

NAXOS

MARGARET
RIZZA

MYSTERIUM AMORIS



GAUDETE ENSEMBLE • EAMONN DOUGAN

Margaret Rizza (b. 1929)

Mysterium amoris

1	Ave Maria (vocal ensemble, a cappella)	5:15
2	O magnum mysterium (vocal ensemble, organ, cello)	2:15
3	In the silence (vocal ensemble, oboe, clarinet, cello, organ)	5:50
4	Mary slept (vocal ensemble, a cappella)	3:32
5	Fire of Love (vocal ensemble, string quartet, organ)	6:10
6	O sapientia (vocal ensemble, a cappella)	4:40
7	Christ be near (vocal ensemble, a cappella)	3:33
8	Mysterium amoris (vocal ensemble, string quartet, oboe, clarinet, organ)	5:15
9	Veni Jesu (vocal ensemble, cello, organ)	3:52
10	Sanctus Dominus (vocal ensemble, oboe, clarinet, cello, organ)	4:58
11	O speculum columbe (vocal ensemble, a cappella)	5:57
12	Rising Prayer (vocal ensemble, string quartet, organ)	3:43
13	Mysterious Night (vocal ensemble, a cappella)	6:40
14	Oculi mei (vocal ensemble, string quartet, organ)	4:01
15	Ave generosa (vocal ensemble, a cappella)	6:40

Gaudete Ensemble • Eamonn Dougan

Vocal soloists:

Julia Doyle and Matthew Brook (track 3)

Julie Cooper and Simon Wall (track 5)

Elin Manahan Thomas (track 7)

Alison Hill and Kim Porter (track 15)

Instrumentalists:

Oboe: Rachel Baldock (tracks 3, 8, 10)

Clarinet: Catriona Scott (tracks 3, 8, 10)

Violin 1: Sarah Sexton (tracks 5, 8, 12, 14)

Violin 2: Michaela Girardi (tracks 5, 8, 12, 14)

Viola: Rebecca Jones (tracks 5, 8, 12, 14)

Cello: Sarah MacMahon (tracks 5, 8, 12, 14)

Cello: Andrew Skidmore (tracks 2, 3, 9, 10)

Organ: Timothy Horton (tracks 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14)

Publishers:

Tracks 1, 4, 6, 9, 11, 13, 15: Faber Music Ltd. • Tracks 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14: Kevin Mayhew
(Performance materials for the versions on this recording available from Faber Music Ltd.)

Margaret Rizza (b. 1929)

Mysterium amoris

Although music has been part of the fabric of my life since I can remember it was only in my old age that I began to actually write music. In 1996 I was invited to write some music as an introduction to prayer for an international conference. I naturally declined, never having written any music before. After much persuasion, I agreed to sketch out something using a small group of singers and instrumentalists. As I began writing, my mind was filled with ambitious ideas but what I found myself writing was something very different. This was music of extreme simplicity and came more from a spontaneous and intuitive writing than from anything else.

By the time the conference came round I had written six chants. This simple prayerful music moved people and so became the start of composing. As I continued to write, my musical wings began to take flight, and it was in 2007 that I began to explore a more contemporary sound-world, that of Classical Contemporary.

Now that I travel more deeply into the Third Age I find that the creative source, which for me is birthed in and through the contemplative Christian tradition, is undiminished. In the writing it is a huge struggle to try to express something of the richness of the fiery spirit deep within but it is precisely through this struggle that seeds are sown and which, with patience and perseverance, can then be transformed into music.

This collection of choral pieces is composed of 7 unaccompanied pieces and 8 pieces with keyboard and instrumental accompaniment. Although the texts span 800 years, they nearly all come from the contemplative mystical tradition which has influenced and inspired me in the writing of this music.

The following are some brief reflections on some of the pieces:

O magnum mysterium, set to a text from Christmas Matins, invites us to consider the great mystery of the incarnation of Christ. The music creates an atmosphere of awesome wonder as it touches on the wondrous

sacrament which animals and humans are there to behold. The music breaks into ecstatic cries of praise for Mary which then subside into prayerful meditation.

