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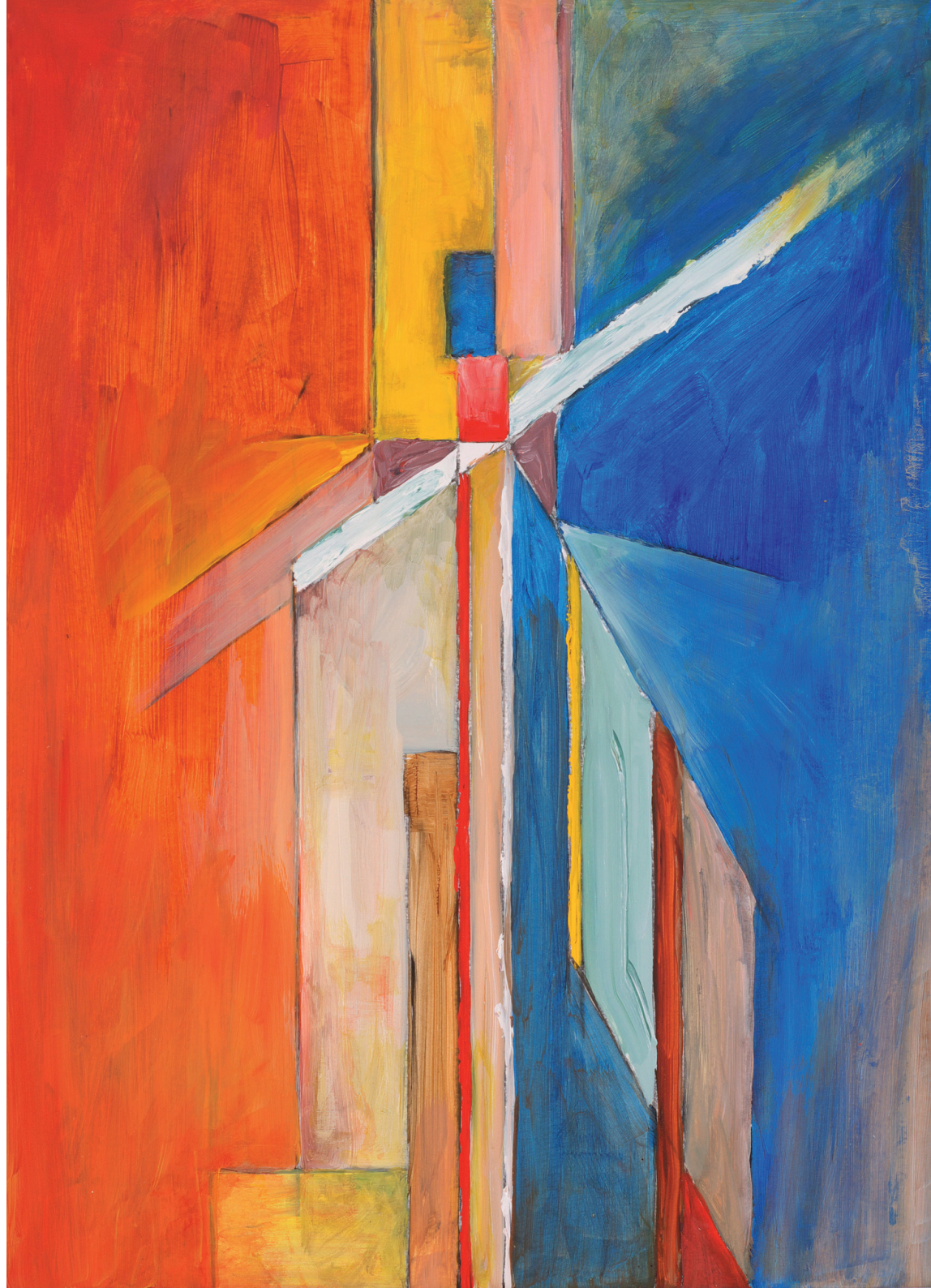
António  
**PINHO  
VARGAS**

**Requiem  
Judas**

Coro e Orquestra  
Gulbenkian

Joana Carneiro

Fernando Eldoro



## António Pinho Vargas (b. 1951)

### Requiem • Judas

#### Requiem (2012)

This *Requiem* came about as the result of a proposal I made to the Music Department of the Gulbenkian Foundation in 2009, requesting a commission that would allow me to continue what I had begun in the oratorio *Judas (secundum Lucam, Johannem, Matthaeum et Marcum)*, a commission from the Festival of Sacred Music in Viana do Castelo, where it was given its première in 2002 by the Gulbenkian Choir and Orchestra, directed by Fernando Eldoro, who performed it again in the Large Auditorium of the Gulbenkian Foundation in May 2004. These concerts have remained unforgettable for me. A composer carries out his work with the greatest dedication, but it is up to the singers and players to give it *reality*, to transform that group of signs written in the score into a sound event that is given over to the emotional perception of the listener. A score, in itself, is never unforgettable. This quality can only be attributed to a work at the moment of *mediation* – the concert – effected by the performance of the musicians. These were always exceptional. Once the commission was confirmed, I later decided that this new work would be a Requiem.

