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CLASSICS

Daylight Declines

Choral Music by Paweł Łukaszewski

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NIGEL SHORT



DAYLIGHT DECLINES

CHORAL WORKS BY PAWEŁ ŁUKASZEWSKI

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TENEBRAE
NIGEL SHORT CONDUCTOR

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PAWEŁ ŁUKASZEWSKI

Paweł Łukaszewski was born in southern Poland in 1968 in the city of Częstochowa, a centre of religious pilgrimage owing to the presence there of a statue of the Black Madonna at the Jasna Góra Monastery. There is a predominantly sacred thread to most of his compositions and his international reputation seems to have blossomed on account of his choral output, the majority of it settings of Latin and English texts as opposed to his native tongue. Revered in his homeland, the list of awards and accolades he has received is substantial including the Fryderyk Award and, most recently, the Feniks Prize in 2017. He was composer-in-residence with the Warsaw National Philharmonic Orchestra (2011/2012) and has taught composition in the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music in Warsaw since 1996, where he himself had been a student and was awarded a doctorate in composition. He is Vice-Rector of the university and Professor of Composition. He has garnered prestigious, national honours and his work has a loyal following around the globe, with over 110 CDs of his work to date.

While it is difficult to categorise Łukaszewski's compositional style, it has a timeless element and is, in his own words, in a *renewed tonality*. Any description of this genre risks being subjective but it seems to centre around the use of conventional, choral sonorities, often in a clear, homophonic format, yet in a manner which does not lead the listener on a predictable journey, involving unexpected turns in harmonic juxtaposition and rhythmic techniques which make demands of the listener as much as of the performers. In a sense he has a foot firmly in the ancient style of sacred choral writing, something shared by many major composers such as Brahms, Bruckner and Stravinsky when they wrote for choirs. Some textural methods appear idiosyncratic and intricate on paper but lend soft borders to the effects of the music, as if metaphorically viewed through lenses and filters. There is an easily-discernible cultural link with his Polish predecessors, such as Lutosławski and Penderecki, but the influence of Henryk Górecki and the Estonian Arvo Pärt is evident in the fervent but restrained spiritual aspect of Łukaszewski's music, and his individual voice never stoops to mere imitation.

Cantate Domino

This most optimistic and exuberant psalm is set for subdivided choir in a most joyful fashion, with a great deal of word-painting of the praises of the psalm and swinging, repeated bursts of happiness. Rapid vocal passages are biased towards the upper voices with much of the rejoicing and singing to the Lord illuminated by triplet activity in different proportions: choral laughter and dancing. The only ominous note is the heavily-scored declamation about the Lord's coming to judge the earth: *Quoniam venit iudicare terram*. The short piece is bookended by meditative vocalisations which are evocative of gentle chiming, and a final whispered 'Domino'.

Like as the waves (Shakespeare's Sonnet LX)

From the outset of this Sonnet, the pulling of the waves and the pebbles are represented in the outward stretching of the choral writing which, with displaced rhythms between women's and men's voices, seems to be hesitant, almost stuttering. There is an unconventional spacing of the choral lines, often leaving the highest part very remote and Łukaszewski's preferred, stark fifths make an appearance, in this instance combined with semitone clashes, inverted as sevenths and ninths to temper

the effect within a wider, starker context. At times there is a unlikely resemblance to some of the favourite dissonances used by the English composer, Gerald Finzi. But mention should be made of a unique metrical device for the repetition of the word 'time'. The unanimous chords sung on this word are given changing bars in two, three and four-beat metre, but there is a trick employed which the listener could hardly be aware of without the aid of a printed score. Silences are built in to the sequences of the repeated 'time', but the silent bars are devoid of the printed rest symbols which are the universally conventional symbol for gaps in sound. It might be argued that the strange look of these empty musical bars invites the musicians to freeze, to hold their breath, reinforcing the word-play, suspending time.

Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed (Shakespeare's Sonnet XXVII)

It speaks a considerable amount about William Shakespeare's universal appeal that a Polish composer sets his Sonnets, in this case for unaccompanied choir and with an extended feeling of being held in time, or lulled to sleep. Particular use is made of slow, downward gestures and a thick chordal sound, usually

doubled at the octave. The timeless mood is amplified by continual progressions of unresolved second-inversion chords and, as an additional feature, there is a reflected symmetry using the interval of the perfect fifth in opposing motion up and down. This is reminiscent of the effect of string instruments playing their open strings, or looking at ones own reflection in water. There is relief from Łukaszewski's typical homophonic texture with little waves of forward motion with canonic imitation, lending a little buoyancy and soothing.

