

VOICES

TARIK O'REGAN



CHOIR OF CLARE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, DIRECTED BY TIMOTHY BROWN



Photo © Suzanne Jansen

Tarik O'Regan

Born in London in 1978, British Composer Award winner **Tarik O'Regan** was educated at Oxford University and completed his postgraduate studies at Cambridge, where he was subsequently appointed Composer in Residence at Corpus Christi College. Described as 'skilful and elegant' (*Sunday Times*) and 'beautifully-imagined' (*Financial Times*), his compositions have been performed by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Sinfonietta and BBC Singers, as well as by many leading vocal ensembles.

Living in New York City since 2004, O'Regan has held the Fulbright Chester Schirmer Fellowship in Music Composition at Columbia University and a Radcliffe Institute Fellowship at Harvard. Currently a Research Affiliate on the Visiting Faculty of Yale University's Institute of Sacred Music, he is working on an operatic version of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* in collaboration with the artist Tom Phillips, RA.

www.tarikoregan.com

TARIK O'REGAN • VOICES

THE CHOIR OF CLARE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, DIRECTED BY TIMOTHY BROWN

James McVinnie (organ)

with Rafal Jezierski (cello), Adrian Spillett (percussion), Helen Tunstall (harp)

Total playing time: 66' 23"

Note: Words credits are given at the end of each text.

1 – 3 **Three Motets from *Sequence for St Wulfstan*** (11' 10")

1 Beatus auctor sæculi (3' 52")

2 O vera digna hostia (3' 34")

3 Tu claustra stirpe regia (3' 37")

4 – 5 **Magnificat & Nunc Dimittis: Variations for Choir** (14' 03")

Rafal Jezierski *cello* *Solo quartet*: Philippa Boyle, Sarah Shorter, Ben Breakwell, Christopher Elcombe

4 Magnificat (8' 00")

5 Nunc Dimittis (5' 58")

6 – 7 **Two Upper-Voice Settings**

6 Bring rest, sweet dreaming child (4' 19")

Emilia Hughes *soprano*, Helen Tunstall *harp*

7 Columba aspexit (2' 28")

Sarah Shorter *alto*

8 – 9 **Dorchester Canticles** (12' 30")

Gerald Beatty *tenor*, Helen Tunstall *harp*, Adrian Spillett *percussion*, James McVinnie *organ*

8 Cantate Domino (5' 45")

9 Deus Misereatur (6' 45")

10 – 13 **Four Mixed-Voice Settings**

10 Gratias tibi (4' 23")

11 Ave Maria (2' 47")

12 Care Charming Sleeper (6' 41")

James McVinnie *organ*

13 Locus iste (3' 50")

14 **Colimaçon** (3' 22")

James McVinnie *organ*

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Tarik O'Regan writes:

VOICES, a collection including thirteen première recordings, forms a corpus of work composed over six years. Looking back to the earliest of these pieces, *Locus iste*, the idea of writing for choir seemed quite a novelty to me, an occasion which I thought I might never get the opportunity to repeat. I was aware that much contemporary choral music sat easily, but often exclusively, within the confines of liturgy or surrounded by the walls of a concert hall. Although transcending the mutual limitations of both environments in one work was a challenging goal, the struggle heralded a stylistic transition and came to define much of my output. That attitudinal shift, back then, is echoed in the most recent composition heard here, *Dorchester Canticles*, marking the onset of a new phase; it was begun in Oxford and completed shortly after I moved to New York, a city renowned for its own plurality of voices.

1 – 3 Three Motets from *Sequence for St Wulfstan*

The three motets which open this recording are taken from a collection of compositions which form part of an ongoing project called *Sequence for St Wulfstan*. Each work in the *Sequence* (currently comprising six individual *a cappella* settings) is conceived to be performed alone or in the company of any number of its siblings. The text of each motet is taken from the 723-page

Portiforium of St Wulfstan, an eleventh-century liturgical almanac housed as Manuscript 391 in the Parker Library at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. The *Portiforium* carries the name of the then Bishop of Worcester, St Wulfstan, who likely commissioned his scribes to copy and collate the volume in 1065.

Beatus auctor sæculi 1, a gentle carol with its intertwining opening melody for upper-voices only, lilts throughout between dense chordal writing and moments of sparse openness. It was first performed in December 2003 at the Spitalfields Winter Festival in Shoreditch Church by the Choir of Clare College, conducted by Timothy Brown by whom the work was commissioned. I specifically chose to set only two of the eight extant stanzas in the manuscript as I was aware that these were the most ecumenical in their reading, referring in metaphor only to a 'blest author'.

