Edmund Rubbra

The distinctive style of Edmund Rubbra’s music is unmistakable. In this beautiful new recording The Sixteen explores some of his little-known choral music.

Fauré: Requiem
Mozart: Vespers

with Elin Manahan Thomas
Roderick Williams

“…the sense of an ecstatic movement towards Paradise is tangible.”

THE TIMES

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Francesco Durante's Requiem Mass in C minor is a remarkable work which can justly be described as one of the most important orchestral Requiem settings of the 18th century. Surprisingly, it was never published, despite an enduring popularity which resulted in over 50 manuscript copies in several European countries dating from between 1746 and 1871.

This is the premiere recording of my own new modern performing edition which reveals Durante to be a composer of great sensitivity and skill, fully vindicating his posthumous reputation as one of the finest 18th-century composers.

Stephen Darlington

Francesco Durante

Fuga Ferdinando: project for the ephemeral structure on San Giacomo degli Spagnoli for the funeral of Philip V.

FRANCESCO DURANTE (1684-1755)
Requiem Mass in C minor · Organ Concerto in B flat major

1 Introitus
   Requiem – Kyrie  6.06

2 Graduale
   Requiem – Tractus  5.07

Sequentia
3 Dies irae  1.29
4 Tuba mirum  2.15
5 Mors stupebit  1.35
6 Quid sum miser  1.22
7 Recordare  0.52
8 Quaerens me  1.39
9 Ingemisco  5.39
10 Lacrimosa  2.56

Offertorium
11 Domine Jesu  2.17
12 Hostias  2.00

13 Sanctus – Osanna  2.42
14 Benedictus – Osanna  3.43
15 Agnus Dei  2.02
16 Communio  3.26

Libera me
17 Libera me (i)  2.39
18 Dies illa  1.32
19 Requiem aeternam  1.27
20 Libera me (ii)  1.49
21 Responsorium  0.49

Organ Concerto in B flat major
22 Allegro  3.30
23 Grave  2.57
24 Allegro  3.33

Total Running Time  63.27
Neapolitan ‘school’ of composition in the middle of the 18th century. It has been convenient for posterity to celebrate him more for his pupils (notably Pergolesi, Traetta, Piccini and Paisiello) than for his own work. There is no doubt that he exerted considerable influence as a teacher, instilling a firm grasp of traditional harmony and counterpoint in his students. However, he was a composer of considerable skill and invention, finding a way of combining his mastery of counterpoint with an elegance of melody, a richness of harmony and a structural instinct which resulted in some memorable compositions. The fact that they are almost all sacred or instrumental, and not in the field of opera, the most famous and fashionable genre in 18th-century Naples, is surely part of the reason for the composer’s subsequent neglect.

In fact, Francesco Durante’s reputation was considerable, both in his own day and also posthumously. In his 18th-century A General History of Music Charles Burney wrote that Durante was ‘long master of the conservatorio of Sant’ Onofrio, at Naples, and regarded as the greatest harmonist, as well as the best instructor of his time’. In the same article, Burney confirmed that the composer’s ‘masses and motets are still in use, and models of correct writing with the students of the several conservatories of Naples’. Another famous 18th-century writer, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, went so far as to describe Durante as ‘more ingenious than all the rest’ in harmony. Turning to the 19th century, the fact that a manuscript copy of Durante’s Requiem in C minor was owned by Anton Thibaut (1772-1840) is not a surprise: it is indicative of the enthusiasm with which Durante’s music was adopted by the Cecilian movement. Some years later, Ernst Ludwig Gerber was also glowing in his praise of Durante, claiming that ‘kein Meister so viel...
Kunstzöglinge gebildet habe, als er’ (‘no Master nurtured as many pupils as well as he did’). In England, the composer featured in the Dictionary of Musicians (1824), eliciting this comment: ‘…it appears refinement can go no further in this style of composition’.

It should be said, however, that not all commentators were as flattering about the composer. For example, in his Biographie Universelle des Musiciens (1882), François-Joseph Fétis, whilst acknowledging that Durante was counted amongst the most famous Italian composers who produced some of the most renowned compositions of the 18th century, damned him with faint praise by writing that he devoted his life primarily to sacred rather than theatrical music and ‘Il a peu d’invention dans les idées’.

