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T TENEBRAE NIGEL SHORT, CONDUCTOR

7:00 P.M., SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 2023 FOLLY THEATER KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

Founded by William Jewell College in 1965, Harriman-Jewell Series' commitment to Kansas City has been to bring the best of the performing arts.

TENEBRAE PASSION & PRECISION

NIGEL SHORT, CONDUCTOR

Versa est in luctum ALONSO LOBO (1555–1617) Pange Lingua Gloriosi Plainchant Hymn to the Cherubim SERGEI RACHMANINOV (1873–1943) Virga Jesse ANTON BRUCKNER (1824–1896) Heu me Domine VICENTE LUSITANO (1520–1561) Crucifixus ANTONIO LOTTI (1667–1740) Drop, drop slow tears ORLANDO GIBBONS (1583–1625) Miserere GREGORIO ALLEGRI (1582–1652) INTERMISSION Funeral Ikos JOHN TAVENER (1944–2013) Musica Dei Donum ORLANDO DE LASSUS (1532–1594) In Winter's House JOANNA MARSH (b. 1970) Ave Maris Stella EDVARD GRIEG (1843–1907) Hymn to the Cherubim MIKHAIL GLINKA (1804–1857) GUSTAV HOLST (1874–1934) Ave Maria Nunc Dimittis HOLST ERIC WHITACRE (b. 1970) Sleep Faire is the Heaven WILLIAM HENRY HARRIS (1883–1973)

The artists kindly encourage you to save your applause until the end of each half of the performance rather than after each piece.

We invite you to join us following the concert for a Q&A with conductor Nigel Short from the stage. You are invited to move to open seats closer to the stage for this conversation.

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PROGRAM NOTES

■ Our programme represents an eclectic mix of music, much of it sung by the members of Tenebrae and myself for the first time as young children in various British Cathedral, Church, and Collegiate choirs. To this day, this repertoire sustains the daily musical life of cathedrals and churches all over the world– and perhaps keeps an element of boredom and repetition at bay too–imbuing the singers with an ability and familiarity to switching styles of music within a very short space of time.

Music of the Renaissance era would of course feature heavily in this type of program, and I've included some of my favourites. In my view, there is no finer Renaissance motet than Lobo's Versa est in luctum, demonstrating a perfect blend of matchless compositional technique in polyphony and achingly beautiful architecture of contrapuntal lines; these creating a sense of wonder for the listener. Existing prior to the glories of the Renaissance era was Gregorian chant. In many works, the chant melodies are used as a framework around which later composers developed their individual styles of composition. There is something slightly mystical about the mediaeval Chant we sing, and I find this always resonates rather well with the same mysticism of Russian Orthodox music. Rachmaninov's *Hymn to the Cherubim* is taken from an extended work, The Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. It is an exquisite short example of the dark and rich harmonic world occupied by Tchaikovsky (something of a pioneer in rediscovering Byzantine chants and embedding them within his own religious music). Others followed his example, perhaps none more so than Rachmaninov with his setting of the Vespers service and *All-Night Vigil*.

We then take you back in time to the music of Anton Bruckner, a giant of the Central European Romantic era. His short sacred motets give us a glimpse of the

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grandeur to come in his masterful orchestral symphonic writing. For the remainder of the first half, we return to the Renaissance era and music by the lesser-known composer Vicente Lusitano, a black Portuguese composer. Inspired by the music of Josquin des Prez, Lusitano was a great theorist and became most well known as a teacher in Central Europe. He travelled to Rome and composed music for the Catholic rites, but much of this music is lost. *Heu me Domine* is a tantalisingly small glimpse into what was probably a wonderful and creative output.

We finish with three settings of texts specifically for Holy Week. Antonio Lotti's setting of the Crucifixus is very well-known, but less well-known is that the short work came from a larger setting of the Credo, written for choir and orchestra. Likely, it would have had a continuo accompaniment, though most choirs these days sing this as an unaccompanied work. Its complex layering of lines, overlapping harmonically as well as rhythmically, is in stark contrast to the setting of Drop, drop slow tears by Orlando Gibbons. The text is set homophonically, yet Gibbons manages to convey the desolation of the poem, written by Phineas Fletcher in the early 17th century. Possibly the most famous of all Renaissance music is Gregorio Allegri's setting of Psalm 51, composed and performed for centuries by the choir of the Sistine Chapel. This piece enjoyed notoriety all over Europe-both Mozart and Mendelssohn travelled to the Chapel to hear this piece-mainly for one aspect alone, the incredibly high soprano solo part written for half of the verses. These are sung by a quartet separated spatially from the body of the larger choir. Whether or not the rendition we sing today is authentic matters not. The music has an enchanting effect on the listener and performer alike. I sang this solo myself as a boy, and I suspect at least half the members of Tenebrae have too. The piece is extremely familiar to us all and always feels like 'coming home' when we sing it.

