was simply keen to include his finest work in the 1610 book. It is a Trinitarian motet which may have been first performed in Mantua in 1605 when Rubens’ painting of the Gonzaga family worshipping the Holy Trinity was installed in the Jesuit church of the Santissima Trinità. Monteverdi’s motet depicts first two and then three archangels calling across the vault of heaven; and because they are heavenly beings they sing using the highly ornamented style that was the preserve of the most highly trained 17th-century singers. Likewise, the highly ornamented style of the Sonata sopra Sancta Maria was designed to show off the expertise of the string and wind players in Vincenzo Gonzaga’s employ. The sonata is a set of variations on three basic motifs, from which soprano voices emerge, as if by magic, singing a short phrase of plainsong to the text ‘Holy Mary, pray for us.’
Deus in adiutorium meum intende.  

O God, make speed to save me.

Domine ad adiuvandum me festina.

O Lord, make haste to help me.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.


As it was in the beginning, now and for ever, world without end. Amen. Alleluia.

The Lord said unto my Lord:  

sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Sion:  
rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.  
Thine is the foundation in the day of thy power;
in splendouribus sanctorum: ex utero ante luciferum genui te.

RITORNELLO
Juravit Dominus et non penitebit eum; tu es sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech.
Dominus a dextris tuis confriget in die irae suae reges.

The Lord hath sworn and will not repent; thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedech. The Lord at thy right hand has broken kings in the day of his anger.

RITORNELLO

He will judge the nations, he will fill them with ruins: he will break the heads in the populous land. He shall drink of the torrent on the way; therefore he shall lift up his head.


Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, now and for ever, world without end. Amen.

Nigra sum SONG OF SONGS 1: 4; 2: 10-12

Nigra sum sed formosa filiae Ierusalem. Ideo dilexit me Rex, et introdixit me in cubiculum suum et dixit mihi: Surge, amica mea, et veni. Lam hiems transiit, imber abiit et recessit, flores apparuerunt in terra nostra; tempus putationis advenit.

I am a black but beautiful daughter of Jerusalem. So the King loved me, and led me into his bedroom and said to me: Arise, my love, and come away. Now winter has passed, the rain has gone and flowers have appeared in our land; the time of pruning has come.

Laudate pueri PSALM 112 (113)


Praise the Lord, ye children, praise the name of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord, from this time forth for evermore. From sunrise to sunset, the Lord’s name is worthy of praise.

The Lord is high above all nations and his glory above the heavens. Who is like the Lord our God, who dwells on high and looks down on the humble things in heaven and earth, raising the helpless from the earth and lifting the poor man from the dungheap, to place him alongside princes, with the princes of his people? He makes a home for the barren woman, a joyful mother of children. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, now and for ever, world without end. Amen.

Pulchra es  SONG OF SONGS 6: 3-4
soprano: Grace Davidson, Charlotte Mobbs

You are beautiful, my love, a sweet and comely daughter of Jerusalem. You are beautiful, my love, sweet and comely as Jerusalem, terrible as the sharp lines of a military camp. Turn your eyes from me, because they have put me to flight.

Laetatus sum  PSALM 121 (122)

I was glad when they said unto me: we shall go into the house of the Lord. Our feet were standing within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem, which is built as a city that is compact together. For thither ascended the tribes, the tribes of the Lord, to testify unto Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord.
ISAIAH 6: 2-3; 1 JOHN 5: 7

Two Seraphim were calling one to the other: Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Hosts: and these three are one.

PSALM 126 (127)

Except the Lord build the house, they have laboured in vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise before dawn: to rise when you have sat down, ye who eat the bread of sorrow. When he has given sleep to those he loves, behold, children are an inheritance of the Lord, a reward, the fruit of the womb. As arrows in the hand of the mighty, so are children of the vigorous. Blessed is the man who has fulfilled his longing by them: he shall not be perplexed when he speaks to his enemies at the gate. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, now and for ever, world without end. Amen.