In setting Thomas Merton's words for *Mary slept*, I was captured by the extraordinary depth of Merton's conception and insight into the birth of Christ. Merton takes me away from the comfortable Christmas images that I have grown up with and touches a mystical depth which sweeps my mind into a new understanding of God breaking through into our world of time and space.

The music begins with clusters of sound representing a cosmic silence and moves towards Mary sleeping in the infinite tranquillity of God. It then broadens out with sopranos singing to embrace Mary with her child curled up within her. The music develops into climactic phrases of God's wisdom which floods her veins, which in turn is night, is starlight, is silence. The piece ends where they become one in tremendous silence.

Fire of Love has words taken from *The Living Flame of Love* by the 16th century mystic St John of the Cross. In these inspired verses, John expresses the highest longings of the human spirit that spring from the fire of God's love.

The music opens with rhapsodic phrases on the cello which in turn introduce the choir. The choral phrases build up into crescendos of fiery love.

A solo soprano sings of the soul who feels at last wholly enkindled in Divine union. This is followed by a response from the violin confirming the fragile and delicate awakenings of the soul. A solo tenor sings of the soul's rapture as it savours the taste of eternal life. This again is followed by a duet between viola and cello. The music continues alternating between solo soprano and tenor, chorus and instrumental variations, culminating in the soul's realization of this final consummation. In the short coda, the soul is transported into the consuming fire of love.

O sapientia is the first of the seven 'Great O

Antiphons' which anticipates the coming of Christmas. The music begins with an entreaty for wisdom, a cry for enlightenment which comes forth from "the mouth of the Most High". This is followed by the very beautiful Wisdom text. The music here is transformed into two expressively lyrical passages which give praise to wisdom. The music flows through expressions of gratitude and love claiming that those who acquire wisdom win God's friendship. The anthem ends with a coda, again pleading for wisdom.

The profound words for *Mysterium amoris* come from the Benedictine monk John Main, a twentieth-century mystic and contemplative writer. The music opens with a downward cascade of sounds on the clarinet. This is taken up by the oboe intoning angular phrases depicting the restless mind which only comes to rest when it sinks into the sound of the strings as they rise and fall in waves of confirming harmony. The entrance of the choir sings of the mystery of love. The oboe then leads the music into an unaccompanied choral section where the choir sing of the roots of love holding the ground of our being together.

From this the oboe is drawn again into expressions of restlessness but again finds repose. A second unaccompanied choral section leads to a recapitulation ending with a contemplative affirmation of the mystery of love.

Ave generosa has words written by that lovely mystic of the 12th century Hildegard of Bingen. One is drawn into the music following the beauty of Hildegard's rich and extravagant words revealing the wonder of the incarnation. Suffice it to say, the whole composition alternates between plain chant phrases sung by a soprano and alto, and fragments of this plain chant which are expanded chorally into rich harmonic cadences.

In the nine other compositions one also find strands of mystical glimpses interwoven with threads of joy, passion, prayer, sorrow, gratitude and peace, creating a tapestry of *Mysterium amoris*.

Margaret Rizza

Margaret Rizza



Margaret Rizza studied at the Royal College of Music, London and at the National School of Opera, London, and continued her training in Siena and Rome. She sang professionally for 25 years. She went on to teach singing at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London from 1977 to 1994. In 1986 she began her work in the field of spirituality and the wider aspect of music in the community. She has worked on many outreach projects taking groups of students to share their gifts with people in prisons and hospices etc. She also began her work with The World Community for Christian Meditation leading many retreats, prayer and music days, and vocal and choral workshops. During these years she founded and directed groups including The St Thomas Music Group and the Gaudete Ensemble which have been involved in many recordings, one of which reached the number 1 in the classical charts. She was closely involved with Dartington International Summer School up until 2008.

Margaret Rizza began composing in 1997, her contemplative choral music being published by Kevin Mayhew up until 2007. She has given many conferences featuring her music in the United States, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, Ireland and the United Kingdom. In 2007 she featured in the BBC Songs of Praise programme 'Women Composers'. Harry Christophers commissioned her to write a choral

composition for The Sixteen in 2007. For her this resulted in a new idiom in writing – that of classical contemporary. The composition *Ave generosa* came out in the recording *A Mother's Love* and was performed at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in 2008. This resulted in a collaboration with Faber Music who now publish her classical contemporary compositions. Her choral music for church choirs is published by The Royal School of Church Music.

