

ONDINE

RAMON HUMET

Light
Llum

Latvian Radio Choir
Sigvards Klava



RAMON HUMET

RAMON HUMET (1968)

	Llum <i>Light</i> (2013–16)	50:26
1	Tanca els ulls <i>Close Your Eyes</i>	7:04
2	Camina endins <i>Walk Inside</i>	7:03
3	Baixa al cim de l'Ànima <i>Descent to the Summit of the Soul</i>	6:00
4	Pedra nua <i>Naked Stone</i>	3:10
5	Pau al Cor <i>The Peaceful Heart</i>	10:46
6	Engrunes de Llum <i>Luminous Crumbs</i>	11:28
7	Al·leluia <i>Alleluia</i>	4:48

Soloists: Agnese Pauniņa, soprano (1, 5, 6);
Dace Strautmane & Santa Kokina, altos (3);
Inga Žilinska & Ilze Konovalova, altos (6);
Kārlis Rūtentāls, tenor (6); Pēteris Vaickovskis, baritone (6)

LATVIAN RADIO CHOIR
SIGVARDŠ KLAVA, conductor

The architectonic goldsmith

I have always admired – even envied – the capacity of Ramon Humet to go from detail to grand structure. Or, from grand structure to detail, if you wish... in times in which rush and wholesale work are more present than ever, and with all the electronic aids and musical editing used by composers today, Humet is stopping, reflecting, thinking, meditating and, like a goldsmith, loves every detail of what he writes. This thoroughness, this purifying of material also flows into greater forms, grand structures, and it is then that the goldsmith turns into an architect. In all of his works, one can find a seriousness of purpose at the service of his musical message. The technical, methodological, demanding part does not end here. Like the greats, Humet puts all of this at the service of musicality that is exquisite, inspired, beautiful... combined by these three factors: detail, architecture and music, creating material that is totally alluring.

We may imagine that there are three ingredients that enable a grand work of art to come to life. I would add a fourth element that for me adds a touch of grace, of life and of transcendence. Ramon Humet is a composer with soul and spirit. Complete in his ideas: he does what he believes, creates what he feels, lives like he creates. Without cosmetics, without falsifications. Responding to his manner of being and doing that with a message that is sincere. The works that you will find in this recording all contain these four elements. It is in the choral music of Humet that one finds that fourth element of living spirituality. In his chamber and orchestral works, Ramon Humet shows us in an extraordinary way a full command of compositional techniques; but it is in his vocal works that he unleashes himself and the transcendental appears with force: I would go so far as to say that his immersion in vocal and choral works after writing instrumental works has given his music a turn towards mysticism. Voice – song – is taking the central role.

This magic potion, certainly unique among today's compositions, is magnified by this exceptional interpretation by the Latvian Radio Choir under the direction of Maestro Sigvards Kļava.

Let us then be carried away by this grand perfection of a grand work of art, and we will find in it a voice that speaks to us from heart to heart.

Bernat Vivancos

Rupit, 25 March 2021

Composer's programme notes

Llum (Light) is an invitation to take a journey inward, to travel to the immense space which is, precisely, what makes us human, to that silent place which exists within us, to the deep wellspring that is the birthplace of everything, to the bright sapling of Peace; to the infinite, which announces the Mystery; to the gift of Life, Peace and Love.

The texts which accompany each of the seven stages of this inner pilgrimage were written by my friend Vicenç Santamaria, a monk from the monastery of Montserrat. The words have been set to music for a variety of choral formations – mixed choir, female voice choir, double choir –, and for different soloists. All the pieces are composed to be sung *a cappella*, and in *Luminous Crumbs* crotales and bar chimes have been added.

Tanca els ulls (Close Your Eyes) is a lullaby which invites us to set out, confident and grateful, on an inner journey. The serene melody, sung by the solo soprano, builds from a single note and interacts with the progressive changes in the harmonic fields of the choir – a variant of *klangfarbenmelodie* – while expressing the different moods and reactions experienced along the path of withdrawal and introspection.

Camina endins (Walk Inside) is a mystic *passacaglia* based on the succession of a sequence of five chords. These develop at the same time as the fundamental bass moves into the lower register of the voice. The transitions between harmonies provide an allegory for the process experienced by the one who walks, of transformations of inner landscapes. The soloist's quiet, withdrawn beginning, suggesting serenity, expands until it reaches the height of tenderness. Finally, the overtone singing weaves an enveloping cushion of sound which evokes an aspect inherent to the process of walking within: confidence.

