

“All-Night Vigil” Rachmaninoff’s Vespers

Tenebrae
dir. Nigel Short

Signum Classics are proud to release a LIVE recording of the stirring performance by Tenebrae of Rachmaninoff’s ‘All-Night Vigil’ (*Vsenoshchnoye bdeniye*, Op. 37).

The roots of the Russian Orthodox Church are traceable back into the Third Century A.D. Whilst Western forms of Christianity continued to evolve, the Orthodox tradition has been preserved largely intact since the 11th Century, despite persecution of the Church under an intolerant Communist regime in Russia.

The music of the Russian Orthodox Church features vocal chants, the oldest of which is known as *znamenny* (from the Slavonic *znamia* meaning “sign”). The melody of this chant is extremely simple, and whilst other composers added their characteristic harmonic effects, Rachmaninoff consciously preserved the modal purity of the original in his setting of the Vespers.

The all-night vigil is celebrated on the eve of the main feasts of the Orthodox Church. Originally it lasted all night and consisted of three separate services to celebrate the beauty of the setting sun, and to reflect on the spiritual light of Christ as the new light of the coming day and the eternal light of heaven.

Rachmaninoff’s setting of the vigil was written in 1915, in the middle of the First World War. He has used authentic *znamenny* chant in seven movements, with two movements employing Greek chants.

“Even in my dreams I could not have imagined that I would write such a work”
Rachmaninoff told the singers at the first performance in March 1915.

The work is dedicated to the scholar Stephan Vasilevitch Smolensky who introduced Rachmaninoff to the repertoire of the church, however the composer’s inspiration was as much politically motivated as spiritually – the composition was a powerful affirmation of nationalism during the war.

The professional chamber choir, Tenebrae, characteristically create an atmosphere of spiritual and musical reflection at their performances, using candlelight and movement within ecclesiastical venues.

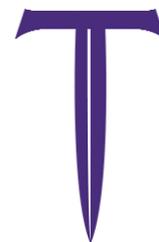
This performance of the Vespers was recorded live as part of the North Wales International Music Festival in St. Asaph on 24th September 2004.

Please contact Signum Records on +44 (0)20 8997 4000 for further information.



1)	Come, Let us Worship	[2.13]
2)	Bless the Lord, O my Soul	[4.46]
3)	Blessed is the Man	[5.15]
4)	Gladsome Light	[2.35]
5)	Lord, Now Lettest Thou	[3.11]
6)	Rejoice O Virgin	[3.05]
7)	The Six Psalms	[2.28]
8)	Praise the Name of the Lord	[2.04]
9)	Blessed Art Thou O Lord	[5.35]
10)	Having Beheld the Resurrection of Christ	[2.57]
11)	My Soul Magnifies the Lord	[8.10]
12)	The Great Doxology	[7.06]
13)	Today Salvation has Come	[1.44]
14)	Thou Didst Rise from the Tomb	[3.17]
15)	To Thee, the Victorious Leader	[2.46]
16)	We Praise Thee	[3.02]

Total running time: [60.18]



TENEBRAE
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