Daylight Declines

A commission from the Netherlands Cantatrix Choir, this text is by the 16th Century Waclaw z Szamotul in a translation by Marek Żebrowski. There is an element of a Compline prayer in the requests for protection through the approaching night. The music is a soothing treatment of the text, using reflected scales between opposing voice-parts, hovering around the plainchant Mode 1 which Łukaszewski has also employed in his *Responsoria Tenebrae*. Drone-fifths are predominant in the bass part and the declining daylight is evoked by falling triplet figuration throughout the voices, and a noticeable hint of the Lydian mode with its jagged sharpened fourths. The listener can

hear a familiarity in this composer's conventional use of key-areas and modes, but unexpected shifts to new tonal territory always lurk around the corner.

1. *Tenebrae factae sunt*

Łukaszewski uses the term, *placido* for each movement of the Responsories, in conjunction with a tempo annotation. In this first movement, the calmness pervades even the manner with the loud voice of Jesus is portrayed. The musical description is more of a personal reflection than a dramatic enactment, which previous composers' versions perhaps lead us to expect. Extensive use is made of rhythmic dissonance, where the note-values of successive, incanted phrases are paced slightly out of phase, lending a feeling of turbulence or uncertainty. There is a moment of wide-spaced minor-chord consonance on the word: *Spiritum*, when Jesus gives up his last breath. Significantly, the other occurrence of this harmony is the only loud moment of the movement: the word *Iudaei*, near the beginning.

2. *Caligaverunt oculi mei*

Is there perhaps weeping, or drops of tears, built into the choral sound of this movement, in the oscillating upper bass line, or in the constant mordent-clusters of the first alto

part? This composer makes swift progress through myriad choral techniques and, in this setting, some of the text is divided out from top voice to bottom, and vice versa, splitting up words among the vocal parts. This effect is rather like a spread chord on a harp or lute. There is also a contrary motion between the outer parts with opposing leaps of octaves and sevenths. The sevenths reappear at the climax of the responsory whose clashing, unresolved dissonance returns at the related text in responsory no.4: *O vos omnes*.

3. Recessit pastor noster

There is some comfort here, for despite the betrayal and imminent fate of the Lord, the power of evil has been destroyed. There are two opposing elements. First, a quasi-Gregorian-Mode 1 cantabile melody which is raised twice by a semitone step, accompanied by a vocalised, off-beat accompaniment which could be compared to a piano-accompaniment for a song by Schumann or Fauré. The battle of good and evil at the gates of hell is represented by unrelenting dissonances in rhythmic fractions which might suggest that weapon of the Old Testament referred to in psalm 149: a two-edged sword.

4. O vos omnes

An impassioned plea from the condemned Jesus himself for the passerby to stop and consider His plight, and further to realise that the debts of all humankind are now heaped on the Saviour's shoulders. Tomas Luis de Victoria created perhaps his most perfect work in setting these words in his own Responsories, and much is expected of a fresh version of this text. Łukaszewski's treatment certainly employs dissonance but, imaginatively leaves the resolution of such tension either in a silence in that particular area of the choral sound, or by an incomplete resolution by shifting to another, nearby clash of vocal lines instead. There is also an interplay between the upper three vocal lines and the lower three, a trait which this composer is fond of, and he keeps a symmetry of dissonance in the sense that close dissonances are used as much between the two lowest voices as in the two highest. In the original performance layout with The King's Singers, the result would be a stereo separation in space, but the effect remains in a vertical plane between the higher and lower voices. By way of respite for the listener, Łukaszewski's inserts a recurring phrase – a soothing, descending ritornello on the words: 'qui transitis/sicut

dolor meus' – which is strangely reminiscent of the vocal writing of Claudio Monteverdi.

5. Ecce quomodo moritur iustus

The text, from the Book of Isaiah, deals with the injustice of an innocent man being led away to the slaughter, portrayed figuratively as a lamb to the shearer which does not bleat in complaint. The division of text is, in this instance, repeated phrases which alternate around the voices and not subdivided words. Use is made of an accompanying *moto perpetuo* vocalisation, sounding like slow trills in thirds, passed among the voices and this rocking effect is coupled with the swing of alternations of repeated words between contrasting pitches. There is a further feature in this movement: a semitone-shift which typically coincides with the printed bar-lines. There is also one, unexpected semitone transposition in the reprise of the opening material which is a reminder of the exacting choral skills necessary to perform the work.