In preparing this edition, I consulted 14 of the more than 50 sources of Francesco Durante's Requiem in C minor, ranging from the autograph manuscript dated 1746 to a copy dated 1871. There could be no greater evidence for its widespread dissemination throughout Europe over a period of more than a century than this corpus of manuscripts. An explanation is not difficult to find, given the extensive cultural exchange between Spain, Italy and Northern Europe for political reasons during the 18th century. It is perhaps surprising though that the work was never published, notwithstanding the limitations of its commercial value for a publisher. After all, the composer's reputation was considerable, as we have seen from a wide variety of commentators.

It has been suggested by Hanns-Berthold Dietz that this is one of the most important orchestral Requiems of the early 18th century and at times even foreshadows Mozart. That the work anticipated Michael Haydn's or even Mozart's settings may seem far-fetched. Requiems by Hasse (1763), Gassmann (1774) or Paisiello (1789) are much more obvious precursors. However, glances at Reutter's Requiem in C minor (1753), or Jommelli's Requiem in Eb (1756), reveal Durante as having a stronger grasp of structure, and greater skill in combining traditional contrapuntal devices with an engaging early-Enlightenment style, which owed much to the secular musical world of opera. This is certainly some way from the sacred music of his predecessor at the Conservatorio Poveri di Gesù Cristo, Francesco Feo (1691-1761), whose sacred music is much less sophisticated, relying on short repetitive phrases and simple harmonic procedures.

There are a number of striking features of Durante's Requiem in C minor which are worthy of comment. First, there is the approach to vocal scoring. The work is scored for five-part choir (SSATB) from which soloists are taken with an additional ripieno choir (ATB). Although much of the time the ripieno choir is used to reinforce the tutti (e.g. the beginning of 'Dies irae'), at other times it is used to produce a richer textural effect (as in 'Libera me'). Durante also makes use of this expanded texture for dramatic, repetitive effects, such as the frequent elegant soprano duets such as 'Preces meae' or the juxtaposition of soprano and counter-tenor in 'Quaerens me'. The last of these demonstrates a third feature, namely an enterprising approach to keys and structure. This particular movement begins in Eb major and ends in the secondary dominant, F major, leading...
directly to the striking F minor chords at the start of ‘Ingemisco’. Structural repetitions are persuasively managed, such as the opening bars of ‘Dies irae’, repeated at the beginning of ‘Quid sum miser’, or the three notes in thirds associated with the word ‘Requiem’, appearing in bar 6 of the first movement and again in bar 17 of ‘Liberate me’ and the opening of ‘Requiem aeternam’. Fourthly, it is not surprising to find numerous contrapuntal devices, which the composer is at pains to flag for their importance. A notable example is ‘Pleni sunt coeli’ labelled Canon sopra canon on the score with Alto 1 and 2 marked Canon alla quarta sopra and Tenor 1 and 2 marked Canon alla quinta sotto in case the performer should fail to spot it! Finally, the instrumental resources are modest, just strings throughout, with added horns in ‘Tuba mirum’, but they are used with admirable subtlety: lyrical and expressive at the outset, vigorous and dramatic in scales marked spaventoso (frightening) in the ‘Dies irae’, sweetly poignant in the ‘Lacrimosa’, boldly tremolando in ‘Liberate me’ or arpeggiando in the ‘Offertorio’. As a whole, it is not hard to understand why this Requiem was so popular for over a century after its composition, for Durante created a route to the heart of the meaning of the text by transcending the clichés of mid-18th-century Neapolitan musical language and achieving a striking combination of harmony and melody.

The first performance is thought to have been in Rome in 1746, possibly at the church of S. Giacomo degli Spagnoli in the Piazza Navona. The evidence for this is by no means incontrovertible. The date 1746 appears in three places in the primary source for this edition held in the British Library: the title page of the First Violin part, the title page of the Organ part, and the end of the Organ part (‘Finis/1746’). A later manuscript, also in the British Library, includes the words ‘Per Roma’ on the title page of the score. Also, in a letter to Padre Martini (1706-84) dated ‘Roma, 10 Settembre 1746’, Girolamo Chiti (1679-1759) wrote about a funeral Mass by ‘Ciccio Durante, Napolitano Scolari di Pitoni’ for S. Giacomo degli Spagnoli and refers to the Spanish commissioning Durante to compose the Requiem Mass for the royal funerals (‘e regij funerali’). The problem is that the author specifies that this was a Mass in four parts (not eight) with instruments.

