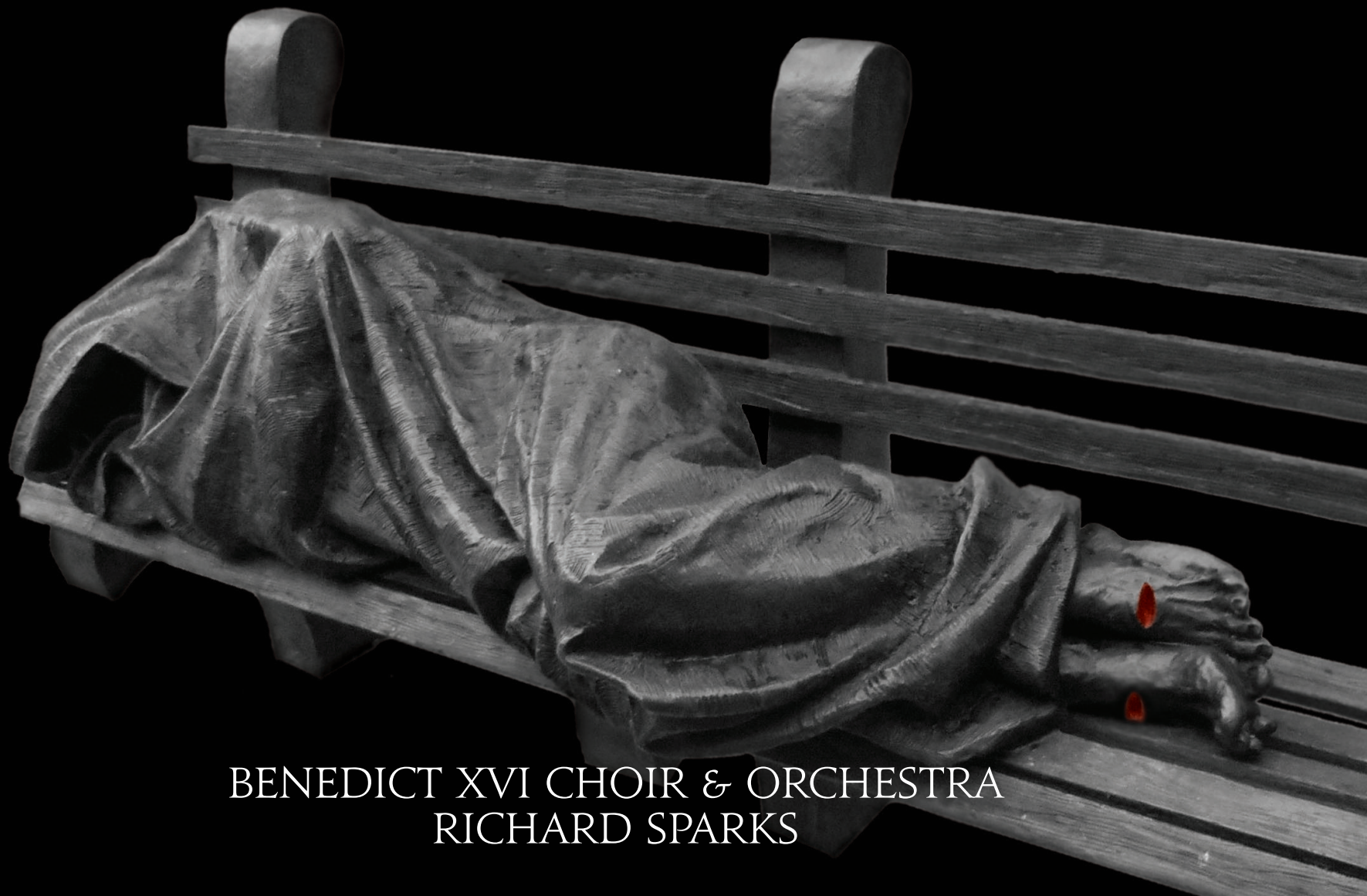


FRANK LA ROCCA

REQUIEM FOR THE FORGOTTEN
MESSE DES MALADES



BENEDICT XVI CHOIR & ORCHESTRA
RICHARD SPARKS



FRANK LA ROCCA (B. 1951)
REQUIEM FOR THE FORGOTTEN
MESSE DES MALADES

BENEDICT XVI CHOIR & ORCHESTRA • RICHARD SPARKS

<i>Messe des Malades</i> (2022) for SATB choir and organ		
1	Kyrie	3:54
2	Gloria	5:22
3	Alleluia (verse melody by John Renke)	2:18
4	Ego sum Pastor bonus — The Anointing of the Sick	6:48
5	Sanctus, Benedictus	3:41
6	Agnus Dei	2:33
7	<i>Diffusa est gratia</i> , Offertory of the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary	5:50
<i>Requiem for the Forgotten</i> (2020–23) for SATB choir, low strings, organ, and harp		
8	Introit	6:11
9	Kyrie	1:55
10	Commemoration: A Hymn for Ukraine	4:59
11	Offertory: I will lift up mine eyes	6:33
12	Sanctus, Benedictus	3:15
13	Agnus Dei	2:39
14	Meditation: O vos omnes	9:00
15	Procession to the place of rest: Pie Jesu	2:55