Our second half is also a mix of old and new. The emergence of Russian Orthodox music in the second half of the 20th century inspired the young John Tavener, who converted to the Greek Orthodox religion and incorporated the mysticism and traditions of the Orthodox rites in his music. As with all of the music I and Tenebrae members sang in choirs, music of the Renaissance era is something that was an ever-present element in our musicmaking; another gem from this part of our libraries is *Musica Dei Donum - Music, a gift from God.* The repeated singing of masterful works in this polyphonic style gradually allows one to easily detect and enjoy the flowing lines that sometimes work against each other, and at other times come together to form ecstatic cadences within the music. This piece has three 'waves', each starting afresh with the words '*Musica Dei Donum*' as if only to reiterate the Divine nature of what we are enjoying and singing.

Next is something most choirs in the UK have done over time, commissioning new works from composers. Tenebrae has commissioned many new works over the past 20 years, most notably *Path of Miracles* by Joby Talbot. For our latest recording project of Christmas music, we asked Joanna Marsh to create a work for men's voices, to serve as a companion piece to Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*, a work sung by the trebles of the choir. The poem *In Winter's House* by Jane Draycott evokes the sense of wonder from a child as Christmas approaches. Whilst there is a warmth and love of all things to do with the Christmas story, it is always accompanied (in the Western Hemisphere at least) by the cold, harsh reality of winter.

While neither Edvard Grieg or Mikhail Glinka were considered out-and-out choral composers, both produced gems that have stood the test of time, and feature on music lists for choirs all over the world. Imbued with such a rich sense of harmony, these works epitomise the musical achievements of composers from the Romantic era. Composers born near the end of the 19th century were heavily influenced by the greats of the previous hundred years, and the voyage of musical discovery only spurred them on to greater things. Gustav Holst, known widely for his orchestral suite The Planets, felt the influence of Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss strongly in his early years, but more latterly developed his own distinctive style of compositions, laced with the flavour of English folk music. His name is often featured in programmes of great English choral music, and his setting of the Nunc Dimittis is a staple for good and ambitious choirs. This setting of Ave Maria for treble voices is less well-known but clearly demonstrates Holst's mastery of vocal part-writing.

In the last two decades, an explosion of interest in choral singing can largely be attributed to one man, Eric Whitacre. Similar to Holst, he has his own distinctive style of composition. His music has led to a huge re-engagement of people in choral singing, and many of his compositions are now regarded by choirs as favourites. One such piece

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for myself and Tenebrae is his setting of Charles Anthony Silvestri's poem Sleep. Whitacre's ability to compose music that makes a choir's sound simply shimmer results in singers always picking up his scores enthusiastically, and I, for one, never tire of hearing his beautiful music.

We finish our concert with an enduringly popular anthem by William Henry Harris. Harris was a preeminent choir trainer in his day, appointed Director of Music at St. George's Chapel, Windsor in 1933. His anthem Faire is the Heaven is a sublime setting of lines from Edmund Spencer's poem An hymn of Heavenly beauty. A handful of Tenebrae's members sing in the choir at St. George's Chapel today, passing Harris' Memorial Stone nearly every day --- a touching link of musical heritage we live and breathe still.

- Nigel Short

NIGEL SHORT Conductor

Award-winning conductor Nigel Short has earned widespread acclaim for his recording and live performance work with leading orchestras and ensembles across the world.

A former member of renowned vocal ensemble The King's Singers, in 2001, Nigel formed Tenebrae, a virtuosic choir that combines the passion of a cathedral choir with the precision of a chamber ensemble. Under his direction, Tenebrae has collaborated with internationally acclaimed orchestras and instrumentalists and now enjoys a reputation as one of the world's finest vocal ensembles. Nigel has conducted the choir at some of the world's most prestigious venues and festivals, including the BBC Proms, Wigmore Hall, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Rheingau Musik Festival, and Sydney Festival.

To date, Nigel has conducted the majority of the UK's leading orchestras, including the Academy of Ancient Music, Aurora Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, English Concert, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Other orchestral recordings include Mozart's Requiem with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, and Nigel has also appeared as guest conductor with the BBC Singers, Leipzig's MDR Rundfunkchor, and the Danish National Vocal Ensemble.