However, there is no doubt that there was a Requiem Mass for Philip V of Spain in S. Giacomo degli Spagnoli in September 1746. The King had died in July that year, prompting Requiem masses for him in Spanish churches throughout Europe. Additional evidence for the Rome performance can be seen from a series of engravings that appeared in the city in September 1746, including one of the Spanish national church, S. Giacomo in Piazza Navona. This had been commissioned by Cardinal Trojano Acquaviva, Protector of the Kingdom of Spain, from the artist Ferdinando Fuga (1699-1782) in 1746, ‘for the solemn funeral of King Philip V of Spain’.

For clues about the performers at the work’s premiere we have to look to the late 17th century, as we lack precise details about the musical resources at S. Giacomo in 1746. There is a record of the musicians involved in the outdoor Easter morning celebrations in 1687 (in the Piazza Navona), at which there were 17 singers and players. For special occasions such as patronal feasts and Requiems inside the church, it is likely that platforms were built to accommodate extra musicians. One can speculate that for this Requiem,
Choir 1 might have been in the organ gallery and Choir 2 on a platform on the other side of the nave with its own organ.

In 1746, the singers would have been all male. In this recording there is a separate group of soloists in addition to Choir 1, an approach which is likely to have been taken in later performances. The continuo keyboard part is specifically marked *organo* in all sources and it is most likely that the string continuo group consisted of violoncello, adding violone in the *tutti* sections. There is no evidence that wind instruments were used apart from the solo horns in ‘Tuba mirum’. The horn had been introduced into Neapolitan opera orchestras via the Viennese court orchestra, particularly in the scores of Alessandro Scarlatti, one of Durante’s predecessors as Primo Maestro of the Conservatorio S. Maria di Loreto. Durante and others sometimes used the term *tromba da caccia* (the Italian version of the French *trompe de chasse*) to distinguish it from the trumpet, although the hooped horn, for this is what it was, was originally a form of trumpet.

Amongst Durante’s instrumental music is a set of orchestral concertos which are particularly imaginative, displaying the conjunction of *stile antico* and *stile moderno* effects with great skill. He also wrote a number of works for keyboard including sonatas, toccatas and several *partimenti*. However, his keyboard Concerto in Bb is a rare example of an Italian keyboard concerto of the period. The outer movements exploit the virtuoso possibilities of the solo instrument, whilst the slow movement is more expressive in harmony and melody. The edition used in this recording is based on a manuscript copy of 1863.

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**Texts and Translations**

### INTROITUS

**Requiem** (sopranos I & II & chorus)

*Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,*  
*et lux perpetua luceat eis.*  
*Te decet hymnus, Deus, in Sion,*  
*et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem.*  
*Exaudi orationem meam,*  
*ad te omnis caro veniet.*

**Kyrie** (chorus)

*Kyrie eleison.*  
*Christe eleison.*  
*Kyrie eleison.*

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.  
A hymn, O God, becometh Thee in Zion,  
and a vow shall be paid to Thee in Jerusalem.  
Hear my prayer,  
unto Thee shall all flesh come.

Lord, have mercy on us.  
Christ, have mercy on us.  
Lord, have mercy on us.
GRADUALE

Requiem (sopranos I & II & chorus)

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. He shall be justified in everlasting memory, and shall not fear evil reports.

Tractus (sopranos I & II, bass & chorus)

Forgive, O Lord, the souls of all the faithful departed from all the chains of their sins and by the aid to them of Thy grace may they escape the judgement of punishment, and enjoy the blessedness of everlasting light.

SEQUENTIA

Dies irae (chorus)

Day of wrath, day of anger shall consume the world in ashes, as foretold by David and the Sibyl.

Quantus tremor est futurus, quando iudex est venturus, cuncta stricte discussurus.

Tuba mirum (soprano I solo)

A trumpet, spreading a wondrous sound through the graves of all lands, summons all before the throne.

Mors stupebit (sopranos I & II & chorus)

Death and nature shall be astonished, when all creation rises again, to answer to the Judge.

A book will be brought forth, in which is contained everything that is, out of which the world shall be judged.

When the Judge takes his seat, all that is hidden will reveal itself, nothing will remain unavenged.
6 Quid sum miser (chorus)

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?
Quem patronum rogaturus,
cum vix iustus sit securus?

