

## Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina · Vol.2

*"An effortlessly radiant recording."*

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COR16105

## Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina · Vol.3

*"The Sixteen's Palestrina cycle may just be a classic in the making."*

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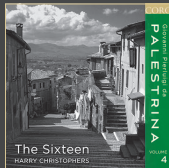


COR16106

## Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina · Vol.4

*"What superb advocates The Sixteen turn out to be, from the sensitively shaped Kyrie through the firm yet carefully rendered Gloria."*

INTERNATIONAL RECORD REVIEW

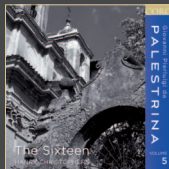


COR16114

## Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina · Vol.5

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The Sixteen  
 HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

Palestrina's legacy and impact on sacred music worldwide is second to none. Composers through the centuries have studied and learnt from his gift for writing exquisite polyphony. Small wonder then that he has been called not only 'the prince and father of music' but also 'the saviour of church music'. At the final session of the Council of Trent, there were many discussions about the use of polyphony and whether or not it should be banned. In 1607, the composer Agostino Agazzari wrote "music of the older kind is no longer in use because of the confusion and Babel of the words." And he went on to say that this music would have come very near to being banished from the holy church by a sovereign pontiff had not Giovanni Palestrina found the remedy. The price of fame for Palestrina was that his legacy was to contain as many myths as facts.

Over the next few years, we are going to undertake a series honouring his great art, recording much unfamiliar but stunning music from every part of his life, giving a more accurate picture of his great achievements in music. I hasten to add that we are not endeavouring to record every note Palestrina penned - that would be more than a lifetime's work considering he wrote 104 Masses! But what we will do is present each volume based around a single Mass, in this case one of his two settings based around the famous *L'homme armé* tune, alongside not only some motets and Offertories



Photograph: Marco Borggreve

concentrating on despair, loneliness and the need for repentance, but also some of his settings of the Song of Songs. Palestrina published 29 such settings, which he dedicated to Pope Gregory XIII. In that dedication, he apologised, and indeed "blushed and grieved", for having possessed light and vain ideas in the past (presumably referring to such music as his hugely popular madrigals on profane texts); and he asserted that he had changed his purpose now by choosing "those poems which have been written of the praises of our Lord Jesus Christ and his Most Holy Mother the Virgin Mary". Remember that the Song of Songs comes from that part of the Old Testament which was often considered too sensual and erotic to be read. It was originally Hebrew love poetry, written down possibly 300 years or so before the birth of Christ, but these are texts which in Renaissance times were used in praise of the Virgin Mary.

I have always regarded Palestrina as the master craftsman, whose music composers of all ages have attempted to emulate. He shapes his music in a beautifully sonorous way, using a lot of suspensions, but always coming back into the line of the music. However, it is this perfect craftsmanship that can sometimes make Palestrina's music sound all too perfect and occasionally academic. We have attempted to achieve real ebb and flow in his music, not clipping the ends of phrases but allowing the music to breathe, to convey the real meaning of the words and making our breaths part of the music as a whole. There is a wealth of word painting in which to indulge especially in his Song of Songs motets. Our aim has been to be sensitive to this wonderful poetry and inject an energy and beauty to our performances that I hope goes some way to honour Palestrina as "the celebrated light of music".

Harry  
Anisner.

1	Parce mihi, Domine	6.44
2	Peccantem me quotidie	3.57
3	Si ambulavero in medio tribulationis	3.36
4	Tribulationes civitatum audivimus	6.17
5	Super flumina Babylonis	3.24

## SONG OF SONGS: nos. 16-18

6	Surge amica mea	2.32
7	Dilectus meus mihi	2.47
8	Surgam et circuibo civitatem	1.59
9	De profundis clamavi	3.01

## MISSA L'HOMME ARMÉ

10	Kyrie	3.11
11	Gloria	5.36
12	Credo	7.48
13	Sanctus	3.52
14	Benedictus	2.51
15	Agnus Dei I & II	5.31
16	Tribularer si nescirem	8.08
	Total Running Time	71.23

Palestrina (1525-1594) is perhaps the only Renaissance composer who has not needed revival in modern times. By the end of his life his reputation outshone all others, to some extent, it must be said, because he spent his life in Rome as a servant of the Roman Catholic Church, at the centre of power, providing music for the Pope himself and the then most prestigious group of singers in the world, the Papal Choir. His musical language derives from Josquin and his contemporaries through the music of Cristóbal de Morales (1500-1553), and he refined and polished his technique to join words and music with a perfection of expression that was never surpassed, at least within the restrictions of his chosen style. After 1600 there were huge changes in musical fashions and forms, with the rise of secular music, instrumental and opera. It is surprising that Palestrina's music was not forgotten, swept away in the flood of new harmonies and ideas. Yet it has continued to be used in churches throughout Europe and

the New World right up to our own time, still retaining a great power to move us spiritually, even in concert and recording, when divorced from the context for which Palestrina originally wrote it.

Palestrina's musical legacy is prodigious – he wrote over 100 Masses and numerous motets, Magnificats, Hymns and other pieces for all the main feasts in the church year, as well as for general use. He was fortunate in being able to have much of this music printed in his own lifetime, and also to be the first Renaissance composer to have a complete edition of almost his whole output published in modern notation in our time. Today some pieces are quite familiar, yet much superb music still awaits a proper place in the repertoire, in church or in concert.