TOTAL TIME 68:02

BENEDICT XVI CHOIR & ORCHESTRA

Richard Sparks CONDUCTOR

SOPRANO

Chelsea Helm ¹⁴
Linda Jones
Fotina Naumenko
Savannah Porter ⁵

ALTO

Cecilia Duarte ^{11, 15}
Catherine Hedberg
Helen Karloski ⁵
Kate Maroney

TENOR

Paul D'Arcy
David Hendrix
Timothy Hodges ^{2, 9}
John Ramseyer ^{14, 15}

BASS

Dominic German
Michael Hawes ⁵
Joseph Hubbard
John Orduña

VIOLA I

Laura Renz, *concertmaster*
Betty Agent
Joyce Ramée

VIOLA II

Rick Neff
Sue Jane Bryant

'CELLO

Brian Wharton*
Virginia Dziekoński
Olga Ruvinov
Alistair MacRae

DOUBLE BASS

Tod Gowers

HARP

Pat Wooster

**orchestra contractor*

ORGAN

Michael T.C. Hey

Soloists indicated by track number ^x



Benedict XVI Choir & Orchestra
Lagerquist Hall, Pacific Lutheran University

MESSE DES MALADES REQUIEM FOR THE FORGOTTEN

by Frank La Rocca

Writing music for liturgy requires a composer to reconcile considerations that can appear to be in conflict. The music must, first, be reverent, and strive to bring glory to God. It must flow from a spirit of humility and simplicity. Unlike works purely for the concert stage, music for liturgy is not (or should not be) *primarily* a vehicle for the composer to project some “originality” of artistic vision. Such an approach can easily result in music for its own sake, rather than music that serves to deepen participation in the Liturgy through inner illumination of the texts. Finding that place where one’s own voice as a composer can join the voices of the past — as a fresh contribution to the great history of liturgical music — requires constant vigilance and introspection, especially in an age where originality is revered as the highest of all artistic aspirations. I have found this tension to be a potent source of creative inspiration.

Composers as diverse as Hildegard of Bingen, Tomás Luis Victoria, J.S. Bach, and John Tavener each project through their music a theology shaped by their experiences of the Divine and the intended use for the music. The theology of music used in Roman Catholic worship music is rooted in a Catholic theology of liturgy: music is a necessary and integral element of liturgy

because it is intimately tied to the liturgical action.

In the two works on this disc, I felt moved to link this essential aspect of the music to the subjects reflected in the titles of these works: the homeless, the refugee, the sick. What these subjects have in common is that, too often, we would rather not think about them, because doing so can elicit feelings that are discomfiting. I could not escape such emotions when given the commissions to write these Masses by the Benedict XVI Institute. And so, the gestation period for both these works was long, since it entailed more than just forming a musical vision, but also coming to terms with what might be called an anthropology of these subjects. How are we linked to our fellow humans? Just what is our relationship to the unhoused person, to the refugee escaping war or political oppression, to those suffering illness?

For the **Messe des Malades**, these questions had a very personal point of reference: my sister, Carin (1948–2020), who waged a heroic battle with Multiple Sclerosis for some 35 years. She was courageous, possessed of an iron will, with not a shred of self-pity. I have never admired anyone more. And so, this was the image I started with: strength tempered with humility.

The **Kyrie** projects these qualities in the alternating *fortissimo* and *piano* pleas of “Lord, have mercy.” The harmonic underpinning does not shy away from the biting dissonance, nor does it reject the sweet surrender to the beautiful consonance. Instead, it vacillates between these poles, illuminating an inner experience known to the supplicant, whether in illness or in a place

of religious contemplation like that St. John of the Cross describes in *Dark Night of the Soul*. The curious chromatic turn at the final “eleison” points a device that will become significant as the following movements unfold.

The **Gloria** carries forward this expressive vacillation, moving constantly between major and minor on the same key note (so-called “parallel” major and minor), and continuing the *piano* (soft) - *forte* (loud) dynamic contrasts. These contrasts are supported by the musical texture: the *forte* passages consist of strongly “vertical” (chordal) sonorities, with the minor *piano* passages often characterized by contrapuntal part writing. One aspect of the Gloria that opens up text-setting opportunities is the naming of the three Persons of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Here the Father (“Deus Pater”) is presented in a two-part canon over a deep repeated bass note; “Jesu Christe” is given a simple, humble setting at both of its appearances, and at “Sancto Spiritu” an air mystery descends over the music. Once again there is a curious chromatic turn at the end of this movement, now one whole step higher than that of the Kyrie.

This ascending movement is completed by the ending of the **Alleluia**, which traces the progression B major (Kyrie) C# major (Gloria), D# major (Alleluia). This is more than just compositional fun — there is a sound musico-theological rationale for this. Put simply, in the Traditional Latin Mass, the succession of the “Propers” — Gregorian chant settings of the readings specific to that day — are marked by a growth of musical movement (Introit – Gradual – Alleluia) that point towards the climax of the

liturgy of the Word: the reading of the Gospel passage for that day. In constructing the endings of the Kyrie, Gloria, and Alleluia to form a series of rising steps, I sought to recreate this marvelous tradition from the Propers within the framework of this Mass, as it moves (in a liturgical celebration) to the reading of the Gospel.

The most poignant moment in a Mass for the Sick is just after the sermon, when — as celebrated at Christ the Light Cathedral in Oakland, California under Bishop Michael Barber — the “Malades” (those who come seeking healing, as at the Shrine of Lourdes in France) one by one, receive an anointing from the Bishop or Priest. I witnessed this at the premiere of this Mass. Indeed, I *was* one of the “Malades.” As fate — or Providence — would have it, I became seriously ill with a ruptured appendix and peritonitis about halfway through composing this Mass. I can testify to the tenderness of this anointing ritual, and chose my motet “Ego sum Pastor bonus” to accompany it at the premiere.

The Sanctus is grand in a Baroque manner, and certainly inspired by majesty of the Sanctus in Bach’s *B-minor Mass*. The Benedictus features some extraordinary solo singing by Savannah Porter, Helen Karloski, and Michael Hawes.