Writing a Requiem is, firstly, to give a “reply” to a history of numerous works of the past, some known by everyone, others – there must be hundreds – today unknown. Secondly, it is dealing with a liturgical text belonging to our Western Christian tradition but whose deeper meaning goes back to that moment when primitive man began to bury the dead, a moment identified by archaeologists as being the beginning, still prehistoric, of humanity’s long road towards self-awareness.

Having put things in this perspective, that is, a wider perspective than that of the history of music or, even, of Christianity, the central question of the text of the Mass for the dead – the Requiem – may perhaps be described by a single phrase: “God, receive unto Thyself those who

have died”. There is nothing more universal for humanity than the ineluctable sequence of birth, life and death. But a composer, once he has decided to write a Requiem, has fewer transcendental tasks to carry out, but equally necessary. The first is to examine the various selections of text as a whole made by composers of the past, in order to establish a text. There are innumerable variants amongst the extant repertoire. I made my choice in accordance with the resonances that my memories, of various kinds, invited me to choose from among the texts extant in the liturgy, as all other composers have done, some excluding more, others less. Then, during the compositional act, as always happens with a text, certain sections of it acquire, during the work of composition, different degrees of importance, whether in the formal sense or in terms of the overall duration. If, nowadays, almost nobody claims a previously worked-out plan as being indispensable, on the contrary, I must underline that what can never be dispensed with is the work of selecting, of measuring, of criticizing, considering alternatives, of new choices, of verifying the proportions and the expressive rhetoric that finally come into existence, both in the use of the text itself, and in the resulting musical discourse. This is the work of *making* the artistic object. In it resides the essence of the work of the composer and of the inherent human reflection on *finitude* that a work of this kind places at the centre and, as a previous step, the creative desire.

#### Judas (secundum Lucam, Johannem, Matthaeum et Marcum) (2002)

I feel obliged to confess (ambiguous words, these) that the period during which I wrote this work was very intense for me. Perhaps because the Catholic education I received, taken together with my readings of the Bible when I was young and with the Judaeo-Christian values of our civilization, make each word of the liturgical text full

of meanings and possible interpretations, confirmed by the vast Biblical exegesis and extensive literature concerning this episode. The Biblical texts underwent a different historical gestation, widely separated in time, and the establishment of canonical dogma took place over the course of several centuries. The narratives of the Old and New Testaments are full of symbols, and the exegesis necessary for their interpretation was in some senses the first hermeneutical practice. I had initially considered using other texts (António Patrício, Jorge Luis Borges), but finally I chose to use only the text from the four Gospels. Everything is there. Latin is a dead language but some of the expressions in the Biblical language have become permanent references in the values of our world.

The recent return of the sacred has produced innumerable works on liturgical texts that continue the great tradition of sacred music: *Passio, Te Deum, Miserere, Requiem* and *De Profundis* are titles of works written largely by religious composers, but also agnostics such as Ligeti. Ontological questioning is not exclusive to theologians, and the questions of death, of treason, of guilt, of doubt, of determinism and of free choice are eminently human.

I have already spoken and written enough about my musical opinions to allow me to do now as did Wagner, who wrote far more about his intentions than his technique. Indeed, I do not use “techniques”. Composing is a complex process, a being launched, during which things arise, forces to which one responds in some way. This being open to becoming, inherent in the creative process as I conceive of it, does not exclude historical awareness of the so-called materials (which will be very different for each composer), but rather the moving outwards of the creative process as such.

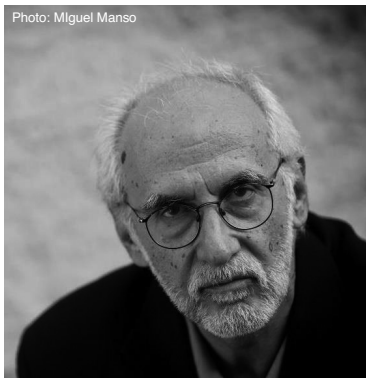
The conditions associated with this commission for choir and orchestra are also part of this. Given the impossibility of using soloists, for financial reasons, I had to find a solution for the words spoken by Jesus and Judas. I chose in the case of Jesus to use almost always female voices as a means, certainly arbitrary, of emphasizing some idea of human fragility. There is no sexual or transsexual speculation in this choice. In Judas’s speech of repentance, “*Peccavi tradens sanguinem iustum*”, there is a gradual progression from one voice (sopranos) on “peccavi” to four voices on “justum”. I organized the text into five specific scenes and an epilogue, the fourth and the fifth being subdivided into three “moments”. These formal decisions concerning the musical focus, the determinant textual-musical nucleus in each of the six sections, were taken during composition. The sixth section, the *Epilogue*, which I called “*Scripturae*” (eternal canon) is a kind of caesura, of a “commentary” in the work. It contains two phrases from Matthew, on the theme “all this took place that the scriptures might be fulfilled”.