In 1554 Palestrina, at nearly 30 years of age, published his first book of Masses. The opening item is the *Missa Ecce sacerdos magnus*; and the

frontispiece of the choirbook shows Palestrina kneeling, presenting a copy to his dedicatee, Pope Julius III. Ten years earlier, Cristóbal de Morales had published two books of Masses in Rome: the frontispiece in his second book shows the same wood cut, but with depictions of Morales and his dedicatee, Pope Paul III. Palestrina was to use the same printer as Morales, the Roman firm of Valerio and Aloysio Dorico, for his first three books of Masses (at least for the first editions). Morales had been inspired by the ground-breaking *Liber Quindecim Missarum* of 1516, published by Antico in Rome and containing Masses by Josquin, Fevin, Pipelare, Mouton, La Rue, Brumel and Rosetti. Palestrina was no doubt influenced by this collection too, but more immediately by Morales and his publishing activities, certainly by the Spaniard's music, which was regularly sung in the Papal Chapel.

Among the 16 Masses published by Morales in 1544 are two on the famous

*L'homme armé* tune, a popular French song of the early 15th century (thought by some to be composed by Antoine Busnois). This was the favourite melody used by composers in settings of the Mass Ordinary through the 1400s and early 1500s and later. The tune is not merely strikingly memorable, but it is particularly suited to contrapuntal writing, especially to the construction of complex canons. 30 or more Masses immediately spring to mind by composers of the time – anon., Busnois, Faugues, Pipelare, La Rue, Dufay, Ockeghem, Carver, Forestier, Basiron, Caron, Obrecht, de Orto, Peñalosa, Regis, Vaqueras, Tinctoris, Morales and, most famously, by Josquin Despres.

Palestrina published his two settings in 1570 and 1582, in his third and fourth Mass books. The second (unnamed in the source) paraphrases the tune, quoting and reworking it equally in all four voices throughout; whereas the first Mass is a much more extrovert affair, for five and six voices, using

the tune as a *cantus firmus* notated in mensuration canons.

In Palestrina's *Kyrie*, the first part of the tune is prominent in each voice as an introduction to the tenor, which quotes the phrase in augmented values, in long pedal notes. *Christe* likewise has the second part of the tune, prefacing its true entry, again in long pedal notes in the tenor. The 'problem' with a long-note *cantus firmus* is that the greater the augmentation of note values, the less recognisable the tune; and when that might also be sung stretched-out, backwards or upside-down, or recombined with itself in another voice, it becomes unrecognisable for listeners and often tedious for a singer. In this Mass however, Palestrina makes sure that the other voices always allude to the tune at the beginning of sections; and the second *Kyrie* dispels any doubt that this mass is anything other than one on the famous tune, for here Palestrina is inspired to write the tune in diminution in the tenor, in effect in

quick triplets against the already-triple time of the other voices. In *Osanna* also the tenor is given the complete melody in its original form.

Palestrina adds another soprano line for the second *Agnus Dei*. Here he pretends to start the *cantus firmus* in the bass, but this only lasts for four notes. The main statement is again in extreme long notes in the tenor, surrounded by shapely free-composed counterpoints in the other five voices, making for a magnificent ending to an ambitious and successful Mass on the *L'homme armé* tune.

We do not know when Palestrina composed his five-voice *L'homme armé* Mass. There are a handful of manuscript copies, but the only contemporary one seems to have been copied from the 1570 book. It may be that this is an early work – by the end of the century, mensuration canons were certainly regarded as very old-fashioned; also pieces modelled on secular tunes



were frowned upon. Yet if the date of publication has any significance, we should take note that the *Missa Papae Marcelli*, surely Palestrina's most famous work, regarded as the epitome of his mature style, was published in the second book of Masses, as early as 1567. Old-fashioned or not, the music of the third book of Masses must have been in demand, for the volume was reprinted in 1599, in partbooks, five years after Palestrina's death. Here the *L'homme armé* Mass was 'modernised', 'simplified', presumably for the large market of the smaller provincial churches, whose singers were no longer well trained in the complexities of the mensural system of notation. The *cantus firmus* and all the triple-time, (save for *Et resurrexit, Et in Spiritum* and *Osanna*, in  $\phi 3/2$ ) are now written universally in  $\phi$ . One wonders if Palestrina would have approved.

The motets and Offertories recorded here are all settings of well-known texts. They speak of despair, loneliness, the fear of death, the need for repentance,

the pain of sin, the pain of separation, of exile. This brings the most imaginative music from Palestrina, with considerable variety in his treatment. As with all great composers, his style can be defined broadly, but it is more difficult to define precisely (despite generations of music students having had to write compositional exercises in the 'style of Palestrina'): in his greatest works, his contrapuntal skill becomes so effortless, almost invisible, giving him total freedom to respond to every nuance of the text. The music becomes an intimate conversation between the voices. The rhythmic structure of each of the lines, almost never exactly coincident, gives life to the music, propelling it onward.