I wrestled with the final setting of the Agnus Dei. What you hear on this disc is the last of four different versions I wrote — and the only one I wrote post-appendicitis. I will admit I needed to be brought low in order to take up the tune “Immaculate Mary.” Cherished as it is, thanks to its long association with Our Lady of Lourdes, it was not a tune I regarded as musically interesting enough — until I tried it in a minor key. This

quickly unlocked the music of this movement: I would use the minor-key “Immaculate Mary” as an introduction and refrain and, tracing a path from darkness to light — from illness to healing, if you will — leading to a brief, radiant climax in a bright major key. “Dona nobis pacem” is set to the last two phrases of that tune, completing it and the Mass.

If anything, the **Requiem for the Forgotten** (originally “for the Homeless”) had an even more arduous gestation period. I had very little frame of reference beyond a few people outside my grocery store to whom I would regularly give money. I had the same associations with Requiem Masses — the same, as I would imagine as most people’s: the Mozart, the Verdi, the Victoria. I could not reconcile these with the subjects I was now to compose for and about. Then I had a long talk about it one night with Dr. Thomas McLaughlin of San Francisco, the father of a young friend of mine. He told me about his many experiences treating the homeless in hospitals and he said to me, “You know, this is going to change you.” I realized in an instant I was resisting embracing the subject, much as I told myself otherwise. I also realized I had been coming about it from the wrong perspective.

I had been plagued by the thought that my music could not accomplish any tangible good for someone on the streets. Then it hit me: crafting policy to help homeless people on the streets is very important work, and so is the work of the artist. I came to realize, deep in my bones, that anything I could do must be grounded in something larger than a utilitarian calculus: it must rest ultimately in a special kind of faith, faith in the equal dignity of every human life.

“Music not for their bodies, but for their souls” is the thought that came to me — it was, after all, a Requiem.

And so, the **Introit** has all the gravity and majesty one might expect for a “very important person” — because, seen from the perspective of their Creator, each of these souls is of completely equal dignity and worth to every other human person, regardless of their condition living on the streets. So to, for the refugee seeking haven from war or oppression: “...as long as you did it for one of these my least brethren, you did it for Me” (Matt. 25: 40).

This is not a Requiem based on the traditional pattern that Mozart, et al. had available to them. The contemporary Catholic “Rite of Christian Burial” does not include, for example, the “Dies Irae” — a great loss in my opinion. So, in the Kyrie — which features petitions on behalf of the homeless — I smuggled in the “Dies irae” Gregorian chant, setting the words “Kyrie, eleison” to the same notes as the chanted “dies irae, dies illa”; and setting “Christe, eleison” to the chant for “solvat saeculum in favilla.” The final *tutti* (all musicians) “Kyrie, eleison” finds these two chant phrases superimposed in counterpoint, “dies irae...” in the choral melody and “solvat saeculum...” in Viola I and organ.

A stirring poem by James Matthew Wilson, written especially for this recording, provides the text of “A Hymn for Ukraine,” which is sung by the choir alone. In this poem, Wilson pays tribute to a 20th-century hero of the Ukrainian people, the martyred priest Andrei Ischak of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church who, rather than abandon his parish, refused to escape

approaching Red Army soldiers, saying “...the shepherd doesn’t abandon his flock. And I can’t leave my parishioners and conceal myself.” He was, instead, executed in 1941. He was beatified by Pope St. John Paul the Great in 2001. I set the poem somewhat in the manner of the telling of an old legend, a heroic tale for the children of future generations. I am the child of a Ukrainian mother whose parents fled the Bolsheviks in Ukraine, so I was deeply moved by Wilson’s magnificent poem and honored to include it in this *Requiem* (thereby expanding its scope and revising its title). With its refrain “This we bring you with our loss, for your altar and your cross,” it can be used at the Offertory in a liturgical setting.

The subject matter of this Requiem is certainly dark, but my piece is intended to do more than just underscore the tragedies that inspired it. Where there is God, there is hope. The text of “I will lift up mine eyes” is attributed to King David, variously as a prayer before battle or as a pilgrim song — the “hills” being the city of Jerusalem. Either way, it is an expression of David’s confidence in his Lord’s justice and protection — a confidence that transcends temporal circumstances for any who place their faith in a good and just Creator.

With the Sanctus and Agnus Dei, we are brought back into the liturgical flow of the Mass. The Sanctus dwells in mystery and awe, while the Agnus Dei seems to be reaching out in anticipation of eternal rest, as it dwells on the final word “sempiternam.” The concluding two phrases in the viola solo restate the opening choral phrases of the Introit, over the same pedal tone in organ and low strings, bringing a kind

closure to this Requiem — but not quite complete closure.

There remain the two final movements, as contrasting as any two adjacent movements could be, yet linked as a final commentary in this Requiem.

In “O Vos Omnes,” we hear the voice of the homeless and displaced refugees themselves, imploring those who “pass by” to see their suffering — and to see them as creatures made by God, possessed of immortal souls equal in dignity to any other person.

The text is from the Book of Lamentations 1: 12. Lamentations chronicles in excruciating detail the aftermath of the Fall of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC. With the destruction of Solomon’s Temple the ancient Israelites lost — in one blow — their spiritual, political, and financial center of power, and were thrust into a state of profound doubt about their entire identity as the “chosen people.” The text moves from states of incredulity and grief to pleas for solace and expressions of remorse. I have tried to capture some of this volatile mix of emotions with a variety of devices: accusatory exclamations, dizzy/wandering chromatic movements, songful laments, and bitter major/minor polarities.

The Jews had to endure seventy years in exile before they were restored to their land, and so this piece does not attempt to bring the narrative to any kind of resolution at its end. Grief and loss linger in the quiet but unsettling final sonorities, captured by the wailing melody in the tenor solo on the words, “my pain.” This melody centers around a G-major harmony while the choral

background sustains G minor. The tenor phrases end on a B[♭], conflicting with the B[♭] in the minor-key chorus, symbolizing his inability to enter into their “world”: he is an outcast, and alone.