Baixa al cim de l'Ànima (Descent to the Summit of the Soul) reflects the calm and placid state of mind of the first verses of the poem. There is no lineal argument – as the verse says, 'without anxiety and avid for nothing' – and the piece is articulated in five brief sections that are both circular and cyclical, based on the harmonic interval of the minor second. With a delicate *pianissimo* dynamic, and with two singers located behind the stage – *alto lontano* – who interact with the choir to provide a quality of distant profundity, the piece evokes the intimate and silent place of the soul's summit.

Pedra nua (Naked Stone) is a contrapuntal work comprising a retrograde canon in the female voices and a canon on the octave which functions as a drone in the male voices. The austerity of the technique of invertible counterpoint generates, with very few notes, great complexity of intervallic relationships. I have used this technique in order to create a sparse music – in the face of the coldness of naked stone – which, at the same time, is nevertheless worked in such a way as to make reference to the complexity of Life that has its origin, as the second verse says, in 'the great silence'.

Pau al Cor (The Peaceful Heart) is divided into two parts: the first section is based on the poem *Plenitude*, where the choir is treated with full, resonant vertical arrangements. A solo soprano performs a number of elements that provide a contrast to the density of the choral texture. In the second section the choir passes into the background and the voice of a solo soprano emerges, bringing with the verses of *The Peaceful Heart* a message of hope and belief in humanity.

The detailed and delicate creations by Vicenç Santamaria in his work *Engrunes de Llum (Luminous Crumbs)* led me to compose music for the verses which accompany its different parts. The depth of silence communicated by each scene is translated musically into a series of ten stable chords – motionless below, deep in tone, but full of life and movement on the surface – sung by the main choir. These contrast with the crumbs evoked by the ringing notes of the soloists, reinforced by the resonant crotales struck by the singers themselves. As the piece progresses, the register of the lower voices increases in consistency and profundity until the end where the entire vocal field – from basses to sopranos – resonates fully, invoking the final line: 'Embrace, with all your being, the Mystery inside you, in everything and everywhere.'

The text of *Al-leluia (Alleluia)*, together with the experience of hearing a number of anonymous, eighteenth-century Orthodox plainchants, provided the necessary inspiration for the composition of music that is calm and peaceful, radiating serene joy. The inclusion of long pauses between phrases and the endless repetition of four chords in the tenor and bass parts encourages us to listen deeply and to respond with joy to the gifts of music and of Life.

Those to whom I have dedicated the different movements of this work are people who have coincided with me along my path and who, in one way or another, irradiate Light: my first yoga teacher, Mabel Pérez, my friend Emili and his lovely family – Patrícia, Celina, Míriam and Estel –, my friend Natàlia, my friend – composer extraordinaire – Bernat Vivancos, my godparents Ramon and Montserrat, and my friend Muntsa, all of them much loved individuals.

Ramon Humet

Vilanova d'Escornalbou, 23rd April 2016

"A great musical power."
– Washington Post

"This chorus's expertise in music pushes voices to extremes, from ethereal high tones to uncannily sustained bass drones."
– The New York Times

"One of the world's greatest choirs."
– The Advertiser

The **Latvian Radio Choir** is a unique, award-winning ensemble of professional singers that offers its audiences an extraordinary variety of repertoire ranging from early music to the most sophisticated scores of contemporary compositions.

The choir has recorded the Grammy Award-winning album *Adam's Lament* (ECM) composed by Arvo Pärt and conducted by Tõnu Kaljuste. It is a repeat winner of the Great Music Award of Latvia (the highest national award for professional achievement in music) and has received the Latvian Cabinet of Ministers Award. The choir's recording of Sergei Rachmaninov's *All-Night Vigil* was praised by Gramophone as the best recording of February 2013 and ranked among the 25 best albums of the year by the American radio station NPR.

The Latvian Radio Choir has performed at many of the world's most renowned concert halls: Concertgebouw and Muziekgebouw (the Netherlands), Elbphilharmonie (Germany), Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and Cité de la Musique-Philharmonie de Paris (France), Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Duke University Chapel and the Walt Disney Concert Hall (USA), Konzerthaus Berlin (Germany), the Library of Congress (USA), Queen Elizabeth Hall (UK) and the Dresden Frauenkirche (Germany).

