

De Victoria - Ave Maria. Missa O Magnum Mysterium. Missa O Quam Gloriosum (1992)



1 Ave Maria 1:37 Missa O Magnum Mysterium 2 Kyrie 1:14 3 Gloria 3:13 4 Credo 5:10 5 Sanctus 4:33 6 Agnus Dei 4:02 7 O Magnum Mysterium 4:25
Missa O Quam Gloriosum
8 Kyrie 2:01 9 Gloria 4:04 10 Credo 5:43 11 Sanctus 4:57 12 Agnus Dei 4:00 13 O Quam Gloriosum 2:12 14 Ardens Est Cor Meum 5:00 15 Lobo - Versa Est In Luctum 5:15

Oxford Camerata Jeremy Summerly - conductor

Those who have ever enjoyed the intimacy of church music at the Edington Summer Festival will recognise in these Naxos recordings some of the simple, unfrilly style of Renaissance singing to be found there. The Spanish disc features two of Victoria's best-known early Masses (for the Feast of Circumcision and Feast of All Saints). Oxford Camerata's young mixed-voice singers (under their director Jeremy Summerly) have spirit, attack and a measure of sensitivity, though lack as yet sufficient refinement of internal phrasing and balance. Despite an excellent start, the swift-moving final sections of the Credo in the simply conceived O magnum mysterium Mass grow harsh, and several passages come across as rather dull and four-square. Suspect vowels mar some textures in both Benedictus and Agnus. The O quam gloriosum Mass is fresher, and more consistent: the pared forces of the 'Et incarnatus' and the concluding Agnus are particularly attractive. The related motet gets rushed, but Alonso Lôbo's Versa est in luctum confirms what this promising choir can encompass at its mature best. The recording marginally lacks bass. Two fine Requiems by Duarte Lôbo and Manuel Cardoso – Portuguese repertoire all too long neglected over here – draw on the Schola Cantorum's resonant larger forces. Moving slowly in eight and six parts, they sound as regal and impressive as Tallis's 40-part motet and large-scale Tye or Monteverdi. Works by all these composers appear elsewhere – on the Tallis Scholars' Gimell label, or on Hyperion (with Westminster Cathedral). But the Naxos discs are an undoubted bargain, and their foray into early music is to be commended. ---Roderic Dunnett, classical-music.com

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