Beatus auctor sæculi
servile corpus induit,
ut carne carnem liberans
non perderet quod condidit.

Clausæ parentis viscera
cælestis intrat gratia;
venter puellæ baiulat
secreta quae non noverat. Amen.

*Blest Author of this earthly frame,
To take a servant's form he came,
That liberating flesh by flesh,
Whom he had made might live afresh.*

*In that chaste parent's holy womb,
Celestial grace hath found its home;
And she, as earthly bride unknown,
Yet calls that Offspring blest her own.*

attributed to Cælius Sedulius (c. 450), tr. J. M. Neale

O vera digna hostia [2] was the first work in the *Sequence* to be completed, the result of a commission by The Vaulkhard Choral Trust for the Choir Schools' Association. In many ways this piece, first performed in Winchester Cathedral in May 2003 by Winchester Cathedral Choir directed by Andrew Lumsden, laid the stylistic foundation upon which the remaining motets have been built. With its modality rooted in that of Balinese gamelan, this Eastertide motet is mainly reliant on interlaced, repetitive rhythmic patterns for its momentum.

O vera digna hostia,
Per quam fracta sunt tartara,
Redempta plebs captivata,
Reddita vitae praemia. Amen.

*O thou from whom hell's monarch flies,
O great, o very sacrifice,
Thy captive people are set free,
And endless life restored in Thee! Amen.*

Anonymous, tr. J.M. Neale

Tu claustra stirpe regia [3] was composed to celebrate the accession of Her Majesty the Queen, Elizabeth II, to the position of Patroness of Queens' College, Cambridge, receiving its première by the College Choir under the direction of Samuel Hayes in June 2003. Using only two verses of the seven-stanza Ambrosian hymn *Nunc tibi, virgo virginum*, this Marian text links liturgy with the regal theme of the commission ('O Thou, from regal ancestry').

Tu claustra stirpe regia
iureque mundi domina,
desideratum omnibus
tu pertulisti gentibus.

*O Thou, from regal ancestry,
And rightful worldly sovereign,
Brings forth unto all nations wide,
That by which all seek to abide.*

O stella maris fulgida,
absolve plebis crimina,
Fletus quoque supplicium
inmutando gaudium. Amen.

*O Thou, the glowing star of sea,
Whose people freed from tyranny,
Do grant the supplicants this night,
Their weeping changed into delight. Amen.*

Anonymous, tr. Tarik O'Regan

[4] – [5] ***Magnificat & Nunc Dimittis: Variations for Choir***

The ***Magnificat*** [4] and ***Nunc Dimittis*** [5] were both commissioned, separately, by Timothy Brown for the Choir of Clare College, Cambridge. The former was premièreed at the 2000 Spitalfields Winter Festival in London, while the latter was composed for a BBC broadcast in 2001. Both are large-scale settings, designed to stand as concert works in their own right or to be paired together for liturgical purposes. The work is scored for double choir with soprano, alto, tenor and bass soloists and a solo cello. The dedicatee, Christopher Rutter, who sang in the first performance of the *Magnificat*, had his life tragically cut short in a road accident three months later, shortly before the *Nunc Dimittis* was due to have been premièreed. In each movement I have tried to recreate the Renaissance practice of alternating chant and polyphony, the latter developing texturally, rather than harmonically (herein lying the 'variations' of the subtitle). The cello uses material from both choirs, accompanying, rising above and playing against the ongoing variations, but always reverting to fragments, if not entire quotations, of the chant melody.

Magnificat

Magnificat anima mea Dominum.

Et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae: ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.

Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est: et sanctum nomen eius.

Et misericordia eius a progenie in progenies timentibus eum.

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo: dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.

Deposuit potentes de sede, et exaltavit humiles.

Esurientes implevit bonis: et divites dimisit inanes.

Suscepit Israel puerum suum recordatus misericordiae suae.

Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros,

My soul doth magnify the Lord.

And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded the lowliness of his hand-maiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations.

He hath shewed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel.

As he promised to our forefathers,

Abraham et semini eius in saecula.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum.

Amen.

Nunc Dimittis

Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace.

Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum.

Quod parasti ante faciem omnium populorum:

Lumen ad revelationem gentium, et gloriam plebis tuae Israel.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum.

Amen.

Abraham and his seed, for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen.

Luke 1, vv. 46–55

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word.

For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

which thou hast prepared before the face of all people:

To be a light to lighten the Gentiles and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen.