The Offertories, no fewer than 68 of them, were published in two books in 1593, the year before Palestrina's death. A summation of his life's work, they are consistently fine. They are all for five voices, mostly with a second tenor, Palestrina's favourite combination, although some, like *Super flumina*

*Babylonis* recorded here, have two alto parts. The opening phrase of *De profundis clamavi* demonstrates how the composer can set the mood associated with the meaning of the words: the melody leaps down a fifth, then an octave upwards; also the tenor entry is answered at the octave above by the soprano line. In contrast, *Si ambulavero in medio tribulationis* opens with a slow-moving theme rising calmly stepwise up a fourth, suggestive of the certainty of the Lord's support through all difficulties.

Palestrina's 29 motets on texts from the *Song of Songs* are also in the most refined style of the composer's maturity. They were written, it seems, in a burst of Counter-Reformation zeal, for a particular purpose; and they immediately become the most popular of his works, remaining so even in the years immediately after his death. Palestrina and his audience must have loved them and they were reprinted no fewer than 11 times between their first

publication in 1583/84 and 1613. They are simply Latin motets, neither too long nor too difficult, suitable for the sort of devotional gatherings, public or domestic, encouraged, for example, by St Philip Neri, who was active in Rome in the later part of the 16th century. They are non-liturgical, although they could be, and were, sung in services.

*Surge amica mea, Dilectus meus mihi* and *Surgam et circuibo civitatem*, nos. 16-18 of the set recorded here, are typical. There is some text repetition in *Dilectus meus mihi* and *Surgam et circuibo* and Palestrina uses much the same music in both pieces at the words: *'quaesivi illum, et non inveni'*. The rising scalic figuration on the word 'Surge' was something of a cliché in Renaissance polyphony; Palestrina uses it elsewhere in his music (e.g. *Surge illuminare*), also here in a less extended version, at 'Surgam'.

*Parce mihi, Domine* has a bleak text taken from the Book of Job. Much of

the harmony is coloured by added flats (perhaps suggesting humility), at the opening repetitions of '*Spare me, O Lord*', and later at the series of chords that highlight '*I am become burdensome to myself*'.

In contrast to the extended opening duo of *Parce mihi*, in ***Peccantem me quotidie*** all the voices enter in quick succession at short intervals, giving the music a sense of urgency: the numerous repetitions of '*I sin daily*' and '*have no remorse*' emphasise the suppliant's uneasy state of mind. He freezes momentarily at '*Fear...*', set to two long-note chords; the rhythmic pulse recovers at '*... of death disturbs me*', where Palestrina disturbs the harmony, again by adding a flat.

***Tribulationes civitatum audivimus*** is a Responsory at Matins for the Dead. Palestrina's motet setting of this text opens with a subtle emphasis on the first word, '*Tribulation*', which he spreads out over no fewer than four bars in long notes. This is not word painting in

the madrigalian sense, more a subtle accenting of certain words or sections of text, which the listener may well only absorb subconsciously. As in *Peccantem me quotidie* the rhythm stills at '*Fear...*', again with two long-note chords, dramatised differently this time by the half-bar silence before them. Note that the bass here has an extra full-bar silence: as if echoing the other voices, it skilfully draws us on, overlapping and restoring the onward motion.

***Tribularer si nescirem*** is the longest motet on this CD. In responsory form and in two *partes*, it has an extensive closing section common to both ('*Thou who calledst the woman of Canaan...*'). Palestrina constructs his motet around a *cantus firmus*, an ostinato refrain ('*Have mercy on me, O God*'). This is a simple six-bar chant-like theme sung by the second altos. In both *partes* the ostinato is repeated nine times, at the pitch of this recording starting on C, rising each repetition by one step up to G, then falling by step again to C.

Use of such structural devices was widespread of course throughout the 15th and 16th centuries by many composers: Guerrero, Victoria and Morales immediately spring to mind with very similar treatments to Palestrina's. A more complicated related example is Josquin's *Missa L'homme armé super voces musicales* (printed in 1502) in which the *cantus firmus* is repeated on every note of the scale from C up to A; and an even more complex scheme, based on Josquin's Mass, is used by the Frenchman Mathurin Forestier (fl.1500) in his *L'homme armé* Mass.

musical experience. But complexity and ingenuity in musical construction are by themselves no guarantee of musical worth: the proof of the music lies in the sound it makes. Today Forestier's Mass remains unknown except to specialists; while Josquin's two Masses are acknowledged as some of the greatest compositions of their time. Palestrina's *cantus firmus* scheme in his five-voice *Missa L'homme armé* is by comparison simple (in line with later 16th-century preferences); but the combination of that with the various counterpoints he invents make his Mass one of his greatest works to sing and to hear.

Reading and analysing music on the page is often a rewarding part of the

Martyn Imrie © 2015

The image displays three staves of musical notation for the Mass of L'homme armé. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a '3' time signature, indicating a triple meter. The melody is written on a five-line staff with diamond-shaped note heads. Below the staff, the lyrics are written in French: 'L'ome, l'ome, l'ome arme, l'ome arme, l'ome arme doit on doub-ter, doit on doubter.' The second staff continues the melody with the lyrics: 'On a fait par tout cri-er que chas-cun se viengne ar-mer d'un hau-bre-gon de fer.' The third staff concludes the phrase with the lyrics: 'L'ome, l'ome, l'ome arme, l'ome arme, l'ome arme doit on doub-ter,'. The notation includes various rests and bar lines to structure the music.