Ingemisco tamquam reus,
culpa rubet vultus meus,
supplicanti parce, Deus.

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?
Quem patronum rogaturus,
cum vix iustus sit securus?

Ingemisco tamquam reus,
culpa rubet vultus meus,
supplicanti parce, Deus.

Rex tremendae majestatis,
qui salvandos salvas gratis,
salva me, fons pietatis.

Qui Mariam absolvisti
et latronem exaudisti,
mihi quoque spem dedisti.

Preces meae non sunt dignae,
sed tu bonus fac benignae,
ne peremni cremer igne.

Inter oves locum praesta
et ab haedis me sequestra,
statuens in parte dextra.

Confutatis maledictis,
flammis acribus addictis,
voca me cum benedictis.

Oro supplicet acclinis,
cor contritum quasi cinis,
gere curam mei finis.

I groan like a guilty man,
guilt reddens my face,
suppliant before Thee, O God.

Thou who didst absolve Mary
and didst hearken to the thief,
to me also hast Thou given hope.

My prayers are not worthy,
but Thou, O good one, show mercy,
that I burn not in everlasting fire.

Place me among Thy sheep
and separate me from the goats,
setting me on Thy right hand.

When the accursed have been confounded,
and given over to the bitter flames,
call me with the blessed.

I pray in supplication on my knees.
my heart contrite as the dust,
safeguard my fate.

7 Recordare (chorus)

Recordare, Jesu pie,
quod sum causa tuae viae,
ne me perdas illa die.

Ingemisco tamquam reus,
culpa rubet vultus meus,
supplicanti parce, Deus.

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?
Quem patronum rogaturus,
cum vix iustus sit securus?

Ingemisco tamquam reus,
culpa rubet vultus meus,
supplicanti parce, Deus.

Rex tremendae majestatis,
qui salvandos salvas gratis,
salva me, fons pietatis.

Qui Mariam absolvisti
et latronem exaudisti,
mihi quoque spem dedisti.

Preces meae non sunt dignae,
sed tu bonus fac benignae,
ne peremni cremer igne.

Inter oves locum praesta
et ab haedis me sequestra,
statuens in parte dextra.

Confutatis maledictis,
flammis acribus addictis,
voca me cum benedictis.

Oro supplicet acclinis,
cor contritum quasi cinis,
gere curam mei finis.

8 Quaerens me (soprano I & counter-tenor duet)

Quaerens me sedisti lassus,
relinquisti crucem passus;
tantus labor non sit cassin.

Just the avenging judge,
grant remission
before the day of reckoning.

I groan like a guilty man,
guilt reddens my face,
suppliant before Thee, O God.

Thou who didst absolve Mary
and didst hearken to the thief,
to me also hast Thou given hope.

My prayers are not worthy,
but Thou, O good one, show mercy,
that I burn not in everlasting fire.

Place me among Thy sheep
and separate me from the goats,
setting me on Thy right hand.

When the accursed have been confounded,
and given over to the bitter flames,
call me with the blessed.

I pray in supplication on my knees.
my heart contrite as the dust,
safeguard my fate.

9 Ingemisco (sopranos I & II, counter-tenor, tenor, bass quintet & chorus)

Ingemisco tamquam reus,
culpa rubet vultus meus,
supplicanti parce, Deus.

Qui Mariam absolvisti
et latronem exaudisti,
mihi quoque spem dedisti.

Preces meae non sunt dignae,
sed tu bonus fac benignae,
ne peremni cremer igne.

Confutatis maledictis,
flammis acribus addictis,
voca me cum benedictis.

Oro supplicet acclinis,
cor contritum quasi cinis,
gere curam mei finis.

I groan like a guilty man,
guilt reddens my face,
suppliant before Thee, O God.

Thou who didst absolve Mary
and didst hearken to the thief,
to me also hast Thou given hope.

My prayers are not worthy,
but Thou, O good one, show mercy,
that I burn not in everlasting fire.

Place me among Thy sheep
and separate me from the goats,
setting me on Thy right hand.

When the accursed have been confounded,
and given over to the bitter flames,
call me with the blessed.