It is also a regular performer at leading musical events, such as BBC Proms (UK), the Salzburg (Austria) and Lucerne (Switzerland) festivals, the Festival of Radio France Occitanie Montpellier (France), the Baltic Sea Festival (Sweden), Printemps des arts de Monte-Carlo (Monaco), Klangspuren Festival (Austria), the White Light Festival (USA), Klangvokal Dortmund (Germany), Musikfest Erzgebirge (Germany), OzAsia Festival (Australia) and Soundstreams (Canada).

Often serving as a creative lab, the choir encourages composers to write new music that challenges the capabilities of the human voice. During the past 20 years, the ensemble has evolved into an unprecedented form of a choir where every singer has an individual mission and provides their unique contribution to the group's unique, defining blend of timbral qualities.

The choir regularly releases new recordings with Ondine, Hyperion Records, Deutsche Grammophon, ECM, BIS and Naïve, collaborating with outstanding guest conductors like Heinz Holliger, Riccardo Muti, Riccardo Chailly, Gustavo Dudamel, Lars Ulrik Mortensen, Esa-Pekka Salonen and Peter Phillips. It has also partnered with the Lucerne Festival Orchestra, Ensemble Intercontemporain, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Camerata Salzburg and Concerto Copenhagen.

The Latvian Radio Choir was founded in 1940 by the legendary Latvian conductor Teodors Kalniņš, who led the ensemble until his passing in 1962. Following the artistic direction by Edgars Račevskis (1963–86) and Juris Kļaviņš (1987–92), the choir has had two conductors ever since 1992 – artistic director and principal conductor Sigvards Kļava and conductor Kaspars Putniņš.

In 2020, the Ondine recording of Tchaikovsky's All-Night Vigil with the Latvian Radio Choir and conductor Sigvards Kļava won the ICMA Award for the best choral album of the year.

www.radiokoris.lv



LATVIAN RADIO CHOIR

Sigvards Kļava is one of the most outstanding Latvian conductors, also a professor of conducting and producer, music director of the Latvian Radio Choir since 1992. As a result of Sigvards Kļava's steady efforts, the Latvian Radio Choir has become an internationally recognized, vocally distinctive collective, where each singer possesses a creative individuality. Under Sigvards' guidance, the choir has recorded a number of choral works by little known or completely forgotten composers of the past, as well as formed a friendly collaboration with a number of notable Latvian composers. Sigvards Kļava is a professor at the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music. Kļava is a multiple winner of the Latvian Grand Music Award. He has performed at the Concertgebouw and Muziekgebouw of Amsterdam, Berliner Konzerthaus and Philharmonie, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, Berwaldhallen in Stockholm, Dresdner Frauenkirche as well as in the New York Lincoln Centre.

1 **Tanca els ulls**

Serenament tanca els ulls,
desclou la mirada interior.
Feliç i sol·lícit davalla
al cim de la claror increada.

Sense presses ni propòsits
abisma't al fons sense fons.
Allà, dòcil al sant badar,
aquieta't sense neguit.

Amb gratitud i gratuïtat
viu el gaudi del Silenci,
la plenitud de la Comunió.

Deixa't pacificar per la Pau!
Deixa't amarar per Déu!
Deixa que Déu llui dintre teu!

Vicenç Santamaria
Ermita de la Santa Creu, 17 de gener de 2016

2 **Camina endins**

En silenci, camina endins.
Endins teu, tranquil·lament.
Cap endins, com un nin.

Com un nin camina ben endins
i voreja la pregonesa de Déu.

Camina. Endins. Confiat.

Vicenç Santamaria
El Miracle, 1 de novembre de 2014

Close Your Eyes

Serenely close your eyes,
open your inner eye.
Happy and welcoming descend
to the summit of uncreated light.

Without haste or purpose
plunge to the bottomless depths.
There, open to holy reverie
become still, without anxiety.

Gratefully, freely given,
live the joy of Silence,
the fullness of Communion.

Let yourself be pacified by Peace!
Let yourself be filled by God!
Let God shine within you!

Vicenç Santamaria
Ermita de la Santa Creu, 17th January 2016

Walk Inside

In silence, walk inside.
Inside yourself, quietly.
Go inside, like a little child.

Like a little child walk deep inside
and follow the rim of God's profundity.

Walk. Inside. Trusting.