Then notice that a tenor solo also begins the final movement, “Pie Jesu,” acting as a link between the two. Here the soloist pleads not to the surrounding populace, but to the Lord of mercy. He is joined by a companion alto soloist, and together they are brought into the full choral texture. The music speaks not of bitter despair, but rather of hopeful anticipation. And it comes to rest in the final “Amen” on the G-major harmony that was denied resolution at the end of “O Vos Omnes.” Requiem aeternam.

I am grateful to so many for their roles in making this music and this disc a reality: Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone of San Francisco, founder of the Benedict XVI Institute for Sacred Music and Liturgy; Maggie Gallagher, Executive Director of the Institute who secured the funding; Moira Conzelman, Patroness of *Messe des Malades*; my partner-in-music-making Richard Sparks, whose brilliant conducting gives life to my scores; Enrico Lagasca, who managed the whole project and assembled the stellar choir; Mark Powell, Executive Director of Cappella Records; the team at Soundmirror, especially Producer Blanton Alspaugh; and most of all to my wife Lucia, who really is my light and my refuge here on earth.

Texts and Translations

Messe des Malades (Mass for the Sick)

1 Kyrie

Kyrie, eleison (Κύριε, ἐλέησον).
Christe, eleison (Χριστέ, ἐλέησον).
Kyrie, eleison (Κύριε, ἐλέησον).

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

2 Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo
et in terra pax hominibus bonæ
voluntatis.
Laudamus te,
benedicimus te,
adoramus te,
glorificamus te,
gratias agimus tibi propter magnam
gloriam tuam,
Domine Deus, Rex cælestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people
of good will.
We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for
your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God almighty Father.

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.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
Son of The Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the
Father have mercy on us.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus,
tu solus Dominus,
tu solus Altissimus,
Iesu Christe,
cum Sancto Spiritu:
in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

3 Alleluia

Alleluia.
Blessed are you, O Virgin Mary, for
firmly believing that the promises of the
Lord would be fulfilled.
Alleluia.

4 Ego sum Pastor bonus – The Anointing of the Sick (Gospel of St. John 10: 14-15)

Ego sum Pastor bonus: et cognosco meas
et cognoscunt me meae.
Sicut novit me Pater et ego agnosco
Patrem: et animam meam pono pro
ovibus meis.

I am the good shepherd: and I know
mine, and mine know me.
As the Father knoweth me, and I know
the Father: and I lay down my life for my
sheep.

5 Sanctus, Benedictus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus
Dominus Deus sabaoth
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua
Hosanna in excelsis.

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

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis

Blessed is he who comes in the name of
the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

6 Agnus Dei

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

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

Offertory of the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary

7 Diffusa est gratia (Ps. 44: 4, 9-10)

Diffusa est gratia in labiis tuis: propterea benedixit te Deus in æternum.
Myrrha, et gutta, et casia a vestimentis tuis, a domibus eburneis; ex quibus delectaverunt te
Filiæ regum in honore tuo.

Grace is poured abroad in thy lips; therefore hath God blessed thee for ever.
Myrrh and stacte and cassia perfume thy garments, from the ivory houses: out of which Daughters of kings have delighted thee in thy glory.

Requiem for the Forgotten

8 Introit

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

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and may 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, all flesh shall come before you.
Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord And may perpetual light shine upon them

9 Kyrie

You reveal yourself in the poor and lowly:
Kyrie, eleison (Κύριε, ἐλέησον).

Lord, have mercy.

You showed every man who is truly his neighbor:
Christe, eleison (Χριστέ, ἐλέησον).

Christ, have mercy.

You promised eternal blessedness to those who shelter the homeless:
Kyrie, eleison (Κύριε, ἐλέησον).

Lord, have mercy.

10 Commemoration:
A Hymn for Ukraine
James Matthew Wilson, poet

Drums of war forever beating
On the gold Ukrainian fields;
From the east they ever come
From the west it never yields.
How amid such clamor can
Church endure or people pray?
How, when monk and priest are shot
And in prison sits Andrei?

*This we bring you with our loss
For your altar and your cross.*

How they dragged us off to Russia,
Banished to the barren east;
How they held him solitary,
Martyr, Moses, without feast.
Pray for us, your later children
Suffering the same fate as you,
Suffering blasted field and building,
Smoke obscuring skies once blue.

*This we bring you with our loss
For your altar and your cross.*

We who now see death and exile
Recollect what came before,
Freedom known for but an hour
Then boots trample it once more.
Wisdom, Andrei preached, is peace
Set by Christ within the heart;
Wisdom give to us, we pray;
Wisdom from us never part.

*This we bring you with our loss
For your altar and your cross.*

11 Offertory: I will lift up mine eyes (Ps. 121)

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills.
From whence cometh my help?
My help cometh from the Lord
Who made heaven and earth.

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.
Behold, He that keepeth Israel
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is thy keeper,
The Lord is thy shade,
Upon thy right hand,
The Lord is thy keeper.

The sun shall not smite thee by day
Nor the moon by night
The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil
From all evil He shall preserve thy soul.

The Lord is thy keeper.
The Lord shall preserve thy going out
and thy coming in
From this time forth and forevermore.

12 Sanctus, Benedictus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus
Dominus Deus sabaoth
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua
Hosanna in excelsis.

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

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of
the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

13 Agnus Dei

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

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

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

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

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

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of
the world: grant them eternal rest.

14 Meditation: O vos omnes
(Lamentations 1: 12)

O vos omnes qui transitis per viam
adterdite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor
meus,
quoniam vindemiavit me ut locutus est
Dominus
in die irae furoris.