I pray in supplication on my knees.
my heart contrite as the dust,
safeguard my fate.
Lacrimosa (sopranos I & II, counter-tenor, tenor & chorus)

Lacrimosa dies illa, 
qua resurget ex favilla 
iudicandus homo reus. 
Huic ergo parce, Deus, 
pie Jesu Domine, 
dona eis requiem. Amen.

Mournful that day, 
when from the dust shall rise 
guilty man to be judged. 
Therefore spare him, O God, 
merciful Lord Jesus, 
grant them eternal rest. Amen.

Hostias (chorus)

We offer unto Thee this sacrifice 
of prayer and praise. 
Receive it for those souls, 
whom today we commemorate. 
Allow them, O Lord, 
to cross from death into life, 
which once Thou didst promise to Abraham 
and his descendants.

Hostias et preces, tibi, Domine, 
laudis offerimus. 
Tu suscipe pro animabus illis, 
quarum hostie memoriam facimus. 
Fac eas, Domine, 
de morte transire ad vitam, 
quam olim Abrahamae promisisti 
et semini eius.

SANCTUS – OSANNA (chorus)

Holy, Holy, Holy, 
Lord God of Sabaoth; 
heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. 
Hosanna in the highest.

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, 
Dominus Deus Sabaoth; 
pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua. 
Osanna in excelsis.

BENEDICTUS – OSANNA (chorus)

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

Benedictus qui venit in 
nomine Domini. 
Osanna in excelsis.

OFFERTORIUM

Domine, Jesu Christe (chorus)

Domine, Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae, 
libera animas omnium fidelium 
defunctorum de poenis inferni 
et de profundo lacu. 
Libera eas de ore leonis, 
ne absorbant eas tartarus, 
nec cadant in obscurum. 
Sed signifer sanctus Michael 
repraesentet eas in lucem sanctam, 
quam olim Abrahamae promisisti 
et semini eius.

Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory, 
deliver the souls of all the faithful 
departed from the pains of hell 
and from the bottomless pit. 
Deliver them from the lion’s mouth, 
neither let them fall into darkness, 
nor the black abyss swallow them up. 
But let St Michael, Thy standard-bearer, 
lead them into the holy light, 
which once Thou didst promise to Abraham 
and his descendants.
AGNUS DEI (chorus)

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona eis requiem.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona eis requiem sempiternam.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant them rest.

May eternal light shine on them, O Lord, with Thy saints forever, for Thou art merciful.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant them everlasting rest.

Communio (chorus)

Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine, cum sanctis tuis in aeternum, quia pius es.

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis, Domine, cum sanctis tuis in aeternum, quia pius es.

May eternal light shine on them, O Lord, with Thy saints forever, for Thou art merciful.

Requiem aeternam, O Lord, and may perpetual light shine on them, O Lord, with Thy saints forever, for Thou art merciful.

LIBERA ME

Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna, in die illa tremenda, quando coeli movendi sunt et terra, dum veneris iudicare saeculum per ignem.

Tremens factus sum ego et timeo, dum disciplo venerit atque ventura ira, quando coeli movendi sunt et terra.

Deliver me, O Lord, from death eternal, on that fearful day, when the heavens and the earth shall be shaken, when Thou shalt come to judge the world by fire.

I am seized with fear and trembling, until the trial be upon us, and the wrath to come, when the heavens and the earth shall be shaken.

Dies illa (soprano I solo & chorus)

Dies illa, dies irae, calamitatis et miseriae, dies magna et amara valde, dum veneris iudicare saeculum per ignem.

O that day, that day of anger, of calamity and misery, a great day and exceeding bitter, when Thou shalt come to judge the world by fire.

Requiem aeternam (chorus)

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis, Domine.

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them, O Lord.
 Libera me (ii) (sopranos I & II, tenor, bass & chorus)

Deliver me, O Lord, from death eternal, on that fearful day, when the heavens and the earth shall be shaken, when Thou shalt come to judge the world by fire.

RESPONSORIUM (chorus)

May eternal light shine on them, O Lord, with Thy saints forever, for Thou art merciful.