Palestrina (1525-1594) è probabilmente l'unico compositore rinascimentale al quale non è occorso un revival in tempi moderni. Già all'epoca della sua morte egli godeva di una reputazione che offuscava ogni altra. Va detto che fino a un certo punto questo era dovuto al fatto che Palestrina visse a Roma come servitore della chiesa cattolica romana, nel cuore del potere, fornendo musica per il papa stesso e per quello che allora era il più prestigioso gruppo vocale del mondo, il coro papale. Il suo linguaggio musicale deriva da Josquin e i suoi contemporanei, attraverso la musica di Cristóbal de Morales (1500-1553), di cui Palestrina raffinò la tecnica unendo testi e musica in una perfezione espressiva che non fu mai più superata, per lo meno all'interno delle restrizioni dello stile da lui scelto. Dopo il 1600 si verificarono profondi cambiamenti di forme e mode musicali, con l'espansione della musica laica, strumentale e operistica. E' sorprendente che la musica di Palestrina non sia stata dimenticata, spazzata via dal diluvio di nuove idee ed armonie, anzi, ha

continuato ad essere usata in chiese in tutta Europa e nel nuovo continente fino ai nostri giorni, mantenendo un grande potere di commuoverci spiritualmente, anche in concerti e registrazioni, separata dal contesto per il quale Palestrina originariamente la scrisse.

L'eredità musicale di Palestrina è prodigiosa: egli scrisse più di cento messe e numerosi mottetti, magnificat, inni e altri brani per ogni festività e ricorrenze dell'anno ecclesiastico così come per uso generico. Palestrina ebbe la fortuna di vedere gran parte della sua musica pubblicata nel corso della sua vita, e di essere anche il primo compositore rinascimentale ad avere un'edizione completa di quasi tutto il suo repertorio in notazione moderna ai giorni nostri. Oggi alcuni brani sono ben noti, ma molti altri di grande qualità ancora attendono di trovare un posto appropriato nel repertorio, in chiesa o in concerto.

Nel 1554 Palestrina, quasi trentenne, pubblicò il suo primo libro di messe. Il

brano d'apertura è il *Missa Ecce sacerdos magnus* e il frontespizio del corale ritrae Palestrina inginocchiato mentre porge una copia del libro a papa Giulio III, al quale l'opera era dedicata. Dieci anni prima Cristóbal de Morales aveva pubblicato a Roma due libri di messe, il frontespizio del secondo presentava la stessa incisione, che però ritraeva Morales e papa Paolo III come ricevente. Palestrina si avvale dello stesso stampatore, la ditta di Valerio e Aloysio Dorico, per i suoi primi tre libri di messe (perlomeno per la loro prima edizione). Morales era stato ispirato dal rivoluzionario *Liber Quindecim Missarum* del 1516, pubblicato da Antico a Roma e contenente messe di Josquin, Fevin, Pipelare, Mouton, La Rue, Brumel e Rosetti. Anche Palestrina fu senza dubbio influenzato da queste composizioni, ma più direttamente ancora dalle edizioni di Morales, e dalla musica dello spagnolo che veniva eseguita regolarmente nella cappella papale.

Tra le 16 messe pubblicate da Morales nel 1544 ve ne sono due basate sul famoso

**L'homme armé**, un brano popolare francese dell'inizio del quindicesimo secolo (attribuito da alcuni ad Antoine Busnois). Questa era la melodia prediletta dai compositori nella scrittura della Messa Ordinaria nel quattordicesimo e quindicesimo secolo. Il motivo non è solo sorprendentemente orecchiabile, ma particolarmente adatto alla composizione in contrappunto, specialmente per la costruzione di canoni complessi. Saltano subito alla mente trenta o più messe di compositori del periodo come Busnois, Faugues, Pipelare, La Rue, Dufay, Ockeghem, Carver, Forestier, Basiron, Caron, Obrecht, de Orto, Peñalosa, Regis, Vaqueras, Tinctoris, Morales, anonimo e, meglio noto, Josquin Despres.

Palestrina pubblicò le sue due versioni nel 1570 e nel 1582, nel terzo e quarto dei suoi libri di messe. Il secondo (senza titolo nella fonte) fa una parafrasi del motivo, citandolo e rielaborandolo in egual misura nelle quattro voci in tutta la durata; la prima messa è invece un'interpretazione molto più estroversa, per cinque e sei voci,

che impiega il motivo come *cantus firmus* notato in canoni mensurali.

Nel *Kyrie* di Palestrina la prima parte del motivo è prominente in ciascuna voce come introduzione al tenore, che cita la frase con valori aumentati e lunghe note di pedale. Allo stesso modo *Christe* contiene la seconda parte del motivo, a prefazione del suo vero inizio, anche questo in lunghe note di pedale del tenore. Il “problema” di un *cantus firmus* a note lunghe è che più si incrementa il valore delle note meno il motivo è riconoscibile, e qualora questo venga anche cantato in esteso, o retrogrado, o inverso, o ricombinato con se stesso in una voce diversa, diviene irriconoscibile per gli ascoltatori e spesso noioso per l'esecutore. Ad ogni modo nella sua messa Palestrina si assicura che le altre voci alludano sempre al motivo all'inizio delle sezioni, e il secondo *Kyrie* dissipa qualsiasi dubbio che questa messa non possa essere altro che basata sul famoso motivo, poichè qui Palestrina è ispirato a scrivere il motivo nella parte del tenore in diminuzione, e

in effetti in rapide terzine contro il tempo già ternario per le altre voci. Nell' *Osanna* anche al tenore è assegnata la melodia completa nella sua forma originale.