Duo Seraphim

For there sat the seats of judgement, the seats over the house of David. O pray for the peace of Jerusalem and may prosperity attend those who love thee. Peace be within thy strength, and prosperity within thy towers. For my brothers' and my neighbours' sake, I will ask for peace for thee; for the sake of the house of the Lord our God I have sought blessings for thee. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, now and for ever, world without end. Amen.

Audi coelum

Hear, O heaven, my words, full of desire and suffused with joy.

Duo Seraphim clamabant alter ad alterum:
Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth:
plena est omnis terra gloria eius.
Tres sunt qui testimonium dant in coelo:
Pater, Verbum et Spiritus Sancto;
et hi tres unum sunt.

Nisi Dominus

Except the Lord aedificaverit domum,
in vanum laboraverunt qui aedificant eam.
Nisi Dominus custodierit civitatem,
frustra vigilat qui custodit eam.

Quia illic sederunt sedes in iudicio,
sedes super domum David.
Rogate quae ad pacem sunt Ierusalem
et abundantia diligentibus te.
Fiat pas in virtute tua
et abundantia in turribus tuis.
Propter fratres meos et proximos meos
loquebar pacem de te.
Propter domum Domini nostri
quaesivi bona tibi.
Gloria Patri et Filio
et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Hear, O heaven, my words, full of desire
plena desiderio
et perfusa gaudio.

Duo Seraphim

tenor: Mark Dobell, Jeremy Budd, Ben Davies

Except the Lord build the house, they have laboured in vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise before dawn: to rise when you have sat down, ye who eat the bread of sorrow. When he has given sleep to those he loves, behold, children are an inheritance of the Lord, a reward, the fruit of the womb. As arrows in the hand of the mighty, so are children of the vigorous. Blessed is the man who has fulfilled his longing by them: he shall not be perplexed when he speaks to his enemies at the gate. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, now and for ever, world without end. Amen.

Audi coelum

Hear, O heaven, my words, full of desire and suffused with joy.

Hear, O heaven, my words, full of desire and suffused with joy.
i hear.  
Tell me, I pray, who is she who, rising like the dawn, shines, that I may bless her?

i shall tell you.  
Tell, for she is beautiful as the moon, exquisite as the sun which fills with joy the earth, the heavens and the seas.

mary.  
Mary, that sweet virgin foretold by the prophet Ezechiel, gate of the orient, such is she!

That holy and happy gate through which death was driven out, but life brought in.  
EVEN SO!

Who is always a sure mediator between man and God, a remedy for our sins.

(a Choir) Omnes!  
Omnes hanc ergo sequamur, qua cum gratia mercemur vitam aeternam. Conseguamur.

Lauda Jerusalem  
Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem: praise thy God, O Zion. For he hath strengthened the bars of your gates: he hath blessed thy children within thee. He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat. He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: his word runneth very swiftly. He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the cloud like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who will stand before his cold? He will send out his word and melt them: he will cause his wind to blow and the waters will flow. He announces his word unto Jacob, his statutes and judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and he has not shown his judgements to them. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, now and for ever, world without end. Amen.

I HEAR.  
Tell me, I pray, who is she who, rising like the dawn, shines, that I may bless her?

I SHALL TELL YOU.  
Tell, for she is beautiful as the moon, exquisite as the sun which fills with joy the earth, the heavens and the seas.

mary.  
Mary, that sweet virgin foretold by the prophet Ezechiel, gate of the orient, such is she!

That holy and happy gate through which death was driven out, but life brought in.  
EVEN SO!

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Sonata sopra Sancta Maria

Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis.

Holy Mary, pray for us.

Ave maris stella

soprano: Grace Davidson, Charlotte Mobbs
bass: Eamonn Dougan

Ave maris stella,
Dei mater alma,
atque semper virgo,
felix coeli porta.
Sumens illud ave
Gabrielis ore,
funda nos in pace
mutans Evae nomen.