Nigel has vast recording experience having conducted for many of the world's major labels including Decca Classics, Deutsche Grammophon, LSO Live, and Signum, as well as having contributed to a number of high-profile film soundtracks. In 2018, he received a Grammy nomination in the category of 'Best Choral Performance' for Tenebrae's album of parts songs from the British Isles, Music of the Spheres. As a Gramophone award-winning producer, Nigel works with many of the UK's leading professional choirs and vocal ensembles including Alamire, Ex Cathedra, Gallicantus, and The King's Singers.

Under the direction of Nigel Short, Tenebrae performs at major festivals and venues across the globe, including the BBC Proms, Wigmore Hall, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Rheingau Musik Festival, and Sydney Festival. The choir has earned international acclaim for its interpretations of choral music from the Renaissance through to contemporary masterpieces, and has commissioned new music from composers including Judith Bingham, Joanna Marsh, Owain Park, Josephine Stephenson, Joby Talbot, and Roderick Williams.

Tenebrae has enjoyed collaborations with some of the UK's leading orchestras, including the London Symphony Orchestra, Aurora Orchestra, the Academy of Ancient Music, and Britten Sinfonia. The choir also undertakes regular session work, having contributed the vocals for Max Richter's *Voices* (2020), Jean-Jacques Annaud's Notre Dame brûle (2022), and blockbuster scifi movie Avatar: The Way of Water (2022) among others. Its extensive recording catalogue comprises a wide range of music on labels including Signum, LSO Live, and Warner Classics, and has earned the choir two BBC Music Magazine Awards and a Grammy nomination.

Alongside its performance schedule, the choir runs a thriving Learning & Connection programme encompassing partnerships with Music Centre London and London Youth Choirs, Tenebrae Effect workshops with amateur choirs, and regular classroom singing for local primary schools through its Singing Schools initiative. Through its Associate Artist programme Tenebrae provides talented young professional singers with vital experience and support in the early stages of their careers.

'Passion and Precision' are Tenebrae's core values. Through its continued dedication to performance of the highest quality, Tenebrae's vision is to inspire audiences around the world through dramatic programming, flawless performances and unforgettable experiences.



Soprano Rachel Haworth Victoria Meteyard Áine Smith Katie Trethewey Emma Walshe

Alto Hannah Cooke Sophie Overin Anna Semple

Tenor David De Winter Jack Granby Tom Robson

Bass Joey Edwards Jimmy Holliday Tom Lowen Florian Störtz

ALONSO LOBO (1555–1617) Versa est in luctum

Versa est in luctum cithara mea, et organum meum in vocem flentium. Parce mihi Domine, nihil enim sunt dies mei.

Cutis mea denigrata est super me et ossa mea aruerunt.

PLAINCHANT

Pange Lingua Gloriosi – Sing, my tongue, of the glorious mystery (of the body).

SERGEI RACHMANINOV (1873–1943) Hymn to the Cherubim (from Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom)

Heruvimskaya pesn Izhe heruvimi tayno obrazuyushche, i zhivotvoriashchey Troitse trisviatuyu pesn pripevayushche, fsiakoye nine zhiteyskoye otlozhim popecheniye. Amin. Yako da Tsaria fseh podimem, Angelskimi nevidimo dorinosima chinmi. Alliluiya, alliluiya, alliluiya.

ANTON BRUCKNER (1824–1896) Virga Jesse

Virga Jesse floruit: Virgo Deum et hominem genuit: pacem Deus reddidit, in se reconcilians ima summis. Alleluja.

VICENTE LUSITANO (1520–1561) Heu me Domine

Heu me, Domine, quia pecavi nimis in vita mea: quid faciam miser, ubi fugiam, nisi ad te, Deus meus?

Libera me, Domine, de morte æterna, in die illa tremenda, quando celi mouendi sunt et terra.

ANTONIO LOTTI (1667–1740) Crucifixus

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato: Passus, et sepultus est. My harp is tuned for lamentation, and my organ to the voice of those who weep. Spare me, O Lord, for my days are as nothing.

My skin is charred, And my bones are burned.

Let us who mystically represent the Cherubim, and who sing the thriceholy hymn to the life-creating Trinity, now lay aside all cares of this life, Amen.

That we may receive the King of All, who comes invisibly upborne by the angelic host. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The branch from Jesse blooms: a Virgin brings forth God and man: God's peace is restored, reconciling in Himself the lowest with the highest. Alleluia.