Lamentations of Jeremiah

This is a substantial and taxing work for interdivided SATB choir, unaccompanied. Commissioned by the Wratislavia Cantans Festival, Poland, it was published in 2011 and

sets text from the Book of Lamentations in the Bible, including a musical inscription: 'Here begin the Lamentations...' and the Hebrew equivalents of page numbers in song, in the tradition established by composers such as Thomas Tallis (c.1505-1585). In the Hebrew Bible, the Lamentations form part of the books of the *Ketuvim*, and are a poetic lament for the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon. In the Christian Bible it is ascribed to Jeremiah, but only by tradition, and its role is as a metaphor for the death of Christ which is celebrated in the Liturgy of Holy Week.

There is something of the grand-architectural about the form of this piece: a substantial essay in big brush-strokes, starkly-contrasted changes of technique and texture from headings to verses and so on. There is a mixture of metrical complexity and rhythmical dissonance, sustained strands of sounds and dense patterns of intricacy, thick clusters of harmony and the occasional relief of unison lines. But there is a continuous feature made of the role of octaves, between parts and within vocal strands themselves, and dialogue and relationships at one and two octaves apart. There is a suggestion in the sound that there is great throng of people involved –

maybe the whole of humanity as part of the narrative. Many of the earlier devices of Paweł Łukaszewski's are brought together and developed, with wordless vocalisations, extended ostinati, and instrumental-type figurations. In the third Lamentation, extended use is made of an out-of-phase musical timing within each vocal division, resulting in a Mexican wave effect of out-of-time singing, as if in a long column of people in procession.

Beatis

There are relatively few musical settings of the Beatitudes, perhaps the most notable among them by Arthur Bliss (1961) and Arvo Pärt (1990). This text, from St Matthew's Gospel (Chapter 5) is difficult to categorise. It is often described as Jesus's Sermon on the Mount and is neither a prayer nor a narrative, but more a beautiful description of human qualities balanced with the benefits which result from possessing them. In that respect, the text presents some problems for a composer. Its form is rather like a list of statements or rules and one might imagine them inscribed on the wall of a sacred building, each sentence able to exist on its own, having a perfect balance. There is a feeling of a Litany as each phrase except the

final one begins with 'Blessed are...', always voiced in the plural, as if speaking to the world. The lack of poetic flow might be a reason for dissuading composers from setting the text but, perhaps influenced by the version by Pärt, Łukaszewski uses the solid pronouncements as a shape to write granite-like blocks of strong writing, each separated by a double-bar, providing as much a space for the listener's thought as for the choir to breathe. The construction is mainly homophonic, the voices singing the words at the same time, rather than creating music on a horizontal, flowing plane. The interesting thread throughout this work appears to be concerned with bells, or at least bell-suggestions. It happens in many ways. Starting on the vertical, many of the "Beati" statements are 'chimed' on harmonies which pile up intervals of fifths and seconds. Although bells have their own, distinct harmonic characteristics, these words, always stated first as a separate gesture, have a ringing quality, and each of the sentences has its own, if you like, add-on bells, in differing proportions, and in imaginative variations. The phrases which follow have two other techniques which develop the initial tolling effect. There is a comprehensive use of graded proportions

of note-values, nothing unusual in itself, but here used to distract us from the restrictions of measured note-lengths and to throw the piece into the freedom of bell-pealing. In addition, there is a deliberate delay built-in to some of the rhythms, rather like the delay between pulling on the rope and the bell sounding. This is not immediately clear but creates a subtle impression of the cacophony

of bells being heard reflected from walls, out of time and sometimes with chaotic harmony. At the climactic point, where the text lines change from "Beati" to "Gaudete et exsultate" (Rejoice and be glad), all the voices are in exact synchronisation, but they still make use of the same, ringing shapes as have been impressed on our ears from the opening of the work.

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TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

1 Cantate Domino

Cantate Domino canticum novum,
cantate Domino, omnis terra.
Cantate Domino, benedicte nomini eius,
annuntiate de die in diem salutare eius.
Annuntiate inter gentes gloriam eius,
in omnibus populis mirabilia eius.