Gaudete Ensemble

The Gaudete Ensemble was formed and directed by Margaret Rizza as a small parish choir for St Thomas' Church in Sevenoaks. As it developed it went on to do many concerts and recordings. For these recordings the group was augmented with students and young professional singers from London. A CD of chants arranged and directed by Margaret Rizza made it to number 1 in the Classical Charts in 2007. For this present recording, directed by Eamonn Dougan, the ensemble is made up of fully professional singers and instrumentalists. More recordings are planned including a series of chant recordings in the future.

Soprano

Julie Cooper
Alexandra Kidgell
Charlotte Mobbs*
Elin Manahan Thomas*
Alison Hill*
Emma Walshe*
Jenni Harper~
Julia Doyle~
Alice Gribbin~
Helen Neeves~

Mezzo-soprano

Kim Porter
Caroline Trevor
Sally Dunkley*
Ruth Gibbins*
Clare Wilkinson~
Lucy Ballard~

Tenor

George Pooley
Jeremy Budd*
Mark Dobell*
Julian Stocker*
Simon Wall~
William Balkwill~
Sam Boden~

Bass

Francis Brett
Christopher Adams
Ben Davies*
Stuart Young*
Matthew Brook~
Robert Evans~

* these singers perform on tracks 1, 4, 7, 11, 13 and 15 only

~ these singers perform on tracks 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 14 only

Instrumentalists

Oboe	Rachel Baldock
Clarinet	Catriona Scott
Violin 1	Sarah Sexton
Violin 2	Michaela Girardi
Viola	Rebecca Jones
Cello	Sarah MacMahon, Andrew Skidmore
Organ	Timothy Horton
Director	Eamonn Dougan

Eamonn Dougan

Eamonn Dougan read music at New College, Oxford, before continuing his vocal and conducting studies at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. He now pursues a busy schedule working as both singer and conductor. He is the first Associate Conductor of the world renowned vocal ensemble The Sixteen and has directed the ensemble to considerable acclaim at concert halls and festivals across England and Europe, including performances at the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, King's Place and his début at the Concertgebouw, Holland. Eamonn is Principal Guest Conductor of The National Youth Choir of Great Britain and Choral Director of Britten Sinfonia Voices. He is a regular Guest Conductor with Wrocław Philharmonic Choir, Poland, the Coro de la Comunidad de Madrid and the St Endellion Festival Chorus & Orchestra. As a soloist Eamonn has sung with The Academy of Ancient Music, the Gabrieli Consort, The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Orquesta de la Comunidad de Madrid, and the Orchestra of The Sixteen under conductors including Edward Higginbottom, Nicholas Kramer, Paul McCreesh, Jeffrey Skidmore and Harry Christophers. His solo recordings include Bach's *St John Passion* (Naxos 8.557296-97) and *St Matthew Passion*, Handel's *Messiah* (Naxos 8.570131-32) and Brahms' *Requiem* in its two-piano version as well as motets by Giovanni Grillo with His Majestys Sagbutts & Cornetts, and première recordings of Cecilia MacDowell's *Stabat Mater* and Arvo Pärt's *Von Angesicht zu Angesicht*. He has appeared on disc and the concert platform throughout the world with many of Britain's leading ensembles and is a member of I Fagiolini.



Eamonn Dougan

1 Ave Maria

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum.
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.
Sancta Maria, mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae.
Amen.

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.*

Text: traditional

2 O magnum mysterium

O magnum mysterium, et admirabile sacramentum,
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum,
iacentem in praesepio:
Beata Virgo, cuius viscera meruerunt
portare Dominum Christum.

*O great mystery and wondrous sacrament,
That animals should see the Lord at his birth
lying in their manger.
Blessed is the Maiden whose womb earned the
distinction of bearing Christ the Lord.*

Text: traditional

3 In the Silence

In the silence; in the stillness of the spirit,
we move in the ocean of God.

We are called by name;
we are already known and loved;

already known and loved in our mother's womb;
here in the mystery of silence,
we allow ourselves to be loved.
For when the light and kingdom dawn in our hearts,
for then it touches all we touch.
We must not fear the light;
it must dawn and burst forth in our hearts,
until it becomes the full dawn of the risen Christ.