O all you who pass by on the street,
look and see if there be any misery like
unto the misery that has befallen me
in the day of the Lord's wrath.

15 Procession to the place of rest: Pie Jesu

Pie Jesu Domine, dona eis requiem.
Amen.

Merciful Lord Jesus, grant them eternal
rest. Amen.

Benedict XVI Institute

The Benedict XVI Institute for Sacred Music and Divine Worship was founded by Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of San Francisco, with a unique mission to revive the classic Renaissance model: Commissioning great new works of sacred music for the worship of God whose beauty brings spiritual solace to skeptics and faith-filled alike.

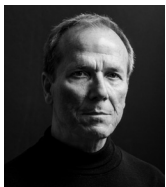
The first work commissioned by the Benedict XVI Institute, the *Mass of the Americas* by Frank La Rocca, was dubbed by critic Michael Linton “the best piece of liturgical music for the Mass since Duruflé.” Of the *Messe des Malades* recorded here, composer Martin Rokeach wrote in the *Sacred Musical Journal* that the music stands “shoulder to shoulder with the great masterworks of the Renaissance.”

The *Messe des Malades* is the gift of Moira Richards Conzelman dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes in honor of her beloved parents, Emma Leong and Alfred “Pat” Richards, and their families. May all who hear this Mass pray for them. “I wish also to acknowledge my gratitude to the Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic, my teachers at the Maryknoll Convent School in Hong Kong,” says Moira Richards Conzelman, “They have been a lifelong inspiration for instilling in me a deep love for my faith, and awakening in me an appreciation for classical and sacred music. These have been a source of delight throughout my entire life.”

In addition to *Requiem for the Forgotten* and the masses mentioned above, Archbishop Cordileone through the Benedict XVI Institute has commissioned others from Frank La Rocca including *Missa Sancti Juniperi Serra* and the forthcoming *Mass for Eucharistic Renaissance*, which will be celebrated for the first time at San Francisco’s Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption on 19 May 2024.

To learn more or support this work visit BenedictInstitute.org.





**Frank La Rocca,
composer**

“The net impressions are of luminous sacred

introspection, transcendental effect, and breathtaking beauty,” wrote Lindsay Koob, reviewer for *American Record Guide*, about Frank La Rocca’s debut CD, *IN THIS PLACE*. La Rocca’s career has traced a path from the severity of an academic modernist style, through a period of sunny minimalist concert works to finding his voice in sacred choral works and music for the Roman Catholic Mass. Of La Rocca’s “O Sacrum Convivium,” composer and organist Richard Clark wrote, “...anchored in tradition, it speaks with the authority of the ages yet with the innovation of modernity. Imbued with the Spirit, it is timeless.”

Born in Newark, New Jersey in 1951, he was educated at Yale (BA) and the University of California at Berkeley (MA, PhD), where he earned his doctorate “with distinction,” the first time such an honor was conferred on a music composition graduate at Berkeley. His 36-year teaching career included positions at the University of California campuses

at Berkeley and Santa Cruz, and at the California State University, East Bay (Hayward), where he also served as Department Chair. From 1984 to 1998 La Rocca was Executive Director of the new music concert series, COMPOSERS, INC in San Francisco, and was one of its founders.

MASS OF THE AMERICAS — the first Cappella Records CD of La Rocca’s music — has been hailed as “perhaps the most significant Catholic composition of our lifetimes” (Michael Olbash), and “the best liturgical composition for the Mass since Duruflé” (Michael Linton). La Rocca is the recent winner of the ORTUS international choral composition competition for his “Miserere,” and was awarded the 2018 American Prize for his “A Rose In Winter — the life of St. Rita of Cascia,” a major work for chorus, orchestra, and soloists.

La Rocca’s work has been recognized with grants, commissions and awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, California Arts Council, the Foundation for Sacred Arts, Young Women’s Chorus of San Francisco, ASCAP Foundation, USC Thornton Chamber Singers,

Vanguard Voices, London Festival of Contemporary Church Music, Cois Cladaigh, the Madrigirls of Glasgow, and many others. Among the distinguished ensembles performing his work are The Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Benedict XVI Choir, London Oratory Schola, Lumen Valo, California Symphony, and Alexander String Quartet.

His discography includes “Canti d’Innocenza” on the SCI label, “String Trio” and “Secret Thoughts” on CRI, numerous a cappella choral works by the San Francisco Girls Chorus, Young Womens’ Choral Projects, Tucson Girls Chorus, the Meistersingers, and Vanguard Voices; and his solo CD, *IN THIS PLACE* on Enharmonic Records. He is published by Boosey and Hawkes, GIA/Walton Music, Santa Barbara Music and Lumen Verum Music.



**Richard Sparks,
conductor**

Richard Sparks is the principal conductor of the Benedict

XVI Choir and Orchestra and has a distinguished career in both professional and academic worlds. He conducted Benedict XVI on their previous recording on Cappella Records, *Mass of the Americas*.

He founded Seattle Pro Musica in 1973 and in seven seasons conducted over 70 different programs with three ensembles. And in 1993 he founded Choral Arts Northwest, which he led for 11 years, making three CDs on the Gothic label. Both ensembles are still thriving.

From 1977–1985 he was principal conductor of the Pacific Northwest Bach Festival, which used period instruments and soloists such as the Dutch baritone Max van Egmont. From 1990–94 he was conductor of the Seattle Symphony Chorale and, among other projects, prepared them for nine recordings on the Delos label (now mostly on Naxos), including the GRAMMY®-nominated recording of Howard Hanson's *Lament for Beowulf*.

And from 1999–2011 he was conductor of Pro Coro Canada, a professional ensemble based in Edmonton, Alberta, who toured regularly in Canada.