Laetentur caeli, et exsultet terra,
sonet mare et plenitudo eius;
gaudebunt campi et omnia, quae in eis sunt.
Tunc exsultabunt omnia ligna silvarum
a facie Domini, quia venit,
quoniam venit iudicare terram.
Iudicabit orbem terrae in iustitia
et populos in veritate sua.

*Sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord, praise his name;
proclaim his salvation day after day.
Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all peoples. (...)*

*Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
let the sea resound, and all that is in it.
Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them;
let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.
Let all creation rejoice before the Lord, for he comes,
he comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples in his faithfulness.*

Text: Psalm 96 (95)

Shakespeare Sonnets

2 Like as the waves

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end,
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.

Nativity, once in the main of light,
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crowned,
Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
And time that gave doth now his gift confound.

Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth,
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow.

And yet to times in hope, my verse shall stand,
Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

Text: Sonnet LX

3 Weary with toil

I haste me to my bed,
The dear repose for limbs with travel tired;
But then begins a journey in my head
To work my mind, when body's work's expired.

For then my thoughts, from far where I abide,
Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,

And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,
Looking on darkness which the blind do see.
Save that my soul's imaginary sight
Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,
Which like a jewel hung in ghastly night,
Makes black night beauteous, and her old face new:

Lo thus, by day my limbs, by night my mind,
For thee, and for myself, no quiet find.

4 Daylight Declines

Daylight declines, the night advances
we ask the Lord for deliverance,
that He our guardian remain,
protecting us from evil domain
of spirits who always in the dark
upon their treachery embark.

Text: Waclaw z Szamotuł (c.1533-c.1568)

Translation by Marek Zebrowski

Tenebrae Responsories

5 I. Tenebrae factae sunt

Tenebrae factae sunt,
dum crucifixissent Jesum Judaei:
et circa horam nonam

*Darkness covered the whole land
when Jesus had been crucified;
and about the ninth hour*

exclamavit Jesus voce magna:
Deus meus, ut quid me dereliquisti?
Et inclinato capite, emisit spiritum.
Exclamans Jesus voce magna ait:
Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum.
Et inclinato capite, emisit spiritum.

*he cried with a loud voice:
My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
And he bowed his head and handed over his spirit.
Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said:
Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.
And he bowed his head and handed over his spirit.*

6 II. Caligaverunt oculi mei

Caligaverunt oculi mei a fletu meo:
quia elongatus est a me, qui consolabatur me:
Videte, omnes populi,
si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus.
O vos omnes, qui transitis per viam,
attendite, et videte,
si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus.
Caligaverunt oculi mei a fletu meo:
quia elongatus est a me, qui consolabatur me:
Videte, omnes populi,
si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus.

*My eyes are darkened by my tears:
For He is far from me that comforted Me:
See, O all ye people,
if there be a sorrow like unto My sorrow.
O all ye that pass by,
behold and see
if there be a sorrow like unto My sorrow.
My eyes are darkened by my tears:
For He is far from me that comforted Me:
See, O all ye people,
if there be a sorrow like unto My sorrow.*

7 III. Recessit Pastor noster

Recessit Pastor noster fons aquae vivae,
ad cuius transitum sol obscuratus est:
Nam et ille captus est,
qui captivum tenebat primum hominem:
hodie portas mortis et seras pariter
Salvator noster disruptit.

*Our Shepherd is departed, the fount of living water,
At whose passing the sun was darkened,
For even he was made captive who was
holding captive the first man.
Today the gates of death and their bars
as well our Savior has destroyed.*

Destruxit quidem claustra inferni,
et subvertit potentias diaboli.
Nam et ille captus est,
qui captivum tenebat primum hominem:
hodie portas mortis et seras pariter
Salvator noster disruptit.

8 IV. O vos omnes

O vos omnes qui transitis per viam:
attendite et videte, si est dolor sicut dolor meus.
Attendite, universi populi, et videte dolorem meum.
Si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus.