The text has been rearranged by Margaret Rizza and taken
from *The Inner Christ* by John Main (1926–1982), published
and copyright 1987 by Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd.,
and used by permission of the publishers.

4 Mary slept

And far beneath the movement of this silent
cataclysm Mary slept in the infinite tranquillity of God,
and God was a child curled up who slept in her and
her veins were flooded with His wisdom which is
night, which is starlight, which is silence. And her
whole being was embraced in Him Whom she
embraced and they became tremendous silence.

Taken from *The Ascent to Truth* by Thomas Merton
(1915–1968), copyright 1957 by Thomas Merton Legacy Trust.
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5 Fire of Love

O living flame of love, so tenderly you wound the
deepest centre of my soul.
No longer you oppress me, no longer you afflict me;
now, if it be your will,
perfect this work of love; break through the veil of this
sweet encounter.

O gentle dart, O tender wound, O soft hand, O
loving, caring touch that tastes of life eternal. All
debts are paid; slaying, you changed death into life,
slaying, you changed death into this fire of love.

O lamps of fire, O lamps of fire, whose radiance fills
the deepest caverns of my heart.

Once obscure and so dark and blind, now give forth
with such strange exquisite tenderness, both light
and warmth, transforming for ever their beloved.

O how gentle, O how loving is your awakening deep
within my heart.

There secretly you dwell, hidden and alone;
breathing the sweetness of your love,
enkinkled in your living flame, O how tenderly you
rouse me to love you.

St John of the Cross taken from *The Living Flame of Love*
adapted by Margaret Rizza

6 O sapientia

O sapientia, quae ex ore Altissimi prodisti,
attingens a fine usque ad finem,
fortiter suaviterque disponens omnia;
veni ad docendum nos viam prudentiae.

*O Wisdom, which camest out of the mouth of the
Most High, reaching from end to end
and ordering all things mightily and sweetly:
come and teach us the way of prudence.*

And so I prayed and understanding was given me;
I entreated and the spirit of wisdom came to me.
I esteemed her more than sceptres or thrones.
Compared with her, I held riches as nothing,
I reckoned no priceless stone to be her peer.
For compared with her, gold is a grain of sand and
beside her, silver ranks as mud. I loved her more
than health or beauty, preferred her to the light since
her radiance never sleeps. In her company all good
things came to me; at her hands riches not to be
numbered, for she is an inexhaustible treasure to
people and those who acquire it win God's
friendship, commended as they are to him by the

benefits of her teaching.

Text: Advent Antiphon No. 1 / Wisdom 7: 7-11, 14)

7 Christ be near

Christ be near at either hand;
Christ behind, before me stand.
Christ with me where'er I go;
Christ around, above, below.

Christ be in my heart and mind;
Christ within my soul enshrined.
Christ control my wayward heart;
Christ abide and ne'er depart.

Christ, my life and only way;
Christ, my lantern night and day.
Christ, be my unchanging friend,
guide and shepherd to the end.

After St Patrick from *The People's Mass Book*

8 Mystrium amoris (The Mystery of Love)

Mysterium amoris.

The mystery of love.

The meaning of life is the mystery of love. Just as the
roots of trees hold firm the soil, so it is the roots of
love that hold the ground of our being together. The
meaning of life is the mystery of love – mysterium
amoris. By stillness in the spirit we awaken to the
fresh source of our being, and we move into the
oneness that is God.

Mysterium amoris.

The mystery of love.

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from *The Inner Christ* by John Main (1926–1982), published
and copyright 1987 by Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd.,
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9 Veni Jesu

Veni Jesu.
Come Lord Jesus.

Lord, I have resolved to obey your word; the law from
your mouth means more to me than silver or gold.
Veni Jesu.
Let your love be ready to console me by your
promise to your servant; let your love come to me
and I shall live, for your law is my delight.
Veni Jesu.
I will always love your commands more than finest
gold. I will always rule my life by your precepts. I
treasure all your statutes.

Veni Jesu.
Your will is wonderful indeed, therefore I obey it. The
unfolding of your word gives light and teaches the
simple. Wonderful your will, your will I obey, your
word gives light and teaches the simple.

Veni Jesu.