Luke 2, vv. 29–32

6 – 7 Two Upper-Voice Settings

Bring rest, sweet dreaming child 6 takes its title from the first stanza of a poem by the Anglican priest-poet, Mark Pryce, which, in his own words, ‘reflects on the birth of the Christ-child who comes into the anxiety, noise and loneliness of the contemporary city, with its varied threats and fear of neighbour.’ Originally written in 2003 for Midnight Mass in the heart of the city, there is an ecumenical sentiment of stillness that pervades the poem; something which I have tried to bring out in my musical setting, commissioned by the Elysian Singers of London and first performed by them in December 2004 in St Paul’s Church, Covent Garden. Scored here in a version for upper-voice choir, the words are sparsely accompanied by a solo harp. I have deliberately avoided the more conventional use of the instrument, thus there are no *glissandi* and it does not double the vocal line; instead it casts a soft light, quietly highlighting particular resonances. Each verse, based on the opening monody, is altered and extended very slightly until we see a window upon the inherent radiance of the words.

If you came at night,
Pushing your way down the long dark
Out into starlight;
Come now into our anxious, sleepless hours:
Bring rest, sweet dreaming child.

If you came at dawn,
Lifting a voice from the dumb void,
Your new song born;
Speak now into our shouting, stifled days:
Bring praise, sweet singing child.

If you came at day’s noon,
Spreading out your arms to shade
From anger’s fierce sun-blaze;
Reach now into our frenzied, drifting years:
Bring peace, sweet trusting child.

If you came at dusk,
Warming our chill fears with the blood
Of love’s pure pulse;
Touch now the numb limbs of our fading lives:
Bring love, sweet breathing child.

Mark Pryce

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The primary material in *Columba aspexit* 7 is taken from the sequence of the same name ascribed to Hildegard von Bingen (1089–1178). By shifting tonal centre several times, the work plays on the modal ambiguity of the original sequence with its contrasting B-flats and B-naturals. The text utilised here, merely the first verse of nine, is not as peaceful in intent as may be first assumed from the translation of the title, ‘the dove peered in’. Hildegard uses the dove as a symbol of the Holy Ghost, hovering in the presence of

St Maximin, a celebrant at Mass. The music develops at a flighty pace from the quiet quotation of the opening phrase. *Columba aspexit* was first performed in December 2000 by The Hildegard Choir of Oxford, conducted by Lucy Haigh.

Columba aspexit per cancellos
fenestre ubi ante faciem eius
sudando sudavit balsamum de
lucido Maximino.

*The dove peered in through the lattices of
the window where, before its face, a balm
exuded from incandescent Maximin.*

Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), tr. Christopher Page

8 – 9 **Dorchester Canticles**

Commissioned by the Bournemouth Sinfonietta Choir, *Dorchester Canticles* was first performed in St Mary's Church, Dorchester (Dorset) in a May 2004 concert conducted by David Gostick. Although the two movements share some musical material, each is conceived as an independent entity and can be performed separately. The optional harp and percussion, heard here, are written with concert performances in mind (primarily for partnering the unusual reduced-orchestration version of Leonard Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*). This incarnation of the *Cantate Domino* 8 grew organically from an earlier 2002 setting for Queens' College, Cambridge, written in response to a commission to celebrate the restoration of the College's historic 1892 Binns

organ. I was mid-way through completing this work, when I moved to New York from the UK in March 2004. There is a sense that the fast toccata that closes the *Deus Misereatur* 9, being the first thing I wrote in my new environs, owes more to Manhattan's rhythm than Dorchester's.

Cantate Domino

Cantate Domino canticum novum:
quia mirabilia fecit.

*O sing unto the Lord a new song: for he
hath done marvellous things.*

Salvavit sibi dextera eius: et
brachium sanctum eius.

*With his own right hand, and with his
holy arm: hath he gotten himself the
victory.*

Notum fecit Dominus salutare
suum: in conspectu Gentium
revelavit justitiam suam.

*The Lord declared his salvation: his
righteousness hath he openly shewed in
the sight of the heathen.*

Recordatus est misericordiae suae:
et veritatis suae domui Israel.

*He hath remembered his mercy and
truth toward the house of Israel.*

Viderunt omnes termini terrae
salutare Dei nostri: jubilate Deo,
omnis terra; cantate, exsultate, et
psallite.

*All the ends of the world have seen the
salvation of our God: shew yourselves
joyful unto the Lord, all ye lands; sing,
rejoice, and give thanks.*

Psallite Domino in cithara, in
cithara et voce psalmi: in tubis
ductilibus, et voce tubae cornea.