9 V. Ecce quomodo moritur iustus

Ecce quomodo moritur iustus,
et nemo percipit corde:
et viri justi tolluntur,
et nemo considerat:
a facie iniuriantis sublatus est justus:
et erit in pace memoria eius.
Tamquam agnus coram tondente se obmutuit,
Et non aperuit os suum:
de angustia, et de judicio sublatus est.
et erit in pace memoria eius:
Ecce quomodo moritur justus,
et nemo percipit corde:
et viri justi tolluntur,

*Indeed He has destroyed
the strongholds of the underworld
and he has overthrown the powers of the devil.
For even he was made captive
who was holding captive the first man.
Today the gates of death and their bars
as well our Savior has destroyed.*

*O all ye that pass by the way,
attend and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow.
Attend, all ye people, and see my sorrow.
If there be any sorrow like to my sorrow.*

*See how the righteous one perishes,
and no one takes it to heart.
The righteous are taken away,
and no one understands,
and his memory shall be in peace.
Like a sheep before its shearers is mute,
so he opened not his mouth.
By oppression and judgment he was taken away.
And his memory shall be in peace.
See how the righteous one perishes,
and no one takes it to heart.
The righteous are taken away,
and no one understands,*

et nemo considerat:
a facie iniquitatis sublatus est iustus:
et erit in pace memoria eius.

and his memory shall be in peace.

Lamentationes

10 Lamentatio I

Quomodo sedet sola civitas plena populo!
Facta est quasi vidua domina gentium;
princeps provinciarum facta est sub tributo.

*O how has the city that was once so populous remained lonely!
She has become like a widow! She that was great among the nations,
a princess among the provinces, has become tributary.*

Plorans plorat in nocte, et lacrimae eius in maxillis eius;
non est qui consoletur eam ex omnibus caris eius:
omnes amici eius spreverunt eam et facti sunt ei inimici.

*She weeps, yea, she weeps in the night, and her tears are on her cheek;
she has no comforter among all her lovers;
all her friends have betrayed her; they have become her enemies.*

Vide, Domine, et considera, quoniam facta sum vilis

Text: Lamentations 1:1-2,11

11 Lamentatio II

Quomodo obtexit caligine in furore suo Dominus filiam Sion!
Proiecit de caelo in terram gloriam Israel
et non est recordatus scabelli pedum suorum in die furoris sui.

*How has the Lord in His anger brought darkness upon the daughter of Zion!
He has cast down from heaven to earth the glory of Israel,
and has not remembered His footstool on the day of His anger.*

Defixa sunt in terra portae eius; perdidit et contrivit vectes eius.
Rex eius et principes eius in gentibus; non est lex, et prophetae eius non invenerunt visionem a Domino.

*Her gates are sunk into the ground; He has ruined and broken her bars;
her king and princes are among the heathens,
there is no more teaching;
moreover, her prophets find no vision from the Lord.*

Cui comparabo te vel cui assimilabo te, filia Ierusalem?
Cui exaequabo te et consolabor te, virgo filia Sion?
Magna est enim velut mare contritio tua; quis medebitur tui?

*What shall I testify for you? What shall I compare to you, O daughter of Jerusalem?
What can I liken to you, that I may comfort you, O virgin daughter of Zion?
For your ruin is as vast as the sea-who can heal you?*

Text: Lamentations 2:1,9,13

12 Lamentatio III

Misericordiae Domini, quia non sumus consumpti, quia non defecerunt miserationes eius.

*Verily, the kindnesses of the Lord never cease!
Indeed, His mercies never fail!*

Scrutemur vias nostras et quaeramus et revertamur ad Dominum.

Let us search and examine our ways, and let us return to the Lord.

Levemus corda nostra cum manibus ad Dominum in caelos.

Nos inique egimus et rebelles fuimus; idcirco tu inexorabilis fuisti.

Non crediderunt reges terrae et universi habitatores orbis,
quoniam ingredieretur hostis et inimicus per portas Ierusalem.

Recordare, Domine, quid acci derit nobis;
intuere et respice opprobrium nostrum.

Converte nos, Domine, ad te, et convertemur;
innova dies nostros sicut a principio.

Text: Lamentations 3:22,40,41,42; 4:12; 5:1,21

13 Beati

Beati pauperes spiritu, quoniam ipsorum est regnum caelorum.

Beati, qui lugent, quoniam ipsi consolabuntur.

Beati mites, quoniam ipsi possidebunt terram.

Beati, qui esuriunt et sitiunt iustitiam, quoniam ipsi saturabuntur.

Beati misericordes, quia ipsi misericordiam consequentur.

Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt.

Let us lift up our hearts to our hands, to God in heaven.

We have rebelled and have been disobedient; You have not forgiven.

The kings of the earth did not believe, nor all the inhabitants of the world, that a foe or enemy could enter the gates of Jerusalem.

Recall, O Lord, what has befallen us; behold and see our disgrace.