Vicenç Santamaria
El Miracle, 1st November 2014

3 Baixa al cim de l'Ànima

Baixa, tranquil·lament,
al cim de l'Ànima,
i seu-hi plàcidament,
sense neguit
i àvid de res.

Indret íntim, serè,
cimal silenciós,
on Llum i Pau
brollen pertot.

Endins i enfora,
broll nítid,
do roent,
amor vers l'Amor.

Al cim més profund
el doll s'aviva
quan es prodiga
en tot, en tothom.
Tot va vers el Tot.

*Vicenç Santamaria
El Miracle, 26 de maig de 2013*

4 Pedra nua

Damunt la fredor de la pedra nua,
amortallat amb zel pel gran silenci,
jeu, lluminós, el plançó de la Pau.

*Vicenç Santamaria
Montserrat, 26 de març de 2016,
Dissabte Sant*

Descent to the Summit of the Soul

Come down, gently,
to the summit of the soul,
rest there at ease,
free from anxiety
avid for nothing.

An intimate place, serene,
a silent peak,
where Light and Peace
spring forth everywhere.

Inside and out,
clear spring,
burning gift,
Love for Love.

At the deepest summit
the jet intensifies,
bountiful
in everything, in everyone.
Everything journeys toward the All.

*Vicenç Santamaria
El Miracle, 26th May 2013*

Naked Stone

Before the coldness of naked stone,
zealously shrouded by the great silence,
lies the bright sapling of Peace.

*Vicenç Santamaria
Montserrat, 26th March 2016
Easter Saturday*

5 **Pau al Cor**

El Cor es bada a l'infinit.
El Cor estima a desdir.

Silenci, portal cap al món.
Silenci, portal que acull el món.

Ara, res no exclou res.
Ara, el Tot ho inclou tot.

Temps i espai s'abracen.
Cos i Cor s'abracen.
Raó i Esperit s'abracen.

La Pau és llavor de Vida.
El viure de cadascú la fa Viure.
Anhelar-la és arrelar-la.
El seu areny, el nostre ser.

Vicenç Santamaria
Ermita de la Santa Creu, 23 d'abril de 2013

The Peaceful Heart

The Heart opens itself to the infinite.
The Heart loves in abundance.

Silence, gateway to the World.
Silence, gateway that receives the World.

Now, nothing excludes anything.
Now, the All includes everything.

Time and Space embrace each other.
Body and Heart embrace.
Reason and Spirit embrace.

Peace is Life's seed.
Each person's living enlivens it;
Longing for it roots it.
Its shore, our being.

Vicenç Santamaria
Ermita de la Santa Creu, 23rd April 2013

6 **Engrunes de Llum**

Arrecera't cap al tard amb el sol.
Asseu-te: el sol s'ajeu silent.
Calla: silent es desvetlla la lluna.
Recull-te: la lluna crida Venus.
Corcentra't: Venus veu venir la nit.
Corbuida't: la nit engruna els estels.
Reposa: els estels enfilen l'espai.
Contempla: l'espai camina vers l'infinit.
Vetlla: l'infinit anuncia el Misteri.

Luminous Crumbs

Seek shelter towards the evening with the sun.
Sit down: the sun sits silent.
Be quiet: silent the moon awakes.
Settle yourself: the moon calls Venus.
Heartcentrate: Venus sees night coming.
Empty your heart: night crumbles the stars.
Rest: the stars thread space.
Contemplate: space steps towards the infinite.
Keep watch: infinity announces the Mystery.

Abraça, tot tu, el Misteri dins teu, en tot
i pertot.

Vicenç Santamaria
Asnurri, estiu 1991

Embrace, with all your being, the Mystery
inside you, in everything and everywhere

Vicenç Santamaria
Asnurri, Summer 1991

7 **Al·leluia**

Al·leluia! Al·leluia! Al·leluia!
Així canta qui viu, feliç, el do de la Vida.
Al·leluia! Al·leluia! Al·leluia!
Així prega qui rep el do de la Pau.
Al·leluia! Al·leluia! Al·leluia!
Així s'arbora qui l'Amor aflama d'Amor.
Al·leluia! Al·leluia! Al·leluia!