Palestrina aggiunge una seconda parte per soprano nel secondo *Agnus Dei*. Qui egli finge di iniziare il *cantus firmus* col basso, ma questo dura solamente quattro note. La frase principale anche qui si presenta con note molto lunghe per il tenore, circondate da contrappunti di forma libera per le altre cinque voci, risultando in un magnifico finale per un'ambiziosa e ben riuscita messa basata sul motivo dell'*homme armé*.

Non sappiamo quando Palestrina compose la sua versione a cinque voci della messa *L'homme armé*. Ne esistono alcune copie manoscritte, ma l'unica contemporanea pare essere copiata dall'edizione del 1570. Può darsi che si tratti di un lavoro di gioventù: per la fine del secolo i canoni mensurali erano sicuramente considerati fuori moda; allo stesso modo composizioni basate su

motivi popolari erano mal viste. Eppure, se la data di pubblicazione significa qualcosa, dovremmo notare che la *Missa Papae Marcellae*, sicuramente il lavoro più celebre di Palestrina e considerata come l'apice del suo stile maturo, fu pubblicata nel secondo libro di messe, probabilmente già nel 1567. Fuori moda o meno, la musica del terzo libro di messe deve essere stata grandemente richiesta, considerato che il volume fu ristampato nel 1599, in collezioni di partiture, cinque anni dopo la morte di Palestrina. Qui la messa dell'*homme armé* era “modernizzata”, “semplificata”, presumibilmente per il grande mercato delle più piccole chiese provinciali, i cui cantori dell'epoca non erano più preparati alle complessità del sistema di notazione del canone mensurale. Il *cantus firmus* e tutti i tempi ternari (eccetto per *Et resurrexit*, *Et in Spiritum* e *Osanna*, in  $\phi$  3/2 sono ora universalmente notati in  $\phi$ . C'è da chiedersi se Palestrina avrebbe approvato.

I mottetti e offertori presentati qui sono interpretazioni di testi ben noti. Essi

parlano di disperazione, solitudine, della paura della morte, della necessità del pentimento, del dolore per il peccato, per la separazione, per l'esilio. Tutto questo produce la musica più fantasiosa di Palestrina, con notevole varietà nel suo trattamento. Come con tutti i grandi compositori il suo stile può essere definito a grandi linee, ma diviene difficile definirlo più precisamente (nonostante generazioni di studenti abbiano dovuto scrivere esercizi di composizione nello “stile di Palestrina”): nei suoi lavori più importanti la sua abilità nel contrappunto è spontanea, quasi invisibile, dandogli una libertà totale nel rispondere ad ogni sfumatura del testo. La musica diventa un'intima conversazione tra le voci. La struttura ritmica di ciascun rigo, quasi mai esattamente coincidente, dona vita alla musica, spingendola in avanti.

Gli offertori, non meno di 68, furono pubblicati in due volumi nel 1593, l'anno prima della morte di Palestrina. Come una summa del lavoro della sua vita, questi avevano una rifinitura di gran



spessore. Sono tutti per cinque voci, generalmente con un secondo tenore, la combinazione preferita da Palestrina, nonostante alcuni, come ***Super flumina Babylonis*** presentata qui, abbiano due parti per contralto. La frase di apertura di ***De profundis clamavi*** dimostra come il compositore sia in grado di rappresentare lo stato d'animo associato al significato delle parole: la melodia balza giù di una quinta, poi sale di un'ottava; e così l'entrata del tenore ottiene risposta un'ottava più in alto dal motivo del soprano. In contrasto ***Si ambulavero in medio tribulationis*** apre con un tema lento che si muove lentamente verso l'alto con un intervallo di quarta, suggerendo la certezza dell'aiuto del Signore nelle difficoltà.

Anche i 29 mottetti di Palestrina, basati su testi dal ***Cantico dei Cantici***, sono nel più raffinato stile della maturità del compositore. Pare che furono scritti in un'esplosione di zelo contro-riformista, per uno scopo specifico, e divennero immediatamente i più popolari dei suoi lavori, rimanendo tali anche negli anni

immediatamente seguenti la sua morte. Palestrina e il suo pubblico devono aver amato questi mottetti che furono ristampati non meno di 11 volte tra la loro prima edizione del 1583/84 e il 1613. Questi sono semplicemente mottetti in latino, non troppo lunghi o difficili, adatti alle congregazioni devozionali, pubbliche o domestiche, incoraggiate ad esempio da San Filippo Neri, che era attivo a Roma nella tarda parte del sedicesimo secolo. Essi non sono liturgici, nonostante potrebbero esserlo, ed erano in effetti cantati durante funzioni.

***Surge amica mea, Dilectus meus mihi e Surgam et circuibo civitatem***, tracce 16-18 di questa registrazione, sono esemplari. C'è qualche ripetizione nel testo in *Dilectus meus mihi* e *Surgam et circuibo* e Palestrina impiega pressoché la stessa musica in entrambe alle parole: *'quaesivi illum, et non inveni'*. La figura in scala ascendente nella parola *'Surge'* era una sorta di cliché nella polifonia rinascimentale; Palestrina la usa altrove nella sua

musica (ad esempio *Surge* illuminare) anche qui in una versione meno estesa in corrispondenza di *'Surgam'*. ***Parce mihi, Domine*** ha un testo tristissimo tratto dal Libro di Giobbe. Gran parte dell'armonia è colorata da bemolle aggiunti (probabilmente a suggerire umiltà), in corrispondenza della ripetizione in apertura di *'Risparmiami o Signore'* e più avanti della serie di accordi che sottolineano la frase *'Sono divenuto un peso per me stesso'*.