He has guest conducted numerous professional ensembles, including the famed Swedish Radio Choir in 2002, 2007, and 2009, including preparing the Brahms *Ein Deutches Requiem* for a performance with the Rotterdam Philharmonic and Valery Gergiev, which was recorded live for a DVD on the BIS label. He has also guest conducted the Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Vocal Arts Ensemble of Cincinnati, the Anchorage Music Festival, and many others.

His doctoral dissertation, which won ACDA's Julius Herford Award, was published as *The Swedish Choral Miracle—A Cappella Works Since 1945*. He also has another book published with GIA, titled *The Conductor's Toolbox*. For his work with Swedish music he was made a Member of the Swedish Royal Academy of Music in 2021.

Sparks was Director of Choral Activities at Pacific Lutheran University and led the Choir of

the West from 1983–2001, with numerous CDs and tours.

He is also Professor Emeritus and was Chair of the Division of Conducting & Ensembles at the University of North Texas, where he taught for ten years. Many of his performances there can be found on YouTube, including a Vivaldi *Gloria* with over 4.7 million views, Monteverdi's 1610 *Vespers*, and the 1725 version of Bach's *St. John Passion*.

For his work with the Benedict XVI Choir, he won the American Prize for Choral Conducting (non-collegiate division) in 2023.

Michael T.C. Hey, organ

Described as “scintillating” and “tremendously virtuosic” (*The Straits Times*, Singapore), concert organist Michael Hey has been increasingly visible on U.S. and international stages. He has performed organ concertos with the San Francisco Symphony, the Juilliard Orchestra, and New York City Ballet Orchestra. Michael has appeared at renowned venues such as Carnegie Hall and Madison Square Garden.

In September 2017, Michael received first prize in the Shanghai Conservatory of Music First International Organ Competition. Released in October 2017, Michael’s premiere solo CD recording Michael T. C. Hey plays the Great Organ of Saint Patrick’s Cathedral in New York is available for purchase by the JAV recording label.

In 2015, Michael was appointed Associate Director of Music and Organist of Saint Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City, where one of his first major tasks was to perform for the first U.S. visit of Pope Francis. Michael plays for over 700 services a year at Saint Patrick’s Cathedral, many of which can be heard on SiriusXM Radio, television, and online.

Not exclusively a solo organist, Michael enjoys collaborating with other artists. He has performed with Renée Fleming, Matthew Polenzani, and Isabel Leonard. He performs duo recitals with violinist Christiana Liberis.

Michael is a graduate of The Juilliard School where he received his B.M. and M.M. degrees in organ performance under Paul Jacobs. He is represented in North America exclusively by Phillip

Truckenbrod Concert Artists, LLC. www.michaelhey.com

Enrico Lagasca, artist manager and project coordinator

Filipino-American bass-baritone Enrico spends much of his time in concert repertoire. Recent highlights include Mendelssohn’s *Walpurgisnacht* with the St. Louis Symphony, Grieg’s *The Mountain Thrall* with American Classical Orchestra at Alice Tully Hall, Haydn’s *Paukenmesse* in Seattle, Beethoven *Symphony No. 9* with the Allentown Symphony, Mendelssohn’s arrangement of the Bach *St. Matthew Passion* for Bach Choir of Bethlehem, a residency at Colgate University, return engagements with Washington Bach Consort, and débuts with Ars Lyrica Houston, Tafelmusik, Portland Baroque Orchestra and the Boise Philharmonic. As a member of the solo quartet at the 2023 Carmel Bach Festival, he sang works of Bach and Haydn.

Mr. Lagasca also is a recognized choral artist and regularly sings with professional groups around the country such as Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Conspirare, Seraphic Fire, Skylark, Bach Collegium San Diego, Choir of Trinity Wall Street, and TENET Vocal Artists, to name a few.

His non-singing pursuits include freelance artist contracting and has enjoyed project management Benedict XVI Choir and Artefact Ensemble, and others. enricolagasca.com

Chelsea Helm, soprano

A Michigan native, Ms. Helm brings a versatile voice to the concert stage. An active choral artist and soloist, appearances include with Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Conspirare, Seraphic Fire, True Concord Voices & Orchestra, to name a few. Ms. Helm recently made her international concert début performing Vaughan Williams’ *A Sea Symphony* at the Seoul Arts Center in South Korea. Her latest concert and oratorio appearances around the United States include the Brahms *Requiem*, Haydn’s *Theresienmesse* and *Paukenmesse*, Orff’s *Carmina Burana*, and the Verdi *Requiem* in a new chamber arrangement. She looks forward to her first Haydn *Creation* this season. Ms. Helm has also been featured in concert with the South Korean Klim Orchestra, the National Chorus of Korea, the Grand Rapids Symphony, Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, Muskegon Symphony Orchestra, Brevard Festival Orchestra, the Rice University Orchestra, and at the University of Wisconsin La-Crosse and Missouri State University. She has presented art song recitals in New Mexico, Virginia, and Utah, featuring works by Samuel Barber, Andre Previn, Maurice Ravel, Leonard Bernstein, Craig Johnson, Gabriel Kahane, and Andrew Maxfield. chelseahelmsoprano.com

Savannah Porter, soprano

Ms. Porter is a native of Fort Worth, Texas and current resident of New York City. Recent appearances with BYU Opera Theater include the title role in Handel’s *Theodora*, Pamina in Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte*, Adele in J. Strauss’ *Die Fledermaus*, and *Zémire*

in BYU’s production of André Grétry’s *Zémire et Azor*. She has been singing in the award-winning BYU Singers since 2016, and with Utah’s early music ensemble Sound of Ages since 2017; and has performed with both ensembles in national conferences of the American Choral Directors Association. Savannah was the Utah District winner of the 2019 Metropolitan Opera National Council Award Competition, and later received the Encouragement Award from the Rocky Mountain (Denver) Region. Recent accolades at BYU include winner of the 2020 Concerto Competition as well as the 2021 Young Artist Competition, where she was named “Singer of the Year,” and recently returned home from a successful tour of the Baltic countries with the BYU Singers. Savannah appeared in March of 2021 as a member of the professional chorus for the concert film version of Rob Gardner’s *Lamb of God*, and this past April she performed in the chorus of three live performances of the work with the original film cast. She has also sung two seasons with the Santa Fe Desert Chorale under the direction of Joshua Habermann and performed with the American Soloist Ensemble directed by E.J. Yoon and produced by the National Chorus of Korea this past summer.