*Restore us to You, O Lord, that we may be restored!
Renew our days as of old.*

Beati pacifici, quoniam filii Dei vocabuntur.

Beati, qui persecutionem patiuntur propter iustitiam,

quoniam ipsum est regnum caelorum.

Beati estis cum maledixerint vobis et persecutivos fuerint

et dixerint omne malum adversum vos, mentientes, propter me.

Gaudete et exsultate, quoniam merces vestra copiosa est in caelis;

sic enim persecuti sunt prophetas, qui fuerunt ante vos.

Text: Matthew 5:3-12

Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you (falsely) because of me.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

TENEBRAE



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Soprano

Emily Atkinson ^{o†}

Jessica Cale ^{oo}

Rosemary Galton [†]

Joanna L'Estrange

Alison Hill [†]

Marie Macklin

Laura Oldfield ^{**}

Bethany Partridge ^{*}

Josephine Stephenson [†]

Katie Trethewey

Alto

Hannah Cooke

Tom Lilburn ^{oo}

Martha McLorinan

Eleanor Minney

Tenor

Ben Alden ^{††}

Ruairi Bowen [†]

Jeremy Budd

Joshua Cooter ^{o†}

Hugo Hymas [†]

Nicholas Madden ^{*}

David de Winter ^{**}

Bass

Gabriel Crouch

Jimmy Holliday

Stephen Kennedy

Andrew Mahon

Gregory Skidmore ^{o†}

Simon Whiteley [†]

* *Responsoria Tenebrae, Like as the Waves and Daylight Declines* only

** All except *Responsoria Tenebrae, Like as the Waves and Daylight Declines*

* *Lamentatio I and II and Cantate Domino* only

** All except *Weary with Toil*

† *Lamentatio III and Beati* only

†† All except *Lamentatio III and Beati*

Described as “*phenomenal*” (The Times) and “*devastatingly beautiful*” (Gramophone Magazine), award-winning choir Tenebrae, under the direction of Nigel Short, is one of the world’s leading vocal ensembles renowned for its passion and precision.

Tenebrae’s ever-increasing discography has brought about collaborations with Signum, Decca Classics, Deutsche Grammophon, EMI Classics, LSO Live, and Warner Classics. In 2012 Tenebrae were the first-ever ensemble to be multi-nominated in the same category for the BBC Music Magazine Awards, securing the accolade of Best Choral Performance for their recording of Victoria’s *Requiem Mass, 1605*. The following year the choir’s recording of Fauré’s *Requiem* with the London Symphony Orchestra was nominated for the Gramophone Awards, having been described as “*the very best Fauré Requiem on disc*” and “*the English choral tradition at its zenith*” (Richard Morrisson, Chief Music Critic, The Times). In 2014 the choir’s recording of Russian Orthodox music was launched on its own label, Bene Arte, receiving glowing reviews and reaching number 1 in the UK Specialist Classical Chart. In 2016 Tenebrae received its second BBC Music Magazine Award for a recording of Brahms and

Bruckner motets, the profits from the sale of which benefit Macmillan Cancer Support. In order to mark Tenebrae’s fifteenth anniversary in 2016-17, the choir re-released its first major commission by Joby Talbot, *Path of Miracles*, alongside a new work by rising composer, Owain Park.

Tenebrae is a dedicated advocate for contemporary composers, having worked with Judith Bingham, Alexander Levine, Paweł Łukaszewski, Paul Mealor, Hilary Tann, Sir John Tavener and Will Todd, in addition to recent releases featuring music by Ola Gjeilo and Alexander L’Estrange. The choir is renowned for its highly-acclaimed interpretations of choral music with repertoire ranging from hauntingly passionate works of the Renaissance through to contemporary choral masterpieces.

Tenebrae is regularly engaged with the world’s finest orchestras and has appeared at major national and international festivals and venues including the BBC Proms, Edinburgh International Festival, Three Choirs Festival, Leipzig Gewandhaus (Germany) and Montreux Choral Festival (Switzerland). The 2017-18 season sees the return of Tenebrae’s popular Holy Week Festival at St John’s Smith Square, London, as well as concerts throughout the UK,

Europe, USA and the choir's debut in Australia. Alongside concert performances, the choir presents its inspirational workshop method, *The Tenebrae Effect*, designed to challenge and advance every participant by instilling skills essential to a Tenebrae performance.