Vicenç Santamaria
Montserrat, 21 de març de 2016

Alleluia

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
So sings one who, happy, lives the gift of Life.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
So prays one who receives the gift of Peace.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
So rises one whom Love inflames with Love.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Vicenç Santamaria
Montserrat, 21st March 2016

English translations by Rebecca Simpson

Publisher: M/s

Recordings: May 27, 2020 & July 22–24, 2020,
St. John's Church (Sv. Jāņa baznīca), Riga, Latvia
Executive Producers: Dace Bula and Reijo Kiilunen
Recording Engineer: Agnese Streļča
Editing: SIG.MA Studio, Riga, Latvia
Mixing & Mastering: Enno Mäemets, Editroom Oy, Helsinki

LATVIAN RADIO CHOIR

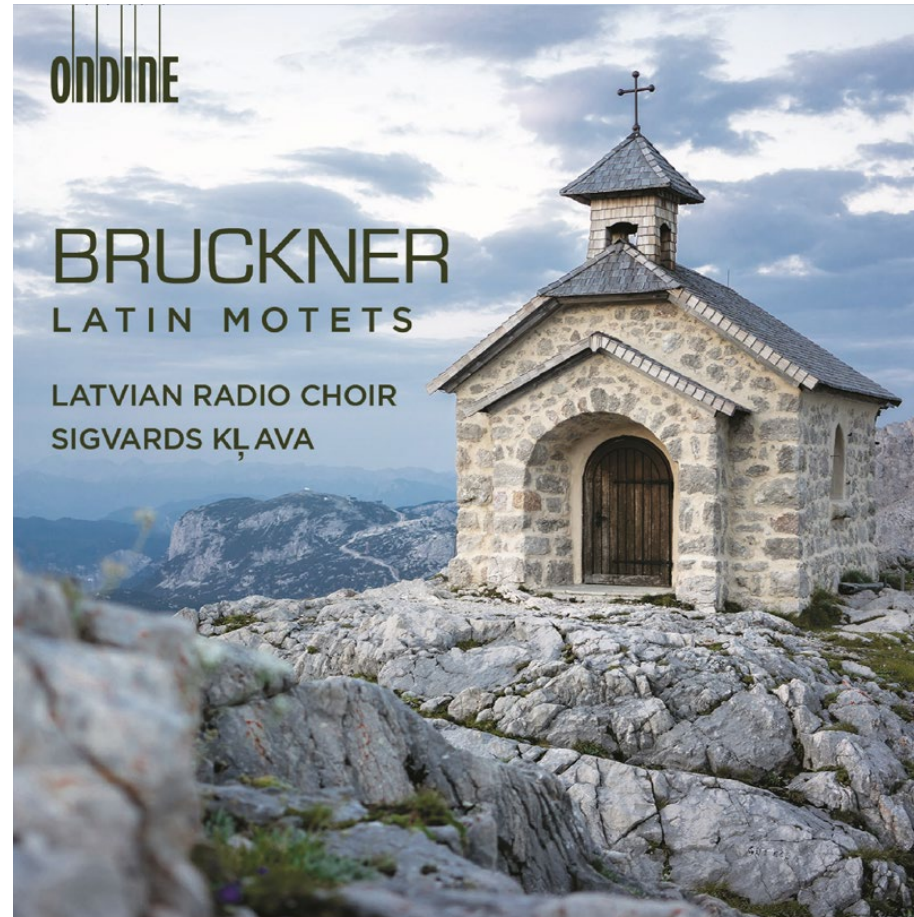


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Booklet Editor: Joel Valkila
Cover: Monistrol de Montserrat, Barcelona | Shutterstock
Composer photo: Marta Pich
Artist photos: Daina Geidmane (Latvian Radio Choir), Kaspars Balamovskis (Sigvards Kļava)

Special thanks to Teresa Barzano

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SIGVARDS KĻAVA

RAMON HUMET (b. 1968)

Llum (*Light*) (2013–16) based on texts by Vicenç Santamaria 50:26

- 1 Tanca els ulls (Close Your Eyes)
- 2 Camina endins (Walk Inside)
- 3 Baixa al cim de l'Ànima (Descent to the Summit of the Soul)
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- 5 Pau al Cor (The Peaceful Heart)
- 6 Engrunes de Llum (Luminous Crumbs)
- 7 Al·leluia (Alleluia)

LATVIAN RADIO CHOIR
SIGVARDS KLAVA, conductor

LATVIAN RADIO CHOIR



[50:26] • English notes enclosed • Sung text with English translation

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