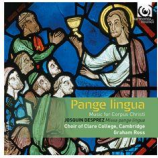


Pange Lingua - Music for Corpus Christi (2017)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 05 February 2018 13:46 -

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1. *Pange lingua gloriosi - plainchant* 2. *Josquin Desprez Missa Pange Lingua - Kyrie* 3. *Josquin Desprez Missa Pange Lingua - Gloria* 4. *Josquin Desprez Missa Pange Lingua - Credo* 5. *Josquin Desprez Missa Pange Lingua - Sanctus & Benedictus* 6. *Josquin Desprez Missa Pange Lingua - Agnus Dei* 7. *Victoria: Lauda Sion salvatorem* 8. *de al Rue: O salutaris hostia* 9. *Byrd: Cibavit eos* 10. *Bairstow: Let all mortal flesh keep silence* 11. *Villette: O sacrum convivium* 12. *Messiaen: O sacrum convivium* 13. *Grier: Panis angelicus* 14. *Ross: Ave verum corpus* 15. *Finzi: Lo, the full, final Sacrifice* Choir of Clare College, Cambridge Michael Papadopoulos - organ Graham Ross - conductor

The Choir of Clare College, Cambridge, directed by Graham Ross, explore music for Corpus Christi through the hymns of Saint Thomas Aquinas. The programme forms part of their series of music for the liturgical year and traces a long arc from Josquin to the present including works by Victoria, Bairstow and Messiaen.

Josquin's *Missa Pange lingua* is sung tenderly with a bright, luminous tone. These young singers display an impressive sense of style but there are a few awkwardly metrical moments where the bar lines of modern notation pervade their phrasing. The 'Pleni sunt caeli' duet is beautifully executed despite several overly manicured dynamic contrasts. Although I prefer fewer voices in Josquin's polyphony, this is one of the best choral performances of this Mass on record.

There is little doubt that this choir has an enviable appetite for 20th-century music and they are at their strongest in the two French settings of *O sacrum convivium* by Villette and Messiaen. Following this, Francis Grier's atmospheric setting of *Panis angelicus*, in memory of musicologist and conductor David Trendell, is something of a show-stopper. Lower voices form a rich, sonorous drone chord, from which the tentrils of solo soprano and tenor lines rise in a

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manner redolent of incense. In particular, the light, buoyant bloom of Alice Halstead's soprano is spellbinding and I would suggest that she is a voice to listen out for. Embedded in this programme are two very Anglican works: Bairstow's Let all mortal flesh keep silence and Finzi's magnificent Lo, the full, final sacrifice. They are majestically performed but make awkward bedfellows for their unaccompanied, Latin-texted colleagues. ---Edward Breen, gramophone.co.uk

Continuing its series of music for the liturgical year, the Choir of Clare College now turns its attention to the feast of Corpus Christi, with a number of pieces setting the hymns of St Thomas Aquinas. Considered one of the Catholic Church's greatest philosophers and influential theologians, Aquinas (c.1225-74) led a busy life of study, teaching and travelling. In 1264, at the request of Pope Urban IV, he wrote five Eucharistic hymns at the institution of the Feast of Corpus Christi. Within these relatively brief writings just 188 verses in total Aquinas has gained himself the reputation of being one of the great ecclesiastical poets. Corpus Christi remains as one of the most important days in the liturgical calendar: it emphasises the joy of the institution of the Eucharist, having previously been observed only on Maundy Thursday in the sombre atmosphere of the forthcoming Good Friday. The centre-piece of this CD is a complete performance of Josquin's Missa Pange lingua, [c1515-21] one of the earliest masses and which heralded the Renaissance. The programme ends with Finzi's ecstatic 'Lo, the full, final Sacrifice'. The piece was commissioned by the great Reverend Walter Hussey (also responsible for commissioning major works by Benjamin Britten, Henry Moore, Graham Sutherland, Leonard Bernstein and others); Finzi composed it directly after the Second World War in 1946 for the 53rd anniversary of the consecration of St Matthew's Church, Northampton, where Hussey was vicar. Francis Grier's setting of 'Panis Angelicus' was composed in 2015 in memory of David Trendell, Director of Music of King's College, London, who died suddenly in 2014 at the age of 50. ---amazon.com

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