GRANDE FESTIVAL SERVICE 2022

ORGAN CONCERTO in B flat major
Clive Driskill-Smith organ

Allegro

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL CHOIR

Stephen Darlington conductor

SOLOISTS from THE SIXTEEN
Alexandra Kidgell soprano I
Katy Hill soprano II
William Purefoy counter-tenor
Mark Dobell tenor
Ben Davies bass

Clive Driskill-Smith organ

OXFORD BAROQUE

VIOLIN I
Rodolfo Richter leader
Stephen Pedder
Beatrice Scaldini
Anna Curzon *

VIOLIN II
Naomi Burrell
Alice Evans
Nia Lewis

VIOLA
Rachel Byrt
Aliye Cornish

CELLO
Joseph Crouch
Gavin Kibble

VIOLON
Kate Aldridge

HORN I
Joseph Walters

HORN II
Richard Bayliss

ORGAN
Clive Driskill-Smith

* Tracks 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 18 & 19 only
Stephen Darlington
Stephen Darlington is one of the country's leading choral conductors. Since 1985 he has been Director of Music at Christ Church, Oxford, where he is also an Associate Professor. Previously Stephen was Master of the Music at St Alban's Abbey and Artistic Director of St Alban's International Organ Festival. He has established Christ Church as an acknowledged centre of academic musical excellence, and maintained the highest choral traditions of the Church of England in the Cathedral. His outstanding strength is in his performances of choral music of the 16th century and of modern sacred music. An extensive discography, comprising over 50 CDs, includes several award-winning recordings. Stephen was President of the Royal College of Organists from 2000 to 2002 and is currently Choragus of the University of Oxford. He is the holder of a Lambeth Doctorate in Music and is the Chairman of the Ouseley Trust. He has been awarded Honorary Membership of the Royal Academy of Music and appointed a Lay Canon of Christ Church Cathedral.

Christ Church Cathedral Choir
The Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, founded 500 years ago, holds a distinctive place within the great English choral tradition. Unlike all other collegiate and cathedral choirs, it serves both an Oxford college and a diocese. The choir is revered for the vibrancy of its sound and its artistic flexibility, performing early and contemporary music with equal skill. On recent tours, in addition to performing its own programmes, the choir has worked intensively alongside local community choirs in Portugal, Jamaica, Bermuda, China and the USA, culminating in successful and memorable joint concerts. Christ Church Cathedral Choir boasts a legacy of ground-breaking recordings which have excited the critics and the listening public for over 30 years, resulting in international recognition. For example, all three volumes of its ongoing series of Eton Choirbook recordings (Avie) have been nominated for Gramophone Awards. Howard Goodall’s Requiem (EMI) received a Classical Brit and An Oxford Elegy by Vaughan Williams (Nimbus) was nominated for a GRAMMY Award. The astonishing versatility of this choir gives it a strong media profile, featuring in more than 15 documentaries in the last ten years.

Oxford Baroque
Oxford Baroque is rapidly emerging as one of the most exciting ensembles on the British historical performance scene. Originally formed by a group of students who discovered a shared passion for music of the 17th and 18th centuries whilst studying at the University of Oxford, the group has gone on to develop a bold characteristic sound. Oxford Baroque has recently featured at the St John’s, Smith Square Christmas Festival, London Handel Festival, Brighton Early Music Festival and the Oxford Early Music Festival, in addition to presenting two exploratory programmes of Bach’s music as part of the Kings Place Baroque Unwrapped series. Building on their roots in Oxford’s choral tradition, they have collaborated with the Oxford choral foundations of Christ Church, Magdalen College, New College and Merton College, giving performances of the core oratorio repertoire. With a strong commitment to upholding the highest standards of musical performance, integrated with the latest musicological scholarship, Oxford Baroque looks set to enjoy a bright future.
Alexandra Kidgell soprano

A graduate of Cambridge University, Alexandra Kidgell studied performance at the Royal Academy of Music, where she was awarded the DipRAM for an outstanding final recital. She was a finalist in the LBS Bach Singer’s Prize, and in the Royal Overseas League Music Competition.

A member of The Sixteen, Alexandra has appeared as a soloist throughout the UK and Europe. Highlights include Bach’s Magnificat on a national tour with The Sixteen, Mozart’s Exultate Jubilate and Mass in C minor, Bach’s Mass in B minor at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, and Handel’s Messiah in Wells Cathedral and Bath Abbey. Alexandra was part of the small cast of Thomas Tallis, a new play with music, which premiered at The Globe’s Sam Wanamaker Playhouse to wide critical acclaim.