In contrasto con l'esteso duo d'apertura di *Parce Mihi*, in ***Peccantem me quotidie*** tutte le voci fanno ingresso in rapida successione a brevi intervalli, dando alla musica un senso di urgenza: le numerose ripetizioni di *'pecco quotidianamente'* e *'non provo rimorso'* enfatizzano lo stato d'animo turbato del supplicante. Egli si blocca momentaneamente a *'Paura...'* posto su due accordi a note lunghe, la pulsazione ritmica riprende a *'...della morte mi turba'* dove Palestrina disturba l'armonia, di nuovo aggiungendo un bemolle.

***Tribulationes civitatum audivimus*** è un responsorio mattutino per i morti. La versione per mottetto che Palestrina fa di questo testo apre con una sottile enfasi sulla prima parola *'Tribolazione'*, che egli estende su non meno di quattro misure in note lunghe. Questo non è un dipingere con le parole nel senso del madrigale, ma più una sottile accentuazione di certe parole o sezoni del testo, che l'ascoltatore può facilmente assorbire inconsciamente. Come in *Peccantem me quotidie* il ritmo si cristallizza in *'Paura...'*, di nuovo con due accordi a note lunghe, drammatizzato differentemente questa volta dal silenzio di mezza misura che li precede. Notate che il basso qui ha una intera misura di silenzio in più: come se facesse eco alle altre voci, ci trascina magistralmente avanti, sovrapponendosi e ripristinando il movimento in progressione.

***Tribularer si nescirem*** è il più lungo mottetto in questo CD. In forma di responsorio e in due *partes*, ha una sezione di chiusura estesa comune ad

entrambe ('*tu che chiamasti la donna di Cana...*'). Palestrina costruisce il suo mottetto intorno ad un cantus firmus, un ritornello ostinato ('*abbi pietà di me, o Dio*'). Questo è un semplice motivo di sei misure cantato dai secondi contralti. In entrambe le partes l'ostinato è ripetuto nove volte, iniziando da Do nella tonalità di questa registrazione, salendo ad ogni ripetizione di un grado, fino a Sol, quindi discendendo gradualmente di nuovo a Do.

L'uso di questi espedienti strutturali chiaramente era comune a molti compositori nel quindicesimo e sedicesimo secolo: Guerrero, Victoria e Morales vengono subito in mente con arrangiamenti molto simili a quelli di Palestrina. Un esempio simile ma più complesso è quello fornito dalla *Missa L'homme armé super voces musicales* (pubblicata nel 1502) di Josquin, nella quale il cantus firmus è ripetuto su ogni nota della scala da Do a La e un ancor più complesso schema, basato sulla messa di Josquin, è impiegato dal francese

Mathurin Forestier (attivo nel 1500) nella sua messa *L'homme armé*.

Leggere e analizzare la musica sulla sua partitura è spesso una parte di grande soddisfazione dell'esperienza musicale. Ma la complessità e l'ingegno nella costruzione musicale non sono di per sé una garanzia di valore musicale: la prova risiede nel suono che la musica produce. Oggi la messa di Forestier rimane sconosciuta se non agli specialisti, mentre le due messe di Josquin sono riconosciute come due tra le più grandi composizioni del loro tempo. Lo schema di cantus firmus che Palestrina impiega nella sua *Missa L'homme armé* a cinque voci è semplice al confronto (in accordo con le preferenze del tardo sedicesimo secolo); ma la combinazione del cantus firmus con i vari contrappunti che egli inventa fa di questa messa uno dei suoi più grandi lavori da cantare ed ascoltare.

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## 1 Parce mihi, Domine

*Parce mihi, Domine:  
nihil enim sunt dies mei.  
Quid est homo, quia magnificas eum,  
aut quid apponis erga eum cor tuum?  
Visitas eum diluculo,  
et subito probas illum.  
Usquequo non parcis mihi,  
nec dimittis me ut glutiam salivam meam?  
Peccavi; quid faciam tibi,  
O custos hominum?  
Quare posuisti me contrarium tibi,  
et factus sum mihi metipsi gravis?  
Cur non tollis peccatum meum  
et quare non auferis  
iniquitatem meam?  
Ecce nunc in pulvere dormiam,  
et si mane me quaesieris,  
non subsistam.*

Spare me, O Lord,  
for my days are nothing.  
What is man, that Thou magnifiest him:  
or why settest Thou Thy heart toward him?  
Thou dost visit him early in the morning,  
and suddenly Thou provest him.  
How long dost Thou not spare me,  
nor suffer me, that I swallow my spittle?  
I have sinned; what shall I do to Thee,  
O keeper of men?  
Why hast Thou set me contrary to Thee,  
and I am become burdensome to myself?  
Why dost Thou not take away my sin,  
and why dost Thou not take away  
mine iniquity?  
Behold now I shall sleep in the dust,  
and if Thou seek me in the morning,  
I shall not be.