Psalm 118/119

10 Sanctus Dominus

Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis. Sanctus.

*Holy Lord God of hosts.
Thy glory fills all heaven and earth.
Hosanna in high heaven.
Blessed is he who is coming in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in high heaven.*

Text: traditional

11 O speculum columbe

O speculum columbe castissime forme,
qui inspexisti mysticam largitatem
in purissimo fonte:
O mira floriditas que numquam arescens cecidisti,
quia altissimus plantator misit te:
O suavissima quies amplexuum solis:
Tu es specialis filius Agni in electa amicitia nove
sobolis.

*O mirror of the dove of most chaste beauty,
you looked upon the mystic largesse
in the purest source.
O wondrous flower, you never withered or wilted
because the highest gardener planted you.
O sweetest rest in the sun's embraces, you are the
special son of the Lamb
in the chosen friendship of a new generation.*

The translation of *O speculum columbe* is reprinted from
Hildegard of Bingen, *Symphonia Armonie Celestium
Revelationum (Symphony of the Harmony of Celestial
Revelations)*, Second Edition, translated and with an
introduction by Barbara Newman.
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12 Rising Prayer

Thanks to the Father I arise today.
He gives me light. He guides my way.
Thanks be to the Saviour I arise today.
He gives me love. He hears me pray.
Thanks be to the Spirit I arise today.
He gives me life with me to stay.
God gives me life eternally.

Taken from *Tides and Seasons* by David Adam,
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13 **Mysterious Night**

Mysterious night, dark, yet ever bright;
miracle and love meet in a stable.
Sheep and cattle sleeping, angels in the sky.
Alleluia, proclaim Christ's birth.
Mysterious night.

Sweet, gentle child, born so meek and mild;
love of God upon your face is shining,
born to be our Saviour.
With the world we sing:
Alleluia, Christ is our King.

Shepherds and wise men following the star
stand before the hope of their heart's yearning,
searching for the promise:
God's own precious Son.
Alleluia, their wand'rings done.
Mysterious night.

In Bethlehem God's Epiphany
brings us the glad tidings of salvation,
fullness of creation; loving God we see,
Alleluia, Eternity.

Emmanuel, God with us to dwell,
bringing joy to earth in Christmas glory.
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace He reigns.
Alleluia, His love we claim.
Mysterious night.

In broken bread through the blood
He shed miracle and love meet at His table.
Love born in a stable, sin nailed on a tree.
Alleluia, glory to Thee.
Mysterious night.

Text copyright Ronald W. Cadmus. Permission granted

14 **Oculi mei**

Oculi mei ad Dominum Deum.
My eyes are on the Lord my God.

Like the deer that yearns for running streams,
so my soul is yearning for my God;
My tears have become my bread day and night,
as I hear it said, "Where is your God?"
Oculi mei ad Dominum Deum.

By day the Lord will send his loving Spirit;
by night I will sing praises to the God of my life.
Send out your light and your truth as my guide,
to lead me to your holy ground.
Oculi mei ad Dominum Deum.

Then shall I go to the God of my joy, singing praise,
praise on the lyre and the harp;
why so down-cast, my soul?
Put your hope and trust in my saviour, my God.
Oculi mei ad Dominum Deum.

Text adapted from Psalm 41/42

15 **Ave generosa**

Ave generosa, gloriosa et intacta puella
Hail, high-born, glorious, inviolate Maid!
Tu pupilla castitatis, tu materia sanctitatis,
que Deo placuit.
You are the pupil of chastity, the matrix of sanctity,
pleasing to God.

Nam hec superna infusio in te fuit,
For this supernal flood was within you,
Quod supernum Verbum in te carnem induit
As the supernal word put on flesh in you.

Tu candidum lilium quod Deus ante omnem
creaturam inspexit.