Alas, Lord, for we have sinned too much in my life! poor wretch, what shall I do, where shall I flee, but to you, my God?

Free me, Lord, from eternal death on the awful day; When Heaven and earth move.

He was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate: He suffered and was buried.

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ORLANDO GIBBONS (1583–1625) Drop, drop slow tears

Drop, drop, slow tears, And bathe those beauteous feet Which brought from Heaven The news and Prince of Peace.

Cease not, wet eyes, His mercy to entreat; To cry for vengeance Sin doth never cease.

GREGORIO ALLEGRI (1582–1652) Miserere mei, Deus

Miserere mei, Deus Secundum magnam misericordiam tuam; Et secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum, dele iniquitatem meam.

Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea: Et a peccato meo munda me.

Quoniam iniquitatem meam ego cognosco, Et peccatum meum contra me est semper.

Tibi soli peccavi et malum coram te feci: Ut iustificeris in sermonibus tuis, Et vincas cum iudicaris.

Ecce enim in iniquitatibus conceptus sum: Et in peccatis concepit me mater mea.

Ecce enim veritatem dilexisti: Incerta t occulta sapientiae tuae manifestasti mihi.

Asperges me hysopo et mundabor; Lavabis me et super nivem dealbabor.

Auditui meo dabis Gaudium et laetitiam; et exultabunt ossa humiliate.

Sacrificium Deo spiritus contribulatus. Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus non despicies.

Benigne fac Domine in bona voluntate tua Sion, Et aedificentur muri lerusalem

Tunc acceptabis sacrificium iustitiae oblationes et holocausta; Tunc inponent super altare tuum vitulos. In your deep floods Drown all my faults and fears; Nor let His eye See sin, but through my tears.

Poem by Phineas Fletcher (1582–1650)

Have mercy on me, God, According to your great kindness; And according to the multitude of your mercies, Erase my iniquities.

Wash me completely from my iniquities; And cleanse me of my sins.

For I know my iniquities, And my sins are always before me.

Against you alone, I have sinned And done evil before you: May you be fair in your speech And justified in your judgement.

Behold, I was conceived in iniquity: And in sin my mother conceived me.

Behold, you desire truth in the inward parts: And you teach me wisdom in the hidden places.

Purify me with hyssop and I will be clean; Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

Let me hear your joy and gladness; And my humble bones will rejoice.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and humble heart, God will not despise them.

Do well before the Lord in your good pleasure to Zion, And build the walls of Jerusalem.

Then you accept the sacrifices of righteousness In oblations and burnt offerings; Then they will offer bulls on your altar.

JOHN TAVENER (1944–2013) Funeral Ikos

Why these bitter words of the dying, O brethren, which they utter as they go hence? I am parted from my brethren. All my friends do I abandon and go hence. But whither I go, that understand I not, neither what shall become of me yonder; only God who hath summoned me knoweth. But make commemoration of me with the song: Alleluia! Alleluia!

But whither now go the souls? How dwell they now together there? This mystery have I desired to learn; but none can impart aright. Do they call to mind their own people, as we do them? Or have they forgotten all those who mourn them and make the song: Alleluia! Alleluia!

We go forth on the path eternal, and as condemned, with downcast faces, present ourselves before the only God eternal. Where then is comeliness? Where then is wealth? Where then is the glory of this world? There shall none of these things aid us, but only to say oft the psalm: Alleluia! Alleluia!

ORLANDO DE LASSUS (1532–1594) Musica Dei Donum

Musica Dei donum optimi trahit homines, trahit deos: Musica truces mollit animos tristesque mentes erigit. Musica vel ipsas arbores et horridas movet feras cunctisque solatia prestans. If thou hast shown mercy unto man, O man, that same mercy shall be shown thee there; and if on an orphan thou hast shown compassion, the same shall there deliver thee from want. If in this life the naked thou hast clothed, the same shall give thee shelter there, and sing the psalm: Alleluia! Alleluia!

Youth and the beauty of the body fade at the hour of death, and the tongue then burneth fiercely, and the parched throat is inflamed. The beauty of the eyes is quenched then, the comeliness of the face all altered, the shapeliness of the neck destroyed; and the other parts have become numb, nor often say: Alleluia! Alleluia!

With ecstasy are we inflamed if we but hear that there is light eternal yonder; that there is Paradise, wherein every soul of Righteous Ones rejoiceth. Let us all, also, enter into Christ, that we may cry aloud thus unto God: Alleluia! Alleluia!