## 2 Peccantem me quotidie

*Peccantem me quotidie,  
et non me paenitentem.  
Timor mortis conturbat me:  
quia in inferno nulla est redemptio,  
miserere mei Deus, et salva me.*

I sin daily  
and have no remorse.  
The fear of death disturbs me,  
for there is no redemption in Hell.  
Have mercy on me, Lord, and save me.

## 3 Si ambulavero in medio tribulationis

*Si ambulavero in medio tribulationis,  
vivificabis me, Domine:  
et super iram inimicorum meorum  
extendes manum tuam,  
et salvum me fecit dextera tua.*

If I walk in the midst of tribulation,  
Thou wilt sustain me, Lord;  
and against the wrath of my enemies,  
Thou liftest Thy hand,  
and I am saved by Thy right hand.

## 4 Tribulationes civitatum audivimus

*Tribulationes civitatum audivimus  
quas passae sunt, et defecimus.  
Timor et hebetudo mentis cecidit super nos  
et super liberos nostros.  
Domine miserere.  
Peccavimus cum patribus nostris,  
iniuste egimus,  
iniquitatem fecimus.  
Domine miserere.*

We have heard of the tribulations of the cities  
which they have suffered, and we have felt weak.  
Fear, and dullness of mind, have fallen upon us  
and on our children.  
O Lord, have mercy.  
We have sinned like our forefathers,  
we have acted unjustly  
and carried out iniquitous acts.  
O Lord, have mercy.

## 5 Super flumina Babylonis

*Super flumina Babylonis,  
illic sedimus, et flevimus,  
dum recordaremur tui Sion.*

By the waters of Babylon,  
there we sat down and wept  
while we remembered thee, O Zion.

## SONG OF SONGS ~ nos. 16-18

### 6 Surge amica mea

*Surge, amica mea,  
speciosa mea, et veni;  
columba mea, in foraminibus petrae,  
in cavernae maceriae,  
ostende mihi faciem tuam,  
sonet vox tua in auribus meis;  
vox enim tua dulcis,  
et facies tua decora.*

Arise, my love,  
my beauteous one, and come;  
my dove, in the clefts of the rock,  
in the hollow of the cliff,  
show me thy face;  
let thy voice sound in my ears:  
for sweet is thy voice  
and thy face is comely.

## 7 Dilectus meus mihi

*Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi,  
qui pascitur inter lilia:  
donec aspiret dies, et inclinentur umbrae.  
Revertere similis esto dilecte mi capreae  
hinnuloque cervorum  
super montes Bether.  
In lectulo meo per noctes  
quaesivi quem diligit anima mea,  
quaesivi illum, et non inveni.*

My beloved is mine, and I his,  
who feedeth among the lilies  
till the day break, and the shadows fall.  
Return, my love, be like to a roe,  
or to a young hart  
upon the mountains of Bether.  
In my bed at night,  
I sought him whom my soul doth love;  
I sought him and I found him not.

## 8 Surgam et circuibo civitatem

*Surgam et circuibo civitatem,  
per vicos et plateas  
quaeram quem diligit anima mea:  
quaesivi illum, et non inveni.*

I will arise and go about the city,  
through the streets and broad ways  
I will seek him whom my soul doth love;  
I sought him and I found him not.



## 9 De profundis clamavi

*De profundis clamavi ad te Domine:  
Domine exaudi orationem meam.  
De profundis clamavi ad te Domine.*

Out of the depths I have cried unto Thee, O Lord.  
Lord, hear my prayer.  
Out of the depths I have cried unto Thee, O Lord.

## MISSA L'HOMME ARMÉ

### 10 Kyrie

*Kyrie eleison.  
Christe eleison.  
Kyrie eleison.*

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

### 11 Gloria

*Gloria in excelsis Deo.  
Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.  
Laudamus te, benedicimus te,  
adoramus te, glorificamus te.  
Gratias agimus tibi  
propter magnam gloriam tuam.  
Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,  
Deus Pater omnipotens.*

Glory be to God on high.  
And on earth peace to men of good will.  
We praise Thee, we bless Thee,  
we worship Thee, we glorify Thee.  
We give thanks to Thee  
for Thy great glory.  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
God the Father almighty.

*Domine Fili unigenite, Iesu Christe.  
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.  
Qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nobis.  
Qui tollis peccata mundi,  
suscipe deprecationem nostram.  
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,  
miserere nobis.  
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus,  
tu solus Dominus,  
tu solus Altissimus Iesu Christe.  
Cum Sancto Spiritu  
in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.*

## 12 Credo

*Credo in unum Deum  
Patrem omnipotentem,  
factorem caeli et terrae,  
visibilium omnium et invisibilium.  
Et in unum Dominum, Iesum Christum,  
Filium Dei unigenitum,  
et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula.  
Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,  
Deum verum de Deo vero,  
genitum, non factum,  
consubstantialem Patri,*

O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ.  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.  
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,  
have mercy upon us.  
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer.  
Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy upon us.  
For Thou only art holy,  
Thou only art the Lord,  
Thou only art the most high, Jesus Christ.  
With the Holy Spirit  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

I believe in God  
the Father almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth,  
and of all things visible and invisible.  
And in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only begotten Son of God,  
begotten of His Father before all worlds.  
God of God, Light of Light,  
very God of very God,  
begotten, not made,  
being of one substance with the Father,