*You are the shining lily on which God before all
creation gazed.*

O pulcherrima et dulcissima, quam valde Deus
in te delectabatur,
*O fairest and sweetest one, how greatly God
delighted in you,*
cum amplexionem caloris sui in te posuit, ita quod
Filius eius de te lactatus est.
*when he set within you the embrace of his warmth so
that his son took milk from you.*

Venter enim tuus gaudium habuit cum omnis celestis
symphonia de te sonuit,
*For your womb held joy when all the harmony of
heaven resounded from you;*
quia virgo filium Dei portasti,
ubi castitas tua in Deo claruit.
*for as a virgin you bore God's own son
when your chastity shone bright in God.*

Viscera tua gaudium habuerunt sicut gramen
super quod ros cadit,
Your flesh held joy like the grass when the dew falls,
cum ei viriditatem infundit, ut et in te factum est,
O mater omnis gaudii.
*and floods it with living green. So it was in you also,
O Mother of all joy.*

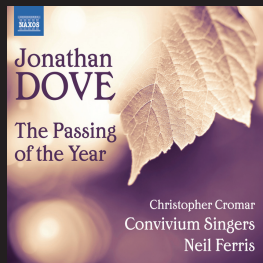
Nunc omnis ecclesia in gaudio rutilat
ac in symphonia sonat
*Now let the whole church flush with gladness
and resound in harmony*
propter dulcissimam Virginem et laudabilem Mariam,
Dei Genitricem. Amen.
*for the sake of the Virgin, sweetest Mary, deserving
all praise, Mother of God. Amen.*

The translation of *Ave generosa* is reprinted from
Hildegard of Bingen, *Symphonia Armonie Celestium
Revelationum* (*Symphony of the Harmony of Celestial
Revelations*), *Second Edition*, translated and with an
introduction by Barbara Newman.

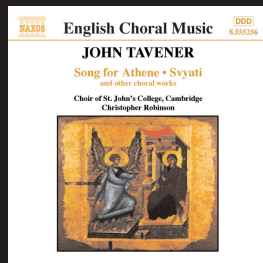
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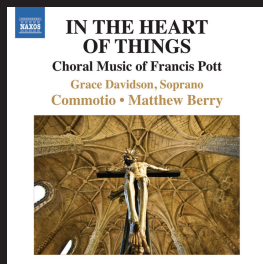
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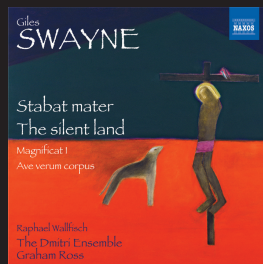
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DDD

Playing Time
72:22

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Margaret Rizza sang professionally for twenty-five years, before teaching at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She has directed music groups, making many recordings. She began composing in 1997 and has since earned huge admiration for her 'Classical Contemporary' sound world, works of spiritual contemplation and great beauty. Hers is music of great spiritual depth and, whether *a cappella* or for vocal and instrumental forces, it generates a sense of lyricism and healing resolution.

Margaret
RIZZA
(b. 1929)

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|------|-----------------------------|------|
| ① Ave Maria (2009) | 5:15 | ⑨ Veni Jesu (2009) | 3:52 |
| ② O magnum mysterium (1999) | 2:15 | ⑩ Sanctus Dominus (1999) | 4:58 |
| ③ In the silence (2004) | 5:50 | ⑪ O speculum columbe (2009) | 5:57 |
| ④ Mary slept (2008) | 3:32 | ⑫ Rising Prayer (2007) | 3:43 |
| ⑤ Fire of Love (1998) | 6:10 | ⑬ Mysterious Night (2008) | 6:40 |
| ⑥ O sapientia (2010) | 4:40 | ⑭ Oculi mei (2004) | 4:01 |
| ⑦ Christ be near (2010) | 3:33 | ⑮ Ave generosa (2007) | 6:40 |
| ⑧ Mysterium amoris (2004) | 5:15 | | |

Gaudete Ensemble • Eamonn Dougan

Recorded at St Silas the Martyr, Kentish Town, London, UK, on 21st January, 2010 (tracks 1, 4, 6, 7, 11, 13 and 15), and 6th July, 2010 (remaining tracks)

Please see the booklet for a detailed track list and publishers' details

Sung texts and translations are included in the booklet and can also be accessed at

www.naxos.com/libretti/573039.htm

Producers: Robert Hollingworth and Margaret Rizza • Engineers: Daniel Lock (World of Sound) and Mike Hatch (Floating Earth) • Booklet notes: Margaret Rizza

Cover photo: *Heart made of candles* (© Andrey Popov / iStockphoto.com)