Katy Hill soprano

After reading music at Cambridge, Katy has had a busy and cosmopolitan career performing and recording. She sings for The Sixteen, as well as other leading groups that include the Monteverdi Choir, The Tallis Scholars and Tenebrae. Her bustling schedule has taken her around the globe, concentrating mainly on the baroque and early classical periods but also on composers such as Arvo Pärt and James MacMillan. Solo work has included Bach’s Passions, Handel’s oratorios and Monteverdi’s Vespers of 1610, while Orfeo (Aix), Der Freischütz (Paris), Orphé (Covent Garden) and Carmen (Paris and Granada) have been operatic highlights. Her versatility has led to a long involvement with the music of Steve Reich, as well as participation in The Sixteen and Streetwise Opera’s celebrated collaboration The Passion in Manchester and an adaptation for children of Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream with Purcell’s The Fairy Queen.

William Purefoy counter-tenor

A graduate of Magdalen College, Oxford and Guildhall School of Music and Drama, William has collaborated with the BBC Proms, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Hanover Band, English Concert, Theatre of Voices, The Sixteen, Scottish Opera, Buxton Festival, Garsington Opera, Iford Arts, Opera Theatre Company and Classical Opera Company. He has given concerts and recitals at the Royal Albert Hall, Wigmore Hall, Carnegie Hall, Barbican, Purcell Room, and in Innsbruck and Graz. International appearances have included New Zealand Opera, Theater Basel, Les Arts Valencia and Staatsoper Hannover. His repertoire includes roles such as ‘Ottone’ (L’Incoronazione di Poppea), ‘Ptolemy’ (Giulio Cesare), ‘Ernesto’ (Il Mondo della luna), ‘Dronic’ (Tamerlano), ‘Antonio’ (Gesualdo), ‘Apollo’ (Apollo and Hyacinth), ‘Ascanio’ (Ascanio in Alba), ‘Athamas’ (Semele) and many more.

William has recorded with Chandos, Da Capo, Decca Argo and ASV Gaudeamus. He was featured in the television series In Search of Shakespeare and the film Young Victoria and has frequently appeared at Shakespeare’s Globe.
Mark Dobell *tenor*

Originally from Tunbridge Wells in Kent, Mark Dobell was a choral scholar of Clare College, Cambridge, where he read Classics. He later studied as a postgraduate at the Royal Academy of Music.

Mark has worked as a soloist throughout the UK and abroad with world-renowned conductors including Sir John Eliot Gardiner and Sir Roger Norrington. He has made numerous television appearances, most notably the BBC's *Sacred Music* series, and can be heard on many recordings, including Mozart's *Solemn Vespers*, Handel's *Saul* and Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610* all with The Sixteen on CORO.

Equally established as a consort singer, Mark enjoys a busy schedule performing and recording with many leading choirs and consort groups. He is proud to be a member of The Sixteen, The Orlando Consort and the Choir of Westminster Abbey.

Ben Davies *bass*

Ben Davies studied at the Royal Academy of Music before joining Glyndebourne Festival Opera chorus and has since sung with many of the world's best-known known choirs and ensembles. He started singing with The Sixteen during their first Choral Pilgrimage in 2000 and has toured, broadcast and recorded with them extensively, including as a soloist on their discs of Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*, Purcell's *The Indian Queen*, two discs of Bach's Lutheran Masses and Handel's *Saul*. He has sung in opera houses and concert halls all over the world for such conductors as Harry Christophers, William Christie, John Eliot Gardiner and Vladimir Jurowski. Operatic roles include 'Sailor' (*Dido & Aeneas*) – Vienna Festival, Netherlands Opera and the Opera Comique, Paris; 'Ubalde' (*Armide*) – Buxton Festival; 'Guglielmo' (*Così fan Tutte*); 'Polyphemus' (*Acis & Galatea*) and 'Amis' (*Le Pauvre Matelot*).

Clive Driskill-Smith *organ*

Clive Driskill-Smith MA MPhil FRCO ARCM is one of the leading organists of his generation. He studied with David Sanger and won the Calgary International Organ Competition in 2002. He performs throughout Europe, North America, Asia and Australia; in the UK he has played at the BBC Proms, the Royal Festival Hall, Symphony Hall and Bridgewater Hall, and in the US he has played at Regional and National Conventions of the American Guild of Organists. His CDs have received critical acclaim and his performances have been broadcast worldwide. Clive plays at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, and teaches at the Royal Academy of Music.

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