'Passion and Precision' are Tenebrae's core values. Through its continued dedication to performance of the highest quality, Tenebrae's vision is to deliver dramatic programming, flawless performances and unforgettable experiences, allowing audiences around the world to be moved by the power and intimacy of the human voice.

NIGEL SHORT

Award-winning conductor Nigel Short has built up an enviable reputation for his recording and live performance work with leading orchestras and ensembles across the world.

A singer of great acclaim, Nigel was a member of the renowned vocal ensemble The King's Singers from 1994–2000. Upon leaving the group he formed Tenebrae, a virtuosic choir that embraced his dedication for passion and precision. 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.

To date, Nigel has conducted the Aurora Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, English Chamber Orchestra, English Concert, London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Scottish Ensemble. He has directed the London Symphony Orchestra alongside Tenebrae in a live recording of Faure's *Requiem*, which was nominated for the Gramophone Awards (2013) and since then, he has conducted the orchestra at St. Paul's Cathedral as part of the City of London Festival. Other orchestral recordings include Mozart's Requiem and *Ave Verum Corpus* with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and a release of music by Bernstein, Stravinsky and Zemlinsky with the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

Nigel has vast recording experience having conducted for many of the world's major labels including Decca Classics, Deutsche Grammophon, EMI Classics, LSO Live, Signum and Warner Classics. 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.



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and **Polish Cultural Institute**.



The **Adam Mickiewicz Institute**, acting under its brand Culture.pl, is a national cultural institute, whose mission is to build and communicate the cultural dimension of the Poland brand through active participation in international cultural exchange. The Institute has carried out cultural projects in 70 countries. The AMI has presented more than 5,500 cultural events, attracting an audience of more than 52.5 million on five continents. All of the Institute's projects are carried out under our flagship brand, Culture.pl.

The Institute's **Culture.pl** portal offers a daily information service covering key events related to Polish culture around the world. In addition to information on events organised in Poland and abroad, the portal features numerous artist profiles, reviews, essays, descriptive articles and information about cultural institutions. The site, which in 2016 drew more than 5 million visitors from around the world, is available in three languages: Polish, English and Russian. In 2015 the portal won the Guarantee of Culture award in the category Culture on the Net.



Based in London, the **Polish Cultural Institute** is dedicated to nurturing and promoting cultural ties between the United Kingdom and Poland, both through British exposure to Poland's cultural achievements, and through exposure of Polish artists and scholars to British trends, institutions, and professional counterparts.

Tenebrae would also like to thank Paweł Łukaszewski's publishers:
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PWM Edition

Cantate Domino commissioned by Brady Allred and Salt Lake Vocal Artists, USA (2014)

Shakespeare Sonnets commissioned by proMODERN Vocal Ensemble, Poland (2015)

Daylight Declines commissioned by Cantatrix, The Netherlands (2013)

Responsoria Tenebrae commissioned for The King's Singers by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, Warsaw, Poland (2010)

Lamentationes commissioned by Wratislavia Cantans Festival, Wrocław, Poland (2011)

Beati commissioned by YL Male Voice Choir, Helsinki, Finland (2014)

Recorded in St Augustine's Church, Kilburn, London from 10-12th May 2016

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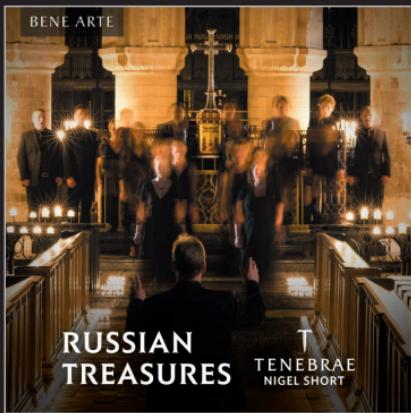
Brahms & Bruckner Motets

Tenebrae, Nigel Short

SIGCD430

"Nigel Short and Tenebrae have come up with a beautifully balanced and contrasted programme...The beauty of sound and dignified expression of intensity that Tenebrae create in the opening of the first choral number, Bruckner's Virga Jesse, would be impressive in themselves but with the ear prepared by the first Aequilis the effect is even more telling...what superb singing: technically immaculate, somehow lucid and voluptuously beautiful all at the same time."

BBC Music Magazine Award Winner, 2016



Russian Treasures

Tenebrae, Nigel Short

SIGCD900

"a beautifully blended, spaciously paced journey through late 19th and early 20th century Russian liturgical music. The basses are phenomenal, descending to their sepulchral bottom B flats." The Times

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