Cecilia Duarte, mezzo-soprano

A soloist in the GRAMMY®-winning album *Duruflé: The Complete Choral Works* with the Houston Chamber Choir, Cecilia has been praised by *The New York Times* as “A creamy voiced mezzo-soprano.” Born in Chihuahua, Mexico, Cecilia is a versatile singer that

has performed around the world singing a variety of music styles, especially early and contemporary music. Cecilia has been greatly recognized for creating the role of Renata in the first Mariachi Opera *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* with the famous Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán, commissioned by Houston Grand Opera in 2010. Cecilia has taken this opera to stages such as the Houston Grand Opera (2013, 2018); Châtelet Theatre in Paris, France; Chicago Lyric Opera, San Diego Opera, Arizona Opera, The Fort Worth Opera, Teatro Nacional Sucre, in Quito, Ecuador, New York City Opera, and El Paso Opera. Since then, Cecilia has created other roles for world premieres of chamber operas and new works, such as Jessie Lydell in *A Coffin in Egypt*, (HGO and the Wallis Annenberg Center in L.A.); Gracie in *A Way Home* (HGO and Opera Southwest); Harriet/First Responder in *After the Storm* (HGO); Alicia in *Some Light Emerges* (HGO); and Alma in “Boundless,” the first episode of Houston Grand Opera’s web opera series *Star-cross’d*, which received a Telly Award. ceciliaduartemezzopranosoprano.com

Helen Karloski, mezzo-soprano

Mezzo-soprano Helen Karloski has been praised for her “genuine mezzo timbre” (Opera News) and a voice “beautifully suited for oratorio” (Santa Fe New Mexican). She has been gaining recognition particularly in her portrayal of the oratorio repertoire. In 2015, she was the recipient of the Ellen Lopin Blair Award for First Place in the Lyndon Woodside Oratorio Solo Competition. Ms. Karloski made her Lincoln Center debut in Mozart’s Solemn Vespers with

the Mostly Mozart Festival under the baton of Iván Fischer and her Carnegie Hall debut performing Mozart’s *Mass in C Minor* under the baton of Kent Tritle with the Oratorio Society of New York. Recent solo appearances include Pergolesi’s *Stabat Mater* with Harry Bicket and the Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Dvořák’s *Stabat Mater* with the Omaha Symphony, Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony* with the American Classical Orchestra, Handel’s *Messiah* with TENET Vocal Artists, Copland’s *In the Beginning* with Sacred Music in a Sacred Space and the Alto soloist in Mendelssohn’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* with the New York City Ballet. helenkarloski.com

John Ramseyer, tenor

New York City-based tenor John Ramseyer specializes in concert and chamber music, as well as opera, having collaborated with many of New York’s finest ensembles, including the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, the American Classical Orchestra, New York Baroque Incorporated, and Camerata New York. In May of 2023, John made his Carnegie Hall debut singing the tenor solos in Rachmaninoff’s *All-Night Vigil* with the Clarion Choir, led by Steven Fox. This performance follows the release of the Clarion Choir’s GRAMMY®-nominated recording of the same *All-Night Vigil* on the Pentatone label, for which he provided the tenor solos. The Arts Desk describes Ramseyer’s solos as “exquisite” and “ecstatic”. Other recent highlights include Rachmaninoff’s *The Bells* with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and the Cathedral Choral Society, an international tour of Handel’s *Solomon* with The English

Concert and the Clarion Choir, led by Harry Bicket, and the world premiere of Trevor Weston’s *American Lamentation* alongside the Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys. johnramseyer.com

Timothy Hodges, tenor

Tenor Timothy Hodges, whose singing has been described as having “both purity and depth,” has an active career performing throughout the United States and abroad. Recent highlights include the Evangelist in Bach’s *St. John Passion* with New York Baroque Incorporated and The Choir of Trinity Wall Street, appearances as the Evangelist in *The Christmas Oratorio* and *St. John Passion* at The University of Illinois, the premiere and recording of Ralf Yusulf Gawlick’s *Missa Gentis Humanae*, as well as performances with Carmel Bach Festival, Clarion Music Society, Fuma Sacra, and Antioch Chamber Ensemble. He has also made appearances with the Connecticut Early Music Festival, Spoleto Festival USA, the Stavanger Kammermusikkfestival, and the Golden Mask Festival in Moscow, Russia. As a soloist, Mr. Hodges has performed with the Trinity Baroque Orchestra, Washington Chorus, Rebel Baroque Orchestra, Garden State Philharmonic, Masterwork Chorus, and Princeton University Glee Club.