*per quem omnia facta sunt.  
Qui, propter nos homines,  
et propter nostram salutem,  
descendit de caelis.  
Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto  
ex Maria virgine, et homo factus est.  
Crucifixus etiam pro nobis  
sub Pontio Pilato;  
passus et sepultus est.  
Et resurrexit tertia die,  
secundum scripturas;  
et ascendit in caelum,  
sedet ad dexteram Patris.  
Et iterum venturus est cum gloria  
iudicare vivos et mortuos,  
cuius regni non erit finis.  
Et in Spiritum Sanctum  
Dominum et vivificantem,  
qui ex Patre Filioque procedit;  
qui cum Patre et Filio simul  
adoratur et conglorificatur;  
qui locutus est per Prophetas.  
Et unam sanctam catholicam  
et apostolicam ecclesiam.  
Confiteor unum baptisma  
in remissionem peccatorum.  
Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum  
et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.*

by Whom all things were made.  
Who for us men,  
and for our salvation,  
came down from heaven.  
And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost  
of the Virgin Mary and was made man.  
And was crucified also for us  
under Pontius Pilate.  
He suffered and was buried.  
And the third day He rose again  
according to the scriptures;  
and ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth at the right hand of the Father.  
And He shall come again with glory  
to judge both the quick and the dead;  
whose kingdom shall have no end.  
And I believe in the Holy Ghost,  
the Lord and giver of life,  
Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son;  
Who with the Father and the Son together  
is worshipped and glorified;  
Who spake by the prophets.  
And I believe in one holy, catholic  
and apostolic Church.  
I acknowledge one baptism  
for the remission of sins.  
And I look for the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

### 13 Sanctus

*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus  
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.  
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.  
Osanna in excelsis.*

Holy, Holy, Holy  
Lord God of hosts.  
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.

### 14 Benedictus

*Benedictus qui venit  
in nomine Domini.  
Osanna in excelsis.*

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

### 15 Agnus Dei I & II

*Agnus Dei,  
qui tollis peccata mundi:  
miserere nobis.*

Lamb of God,  
who takes away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us.

*Agnus Dei,  
qui tollis peccata mundi:  
dona nobis pacem.*

Lamb of God,  
who takes away the sins of the world,  
grant us peace.

### 16 Tribularer si nescirem

*Tribularer si nescirem  
misericordias tuas, Domine.  
Tu dixisti: Nolo mortem peccatoris,  
sed ut magis convertatur  
et vivat.  
Qui Cananeam et publicanum  
vocasti ad paenitentiam.  
Secundum multitudinem dolorem meorum  
in corde meo,  
consolationes tuae  
laetificaverunt animam meam.  
Qui Cananeam et publicanum  
vocasti ad paenitentiam.  
Miserere mei Deus.*

I would be downcast if I knew not  
of Thy mercies, Lord.  
Thou saidst: I desire not the death of a sinner  
but that he should turn away from his wickedness  
and live.  
Thou who calledst the woman of Canaan  
and the publican to repentance.  
On account of the multitudinous sorrows  
in my heart,  
Thy consolations  
fill my soul with joy.  
Thou who calledst the woman of Canaan  
and the publican to repentance.  
Have mercy on me, O God.



**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.



Photograph: Marco Borggreve

Since 2008 Harry Christophers has been Artistic Director of Boston's Handel and Haydn Society; he is also Principal Guest Conductor of the Granada Symphony Orchestra. As well as enjoying a partnership with the BBC Philharmonic, with whom he won a Diapason d'Or, he is a regular guest conductor with the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields. With The Sixteen he is an Associate Artist at The Bridgewater Hall in Manchester and features in the highly successful BBC television series, *Sacred Music*, presented by Simon Russell Beale.

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

Harry Christophers is an Honorary Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, as well as the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and has been awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Music from the University of Leicester. He was awarded a CBE in the 2012 Queen's Birthday Honours.

## § The Sixteen

After more than three decades of worldwide performance and recording, The Sixteen is recognised as one of the world's greatest ensembles. Its special reputation for performing early English polyphony, masterpieces of the Renaissance, baroque and early classical periods, and a diversity of 20th- and 21st-century music, all stems from the passions of conductor and founder, Harry Christophers.

The Sixteen tours internationally giving regular performances at the major concert halls and festivals. At home in the UK, The Sixteen are 'The Voices of Classic FM' as well as Associate Artists of The Bridgewater Hall, Manchester. 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 *Fairy Queen* in Tel Aviv and London, a fully-staged production of Purcell's *King Arthur* in Lisbon's Belém Centre, and new productions of Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse* at Lisbon Opera House and *The Coronation of Poppea* at English National Opera.

Over 100 recordings reflect The Sixteen's quality in a range of work spanning the music of 500 years. In 2009 the group won the coveted Classic FM Gramophone Artist of the Year Award and the Baroque Vocal Award for Handel's *Coronation Anthems*. The Sixteen also features in the highly successful BBC television series, *Sacred Music*, presented by Simon Russell Beale.

In 2011 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.

SOPRANO Julie Cooper, Grace Davidson, Sally Dunkley, Kirsty Hopkins,  
Alexandra Kidgell, Charlotte Mobbs

ALTO Ian Aitkenhead, Daniel Collins, Edward McMullan, Kim Porter

TENOR Simon Berridge, Jeremy Budd, Mark Dobell, Steven Harrold

BASS Ben Davies, Eamonn Dougan, Robert Evans, Tim Jones

Recording Producer: Mark Brown

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