*Praise the Lord upon the harp, sing to
the harp with a psalm of thanksgiving:
with trumpets also, and shawms.*

Jubilate in conspectu Regis Domini: moveatur mare, et plenitudo eius; orbis terrarum et qui habitant in eo.

Flumina plaudent manu, et simul montes exultabunt a conspectu Domini: venit judicare terram.

Judicabit orbem terrarum in justitia: et populos in æquitate.

Gloria Patri, et Filio: et Spiritui Sancto.

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper: et in saecula saeculorum.

Amen.

Deus Misereatur

Deus misereatur nostri, et benedicat nobis: illuminet vultum suum super nos, et misereatur nostri.

Ut cognoscamus in terra viam tuam: in omnibus gentibus salutare tuum.

O shew yourselves joyful before the Lord the King. Let the sea make a noise, and all that therein is: the round world, and they that dwell therein.

Let the floods clap their hands, and let the hills be joyful together before the Lord: for he is come to judge the earth.

With righteousness shall he judge the world: and the people with equity.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen.

Psalm 98

God be merciful unto us, and bless us: and shew us the light of his countenance, and be merciful unto us.

That thy way may be known upon earth: thy saving health among all nations.

Confiteantur tibi populi, Deus: confiteantur tibi populi omnes.

Laetentur et exsultent gentes, quoniam judicas populos in æquitate: et gentes in terra dirigis.

Confiteantur tibi populi, Deus, confiteantur tibi populi omnes: terra dedit fructum suum.

Benedicat nos Deus, Deus noster, benedicat nos Deus: et metuant eum omnes fines terrae.

Gloria Patri, et Filio: et Spiritui Sancto.

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper: et in saecula saeculorum.

Amen.

Let the people praise thee, O God: yea, let all the people praise thee.

O let the nations rejoice and be glad: for thou shalt judge the folk righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.

Let the people praise thee, O God: let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth bring forth her increase.

God, even our own God, shall give us his blessing. God shall bless us: and all the ends of the world shall fear him.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen.

Psalm 67

10 – 13 Four Mixed-Voice Settings

The final four choral pieces on this recording are the earliest to be composed. *Gratias tibi* 10 was premièred in a BBC broadcast performance by the Choir of New College, Oxford directed by Edward Higginbottom in June 2000.

This motet, for divided choir, takes for its text the final two sentences of St Augustine's *Confessions* (book I). Written in the final years of the fourth century, the *Confessions* reflect on St Augustine's own life and, more importantly, the autobiographical evolution of thought. The music explores St Augustine's dual emotions of praise and recollection by using two constantly shifting modalities which only unify in their evaporation at the very end.

Gratias tibi, dulcedo mea et honor meus et fiducia mea, Deus meus, gratias tibi de donis tuis; sed tu mihi ea serua. Ita enim seruabis me, et augebuntur et perficientur quae dedisti mihi, et ero ipse tecum, quia et ut sim tu dedisti mihi.

My God, in whom is my delight, my glory, and my trust, I thank you for your gifts and beg you to preserve and keep them for me. Keep me, too, and so your gifts will grow and reach perfection and I shall be with you myself, for I should not even exist if it were not by your gift.

*from Confessionum, Liber I,
St Augustine of Hippo (354–390), tr. R. S. Pine-Coffin*

Ave Maria [11], also scored for divided choir, was joint winner of the *Concours Européen pour Chœurs et Maîtrises de Cathédrales* 1999. Underpinned with a taut, tripartite motivic construction, I have tried to use sparingly the richness available with a divided chorus to give the work an air of sensitive restraint.

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 in the hour of our death.

Amen.

The Angelic Salutation

Written in 1999, **Care Charmingee Sleep** [12] is the only piece on this album scored for double choir. As the protagonist of John Fletcher's 1614 stage work, *Valentinian III*, lies poisoned on stage, a song is performed (originally composed for lute and voice by Fletcher's contemporary, Robert Johnson) luring him to sleep, the 'easer of all woes'. Without wishing to allude to Johnson's music in any way, I was interested in emphasizing the juxtaposition of Valentinian's violent death and the peaceful beauty of Fletcher's words. The opening section, fanning out from a single pitch, leads into a quasi-fugal passage before returning again in a higher, more urgent tessitura as the moment of death occurs ('kiss him into slumbers like a bride'). This work represents my first collaboration with the Choir of Clare College, Cambridge.

Care charminge Sleepe, thou Easer of all woes,
Brother to death, sweetly thy selfe dispose,
On this affected wight, fall like a Cloud,
In the gentle Showres; give nothing to it Loud,
Or painfull to his slumbers: easy, sweet,
And as a Purlinge streame, thou son of Night,
Pass by his troubled senses, singe his pain.
Like hollow murmuring wind, or Sylver raine.
Into thy selfe gently, oh gently slide,
And kiss him into Slumbers like a Bride.