Michael Hawes, bass-baritone

Austin based GRAMMY®-nominated singer, trumpeter, and pianist, Michael Hawes enjoys a multifaceted performance career. Equally comfortably in front of a piano, as a member of a chamber vocal ensemble, choir, or in the trumpet section of a symphony orchestra or brass quintet, his passion lies in collaboration

and heartfelt performances of beautiful music. Recent performances have taken him throughout Europe to London, Madrid, and Paris, as well as to Seoul, South Korea and Taipei, Taiwan. Michael frequently sings with three-time Grammy®-winning choir The Crossing, known for groundbreaking programming and commissioning of new works, as well as GRAMMY®-nominated Clarion Choir, Skylark Vocal Ensemble, Conspirare, and others. He was a member of Axiom Brass, an award winning touring Brass Quintet, known for their adventurous programming and passionate desire to add to the Brass Quintet art form, and performed and recorded with them, while living in Chicago. Currently Music Director at St. Thomas More Parish in Austin, he is also receiving his Doctorate in Musical Arts at the University of Texas. Michael is in the midst of creating a new ensemble, called “One Voice Ensemble” that focuses on art song, featuring native flute, trumpet, voice, cello and percussion, performing music by a wide array of composers, from Florence Price to Randy Newman, while also performing and commissioning works by indigenous musicians and living composers of different backgrounds and genres. michaelhawesmusic.com

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Producer: Blanton Alspaugh, Soundmirror.

Recording Engineers: Mark Donahue, Jacob Steingart, Soundmirror.

Mixing & Mastering Engineer: Mark Donahue, Soundmirror.

Artist Manager and Project Coordinator: Enrico Lagasca.

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Performing editions: *Messe des Malades* ©2022 by Frank La Rocca and Lumen Verum Music (ASCAP); *Requiem for the Forgotten* ©2020-23 by Frank La Rocca and Lumen Verum Music (ASCAP).

Texts: “Ego sum Pastor bonus” and “Diffusa est gratia” from the Douay Rheims Bible (PD). “O Vos Omnes” translated by Frank La Rocca. “I will lift up mine eyes” from King James Version of the Bible (PD). “A Hymn for Ukraine” by James Matthew Wilson.

Images: Image of *Homeless Jesus*, Timothy Schmalz, Barcelona, photograph by Carlos Canaan, licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International, adapted by Mark Powell. *Our Lady of Lourdes* by Matilde Olivera Tovar, used by permission. Photograph of the ensemble: Brian Gaukel, used by permission.

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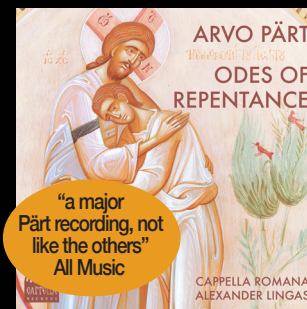
Executive Producer: Mark Powell, Cappella Records.



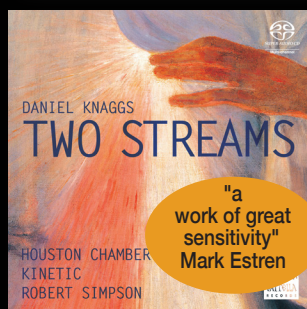
cappellarecords.com



La Rocca: Mass of the Americas
 this setting of the Traditional Latin Mass for the Benedict XVI ensemble artfully combines Gregorian chants, folk melodies from 18th-century México, and florid praises in Nahuatl, the language spoken by Our Lady of Guadalupe to St. Juan Diego.



Arvo Pärt: Odes of Repentance
 Cappella Romana presents the first recording in the world of Pärt's Orthodox works as an Orthodox prayer service, with selections of the *Kanon Pokajanen* (Kanon of Repentance), *The Woman with the Alabaster Box*, one of his *Two Slavonic Psalms*, and *Triodion*.



Daniel Knaggs: Two Streams
 Grammy-winner Houston Chamber Choir presents the world premiere of this work that weaves threads dyed in Medieval, baroque, and contemporary colors into a breathtaking tapestry of love and mercy on the words of Polish nun St. Faustina. In English and Latin.



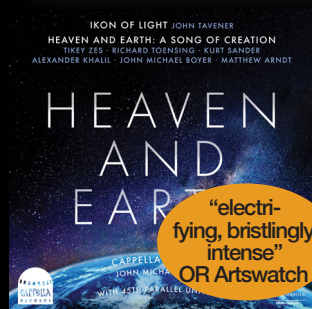
Lost Voices of Hagia Sophia
 For 1000 years, Hagia Sophia was the largest domed interior in the world. Cappella Romana recreates its stunning reverberation—of over 11 seconds—transporting you back in time to medieval sound and ritual in Constantinople: an aural virtual reality. **On Billboard for 44 weeks!**



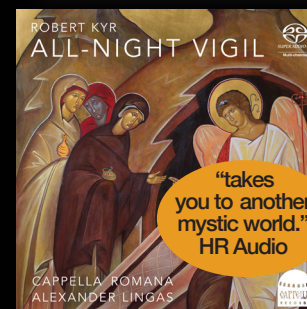
Steinberg: Passion Week
 World premiere recording by Cappella Romana. Maximilian Steinberg's moving work extends the language of Rachmaninoff's *All-Night Vigil*. With Holy Week motets by Steinberg's teacher and father-in-law Rimsky-Korsakov. Also available on 180g vinyl.



A Byzantine Emperor at King Henry's Court
 Worlds collide as Byzantine Emperor Manuel II spent Christmas 1400 at King Henry IV's royal court. Cappella Romana sings the florid chant and polyphony from both kingdoms and rites that echoed antiphonally in London's Eltham Palace.



Heaven and Earth
 Cappella Romana presents a performance unlike any other of John Tavener's *Ikon of Light* and the world premiere of *Heaven and Earth*, written for CR by six Orthodox composers: Tikey Zes, Richard Toensing, Kurt Sander, Alexander Khalil, John Michael Boyer, and Matthew Arndt.



Robert Kyr: All-Night Vigil
 World premiere recording. Robert Kyr's *All-Night Vigil* is inspired by Rachmaninoff's setting of the same, sung here in English. Kyr blends Byzantine and Slavic traditions with a personal idiom, granting both a fresh approach and a profound point of entry to these moving hymns.