Peerless virgin,
gentle above all others,
when we are pardoned for our sins,
make us gentle and pure.

Vitam praesta puram,
iter para tutum,
ui videntes lesum
semper collaetemur.
Sit laus Deo Patri,
summo Christo decus,
Spiritui Sancto,
tribus honor unus.
Amen.

Ave maris stella

Hail, star of the sea,
life-giving mother of God
and perpetual virgin,
happy gate of heaven.
Receiving that ‘Ave’
from the mouth of Gabriel,
keep us in peace,
reversing the name ‘Eva’.

Grant us a pure life,
prepare a safe journey,
so that seeing Jesus
we may rejoice for ever.
Praise be to God the Father,
glory to Christ most high,
and to the Holy Spirit,
triple honour in one.
Amen.

Ritornello

Solve vincla reis,
profer lumen caccis,
mala nostra pelle,
bona cunctis posce.

Peerless virgin,
gentle above all others,
when we are pardoned for our sins,
make us gentle and pure.

Sit laus Deo Patri,
summo Christo decus,
Spiritui Sancto,
tribus honor unus.
Amen.

Ritornello

Monstra te esse matrem:
sumat per te preces,
qui pro nobis natus,
tulit esse tuus.

Show yourself to be a mother:
may he receive through you our prayers
who, born for us,
deigned to be yours.

Ave maris stella

Hail, star of the sea,
life-giving mother of God
and perpetual virgin,
happy gate of heaven.
Receiving that ‘Ave’
from the mouth of Gabriel,
keep us in peace,
reversing the name ‘Eva’.

Grant us a pure life,
prepare a safe journey,
so that seeing Jesus
we may rejoice for ever.
Praise be to God the Father,
glory to Christ most high,
and to the Holy Spirit,
triple honour in one.
Amen.

Ritornello

Solve vincla reis,
profer lumen caccis,
mala nostra pelle,
bona cunctis posce.

Peerless virgin,
gentle above all others,
when we are pardoned for our sins,
make us gentle and pure.

Sit laus Deo Patri,
summo Christo decus,
Spiritui Sancto,
tribus honor unus.
Amen.

Ritornello

Monstra te esse matrem:
sumat per te preces,
qui pro nobis natus,
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Show yourself to be a mother:
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who, born for us,
deigned to be yours.

Magnificat

Magnificat anima mea Dominum.
My soul doth magnify the Lord.

Et exultavit

Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my saviour.
3 16 Quia respetit
Quia respetit humilitatem ancillae suae,
etc. For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden, for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

4 17 Quia fecit mihi magna
bass: Ben Davies, Eamonn Dougan
Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est et sanctum nomen eius.
For he that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is his name.

5 18 Et misericordia
Et misericordia eius a progenie in progenies timentibus eum.
And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations.

6 19 Fecit potentiam
Fecit potentiam in brachio suo; dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.
He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

7 20 Deposuit potentes
Deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble and meek.

8 21 Esurientes
Esurientes implevit bonis, et divites dimisit inanes.
He hath filled the hungry with good things and the rich he hath sent empty away.

9 22 Suscept Israel
soprano: Grace Davidson, Charlotte Mobbs
Susceptit Israel puern suum, recordatus misericordiae suae.
He has helped his child Israel, mindful of his mercy.

10 23 Sicut locutus est
Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semini eius in secula.
As he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.

11 24 Gloria Patri
tenor: Jeremy Budd, Mark Dobell
Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.

12 25 Sicut erat
As it was in the beginning is now and for ever, world without end. Amen.

13 Lauda Ierusalem (high) (for text see CD 1, track 18)
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 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.

In 2008 Harry Christophers was appointed 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 from the University of Leicester. He was awarded a CBE in the 2012 Queen's Birthday Honours.
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 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. 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 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 100 recordings reflect The Sixteen’s quality in a range of work spanning the music of 500 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 features 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.