Indeed, Judas Iscariot has carried the burden of infamous treason without pardon. And the possibility of this being as determined as the death of Christ, with no subsequent resurrection and glory, makes him a tragic figure in the sense that the Greeks, with their too-human gods, manipulators of the destiny of man, used the term. Jesus, at times too human (“Father, take this cup away from me”), betrayed by one of his chosen men, also awaiting a sacrificial death, in the name of the redemption of man, is no less tragic, though with the particular and ambivalent condition of God made man.

António Pinho Vargas  
Translation by Ivan Moody

## António Pinho Vargas

Photo: Miguel Manso



The Portuguese composer, musician and essayist António Pinho Vargas was born in Vila Nova de Gaia in 1951, and was awarded the Municipality Medal of Cultural Merit in 1998. He was decorated with the Infante D. Henrique commendation by the President of the Republic in 1995. He graduated in History from the Faculty of Letters of the University of Porto, has a piano degree from the Porto Conservatoire and a Masters in Composition from the Rotterdam Conservatoire. He has taught composition at the Lisbon School of Music since 1991 and has been a researcher at the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra since 2006. He finished his PhD in Sociology of Culture at the University of Coimbra in 2010 with the dissertation *Música e Poder*. António Pinho Vargas recorded ten jazz albums as a pianist/composer, including the two double discs *Solo* (2008) and *Solo II* (2009), and *Improvisations* (2011), recorded live at the Instituto Superior Técnico in Lisbon. This is the sixth album dedicated to his classical music. He has composed four operas, a *Requiem* and two sacred oratorios, ten orchestral pieces, eight works for ensemble, twenty chamber works, including three string quartets, seven pieces for soloists

and music for five films. His music has been performed by the Arditti Quartet, the Smith Quartet, the Remix Ensemble, the Royal Scottish Brass Ensemble, and the cellists Anssi Kartunen and Pavel Gomziakov, among others. He has received awards for best music at film festivals twice, for *Tempos Difíceis* (1986) by João Botelho, and *Cinco Dias, Cinco Noites* (1994) by José Fonseca e Costa. His works have been performed in many European countries, as well as in the United States, Australia, China, Indonesia and South Korea. Highlights of his approximately fifty pieces include the operas *Édipo*, *Tragédia de Saber* (1996), *Os Dias Levantados* (1998) and *Outro fim* (2008), the string quartets *Monodia, quasi un Requiem* (1993) and *Movimentos do subsolo* (2008), the *Suite for Solo Cello* (2008), *Estudos e Interlúdios* for six percussionists (2001), the orchestral works *Acting Out* (1998), *A Impaciência de Mahler* (2000), *Graffiti [just forms]* (2006), *Six Portraits of Pain* for solo cello and ensemble (2005), *Um Discurso de Thomas Bernhard* for narrator and orchestra (2007) and *Onze Cartas* for orchestra, three pre-recorded narrators and electronics, *Requiem* (2012) for choir and orchestra, and *Magnificat* (2013), also for choir and orchestra. In 2014 Pinho Vargas was awarded the Prize SPA Autores for *Magnificat*. His books include *Sobre Música: ensaios, textos e entrevistas* (Afrontamento, 2002), *Cinco Conferências sobre a História da Música do Século XX* (Culturgest, 2008) and *Música e Poder: para uma sociologia da ausência da música portuguesa no contexto europeu* (Almedina, 2011). In 2012 he was granted the José Afonso Prize for the album *Solo II* and the prestigious 11th University of Coimbra Award.

## Coro Gulbenkian

Photo: Pedro Ferreira



Founded in 1964 by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Coro Gulbenkian has a full symphonic formation of around a hundred singers, but can also appear as a smaller vocal ensemble. Besides its regular season in Lisbon and its national tours, Coro Gulbenkian has been frequently invited to collaborate with major international orchestras and conductors all over the world. Coro Gulbenkian has recorded extensively, performing a wide repertoire. Several of these releases have received international awards, including the Berlioz Prize of the French Académie Nationale du Disque Lyrique, the Grand Prix International du Disque of the Charles Cros Academy and the Orphée d'Or, amongst others. For the fiftieth anniversary of Portuguese composer Luís de Freitas Branco in 2005 Coro Gulbenkian recorded the first complete series of his *Camões Madrigals*.