Music, the gift of the supreme God, entices men, enchants gods; music makes savage souls gentle and uplifts sad minds; it even moves trees themselves and wild beasts, affording relief to all.

JOANNA MARSH (b. 1970) In Winter's House

In winter's house there's a room that's pale and still as mist in a field while outside in the street every gate's shut firm, every face as cold as steel.

In winter's house there's a bed is spread with frost and feathers, that gleams in the half-light like rain in a disused yard or a pearl in a choked-up stream.

In winter's house there's a child asleep in a dream of light that grows out of the dark, a flame you can hold in your hand like a flower or a torch on the street.

EDVARD GRIEG (1843–1907) Ave Maris Stella

Ave, maris stella, Dei mater alma, atque semper virgo, Felix cæli porta.

Solve vincla reis, profer lumen cæcis, mala nostra pelle, bona cuncta posce.

Vitam præsta puram, iter para tutum, ut videntes Jesum semper collætemur.

Sit laus Deo Patri, summo Christo decus, Spiritui Sancto tribus honor unus. Amen.

MIKHAIL GLINKA (1804–1857) Hymn to the Cherubim (Heruvimskaya pesn)

Izhe heruvimi tayno obrazuyushche, i zhivotvoriashchey Troitse trisviatuyu pesn pripevayushche, fsiakoye nine zhiteyskoye otlozhim popecheniye. Amin. Yako da Tsaria fseh podimem, Angelskimi nevidimo dorinosima chinmi. Alliluiya, alliluiya, alliluiya. In winter's house there's a tale that's told of a great chandelier in a garden, of fire that catches and travels for miles, of all gates and windows wide open.

In winter's house there's a flame being dreamt by a child in the night, in the small quiet house at the turn in the lane where the darkness gives way to light.

Poem by Jane Draycott (b.1954)

Hail, star of the sea, Nurturing Mother of God, And ever Virgin Happy gate of Heaven

Loosen the chains of the guilty, Send forth light to the blind, Our evil do thou dispel, Entreat (for us) all good things.

Bestow a pure life, Prepare a safe way: That seeing Jesus, We may ever rejoice.

Praise be to God the Father, To the Most High Christ (be) glory, To the Holy Spirit (Be) honour, to the Three equally. Amen.

Let us who mystically represent the Cherubim, and who sing the thriceholy hymn to the life-creating Trinity, now lay aside all cares of this life, Amen.

That we may receive the King of All, who comes invisibly upborne by the angelic host. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

GUSTAV HOLST (1874–1934) Ave Maria

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum; Benedicta tu in mulieribus, Et benedictus fructus ventris, Jesus.

Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, Ora pro nobis peccatoribus Nunc et in hora mortis nostrae

HOLST Nunc Dimittis

Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum Quod parasti ante faciem omnium populorum Lumen ad revelationem gentium, et gloriam plebis tuae Israel.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

ERIC WHITACRE (b. 1970) Sleep

The evening hangs beneath the moon, A silver thread on darkened dune. With closing eyes and resting head I know that sleep is coming soon.

Upon my pillow, safe in bed, A thousand pictures fill my head. I cannot sleep, my mind's a-flight; And yet my limbs seem made of lead.

If there are noises in the night, A frightening shadow, flickering light,

WILLIAM HENRY HARRIS (b. 1970) Faire is the Heaven

Faire is the heaven, where happy souls have place In full enjoyment of felicitie, Whence they doe still behold the glorious face Of the Divine Eternall Majestie; Yet farre more faire be those bright Cherubins, Which all with golden wings are overdight, And those eternall burning Seraphins, Which from their faces dart out fiery light; Yet fairer than they both, and much more bright, Hail Mary, full of grace, The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus

Hail Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners, Now and at the hour of our death.

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen: thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared: before the face of all people; To be a light to lighten the Gentiles: and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end. Amen.

Then I surrender unto sleep, Where clouds of dream give second sight,

What dreams may come, both dark and deep, Of flying wings and soaring leap As I surrender unto sleep, As I surrender unto sleep.

Charles Anthony Silvestri, b.1965

Be th' Angels and Archangels, which attend On God's owne Person, without rest or end. These then in faire each other farre excelling, As to the Highest they approach more neare, Yet is the Highest farre beyond all telling, Fairer than all the rest which there appear, Though all their beauties joynd together were; How then can mortall tongue hope to expresse The image of such endlesse perfectnesse?