John Fletcher (1579–1625)

Locus iste [13], a simple four-part setting, is the earliest composition on this disc, dating from 1998. The melody here forms the basis of the canonic section at the heart of *Care Charminge Sleepe*.

Locus iste a Deo factus est,
inaestimabile sacramentum,
irreprehensibilis est.

*This place was made by God, a priceless
mystery, it is without reproof.*

Gradual at Mass for the dedication of a church

[14] **Colimaçon**

The title is French for the spiral form of a snail's shell and is most commonly found in the form *escalier en colimaçon*, meaning a spiral staircase. Having

first come across the expression in the work of Jacques Prévert, the word obviously remained in my subconscious and I was reminded of its meaning when composing **Colimaçon** [14] for David Titterington in 1999, with its meandering circular form. *Gratias tibi* evolved as a choral 'transcription' of this work at a later date, the voice of the organ fragmented into a multitude of its human counterparts.

*TARIK O'REGAN
New York, January 2006*

Senior Organ Scholar at Clare College, Cambridge, **James McVinnie** was a music scholar at Sevenoaks School and is a former Organ Scholar of St Albans Cathedral.

An alumnus of the Juilliard School and Manhattan School of Music, cellist **Rafal Jezierski** won the Eisenberg Competition in 2001 and was shortly after awarded the Lotos Club Foundation Prize in the Arts. *The Strad* described his sound as "striking" and his performances as "spellbindingly virtuosic".

Percussionist **Adrian Spillett** was BBC Young Musician of the Year in 1998, and later won third prize in the Eurovision Grand Prix for Young Musicians, with a performance in the Vienna Konzert Haus with the Austrian Radio Symphony Orchestra.

Helen Tunstall studied at the Royal College of Music, London, and was appointed Principal Harp of the London Sinfonietta in 1988. Her many recordings include the harp parts on Björk's *Homogenic* album.

Timothy Brown, Director of Music at Clare College, Cambridge, succeeded John Rutter as director of Clare College Choir in 1979. With the choir he has made many recordings and broadcasts, and undertaken numerous overseas tours. He also directs the London-based professional chamber choir English Voices. Described in a leading newspaper as ‘one of Britain’s most effective choir conductors and a prime custodian of the tradition that makes Oxbridge chapels famous from Seattle to St Petersburg’, he undertakes many freelance conducting engagements and is a popular tutor at international singing courses. He has been a guest chorus-master at the Berlin Staatsoper and the Flanders Opera. He has edited a number of choral volumes for Faber Music and is a contributing editor to the complete edition of music by William Walton, published by Oxford University Press.

Clare College, founded in 1326, is the second oldest of the colleges of Cambridge University. Situated on the banks of the River Cam in the heart of Cambridge with its main buildings dating from the seventeenth century, Clare is a flourishing community of some 75 fellows, 400 undergraduates, and 130 graduate students. Music plays an important role in the life of the college. In 1971 the hitherto all-male chapel choir was re-established as a mixed-voice group of some 24 voices, since when it has gained an international reputation as one of the leading choral groups in Britain. The choir is conducted by the Director of Music, who is a Fellow of the college, assisted by two undergraduate organ scholars. It exists primarily to sing regular choral services in the college chapel, but in addition gives frequent concerts, both in Britain and abroad. Radio and television broadcasts, and recordings, form a regular part of the choir’s increasingly busy schedule.

www.clare.cam.ac.uk

The Choir of Clare College, Cambridge

Timothy Brown *Director of Music*

James McVinnie *Senior Organ Scholar*

Tim Harper *Junior Organ Scholar*

Sopranos: Isabelle Adams (except [7]), Philippa Boyle, Claire Buckley, Esther Chadwick, Rosemary Galton, Eleanor Helps, Laura Honey, Emilia Hughes, Gina Owens, Suzanne Szczetnikowicz ([7] only), Zoë Vanderwolk

Altos: Georgia Black, Madeleine Bradbury-Rance, Elisabeth Fleming, Sarah Shorter, Alastair Tighe, Daniel Wellings

Tenors: Gerald Beatty, Ben Breakwell, Pieter de Villiers, Philip Martin, Matthew Ross, Benjamin Winpenny

Basses: Christopher Elcombe, William Haggard, Jonathan Midgley, David Neal, Edward Parkes, Graham Ross, James Smoker

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