## Orquestra Gulbenkian

Photo: Pedro Ferreira



Established in 1962 by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the original chamber orchestra was expanded to a permanent body of 66 players, a number to be varied according to the demands of programmes. Known since 1971 as the Orquestra Gulbenkian, in each season the orchestra offers a series of concerts at the Gulbenkian Grand Auditorium in Lisbon, in collaboration with distinguished conductors and soloists. It has also performed all over Portugal, and has appeared internationally elsewhere in Europe, as well as in Asia, Africa and the Americas. The Orquestra Gulbenkian has been recognized with several prestigious international prizes. Claudio Scimone, who was Principal Conductor between 1979 and 1986, was named in 1987 its Honorary Conductor. Joana Carneiro has held the position of Guest Conductor of the orchestra since the 2006-2007 season and Susanna Mälkki was appointed Principal Guest Conductor beginning in 2013-2014. Paul McCreech was appointed Principal Conductor of Orquestra Gulbenkian in 2013.

### Joana Carneiro



Photo: Rui Gaudêncio

A native of Lisbon, Joana Carneiro began her musical studies as a violist before graduating in conducting at the Academia Nacional Superior de Orquestra in Lisbon, where she studied with Jean-Marc Burfin. She took her Master's degree in orchestral conducting at Northwestern University as a student of Victor Yampolsky and Mallory Thompson, and pursued doctoral studies at the University of Michigan, where she studied with Kenneth Kiesler. She is the 2010 recipient of the Helen M. Thompson Award, conferred by the League of American Orchestras to recognize and honour music directors of exceptional promise. In January 2009 she was named Music Director of the Berkeley Symphony, succeeding Kent Nagano. She also currently serves as official guest conductor of the

Gulbenkian Orchestra, working with the orchestra at least four weeks every year. In March 2004 Joana Carneiro was decorated by the President of the Portuguese Republic with the Commendation of the Order of the Infante Dom Henrique.

### Fernando Eldoro



Photo: DR

Born in Madeira, Fernando Eldoro began his artistic training at the Academy of Music and Fine Arts in Funchal, and completed his studies at the National Conservatoire of Lisbon, where he graduated in violin, singing and composition courses, while studying piano at the same time. He was a pupil of Sándor Végh and Margit Spirk (violin), Renade von Schenckendorff and Lisie Egger (voice), Jean Françaix (chamber music), Paul von Schillawsky (interpretation) and Michel Corboz and Kurt Prestel (choral conducting). Between 1975 and 1982 he received a scholarship from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, studying conducting with Jean-Sébastien Béreau and Michel Tabachnik. Assistant Conductor of the Gulbenkian Choir from 1971 to 2012, he has directed numerous choirs and orchestras in different

countries. Fernando Eldoro travels frequently to a number of European countries to lead master-classes and to participate on international juries. He teaches at the School of Music at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, and at the National Conservatoire.



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Much decorated by his native country, António Pinho Vargas, originally best known for his jazz performances, is now one of Portugal's leading classical composers. His instrumental and film music has won numerous awards, and his chamber works have been performed by some of the world's leading ensembles. In turning to the sacred, Pinho Vargas has crafted music of moving declamatory power. He has organized *Judas* into five specific scenes with an epilogue, whilst the *Requiem* is a very personal and powerful reply, in the composer's words, 'to a history of numerous works of the past'.

## António PINHO VARGAS (b. 1951)

<b>Requiem (2012)*</b>		<b>22:49</b>	<b>Judas (secundum Lucam, Johannem, Matthaeum et Marcum) (2002)**</b>		<b>31:38</b>
1	<b>Introitus</b>	5:59			
2	<b>Kyrie</b>	1:14			
3	<b>Dies irae</b>	4:43	10	<b>Dies festus</b>	6:11
4	<b>Confutatis, maledictis</b>	1:59	11	<b>Ecce manus</b>	4:50
5	<b>Lacrimosa</b>	5:51	12	<b>Domine, quis est?</b>	4:42
6	<b>Offertorium</b>	3:26	13	<b>Christus apprehenditur</b>	4:40
7	<b>Sanctus</b>	1:51	14	<b>Proditoris finis</b>	4:06
8	<b>Agnus Dei</b>	2:58	15	<b>Se suspendit</b>	3:12
9	<b>Libera me</b>	4:48	16	<b>Scripturae (canone aeternum)</b>	3:57

WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS

**Coro e Orquestra Gulbenkian**  
**Paulo Lourenço, Chorus-master**  
**Joana Carneiro\* • Fernando Eldoro\*\***

The Latin sung texts and English translations can be accessed at [www.naxos.com/libretti/573277.htm](http://www.naxos.com/libretti/573277.htm)

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