

PRESS RELEASE
21 November 2017

The Sixteen presents the world premiere performances of Marco Galvani's *On Christmas Morn*, co-commissioned by the Royal Philharmonic Society and Classic FM

As part of **Classic FM's** 25th anniversary celebrations, **The Sixteen** and **Harry Christophers** present the world premiere performances of **Marco Galvani's** *On Christmas Morn*, co-commissioned by the **Royal Philharmonic Society** and Classic FM.

Forming a key part of the choir's 2017 Christmas programme *Glory to the Christ Child*, touring to nine locations across the UK, the work is a setting of lines from **Anne Brontë's** poem *Music on Christmas Morning*. The piece is an expression of joy, reflecting the excitement and wonder of the season found in the text, and creates the sense of waking up to distant music on that day.

The programme also features a festive collection of music from the 16th century right up to the present day. The Sixteen and Harry Christophers continue their exploration of Poulenc's work with his joyful *Quatre motets pour le temps de Noël*, an uplifting celebration of the events of the Christmas story, and revisit his solemn and reflective *Un soir de neige*, one of the highlights of The Choral Pilgrimage 2017 programme. Other highlights include John Joubert's *There is no rose*; Lassus' *La nuit froide et sombre*; Kim Porter's *Christmas Eve*; Palestrina's *O magnum mysterium*; and Bob Chilcott's *Pilgrim Jesus*.

Marco Galvani is a young composer based in London, studying with David Sawer. He studied for three years with Emily Howard at the Junior Royal Northern College of Music, and subsequently with Professor Robert Saxton at the University of Oxford. Marco's choral and instrumental works have been performed throughout the UK, Europe, and North America.

Marco's compositions have been commissioned, performed, and recorded by a variety of choirs. In 2015, Marco was awarded the Schellhorn Prize for Choral Composition for his piece *Ecce Quam Bonum*. His music has subsequently been performed by Blossom Street, Icosa Chamber Choir, and the choir of Salisbury Cathedral. Marco's commission *Tantum Ergo* was broadcast on BBC Radio 3 from the Edington Festival, and features on 'Cloths of Heaven', the debut album of Sansara Chamber Choir. *Tantum Ergo* has been published by Edition Peters, alongside *Ubi Caritas*, *Memorare*, and *Eden is that old-fashioned house*. *Et Vidi Angelum* was recorded by The Queen's College Chapel Choir as part of their CD, 'A New Heaven'.

Exploring a variety of instrumental combinations, Marco has received a number of commissions for

ensembles and orchestras. His work for the Oxford University String Ensemble, *After the Rain*, was performed in Christ Church Cathedral in 2015, and subsequent instrumental works include *Unearthed*, commissioned by Oxford's Consortium Novum, as well as *Pro/Contra* for solo piano, composed for the pianist Matthew Schellhorn. Marco's recent works have been performed by CHROMA, as well as a number of solo instrumentalists. In 2016 his first Chamber Opera, *Rothschild's Violin*, was performed by New Chamber Opera, leading David Threasher from Gramophone to describe Marco as 'a compositional voice of genuine promise'.

Listings and programme

Glory to the Christ Child

8 December 2017, 7.30pm, Sage Gateshead

9 December 2017, 7.30pm, St Luke's Church Battersea, London

10 December 2017, 3pm, Glyndebourne, East Sussex

11 December 2017, 7.30pm, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

15 December 2017, 7.45pm, St John the Evangelist, Oxford

16 December 2017, 7.30pm, St Mary Magdalene Church, Taunton

17 December 2017, 3pm, St David's Hall, Cardiff

18 & 19 December 2017, 7.30pm, Cadogan Hall, London

21 December 2017, 7.30pm, Concert Hall, Reading

Alan Bullard *Glory to the Christ Child*

John Joubert *There is no rose*

Traditional Old Basque *I saw a maiden*

John Rutter *There is a flower*

Traditional *Christmas Eve*

Costeley *Allons, gay bergères*

Lassus *La nuit froide et sombre*

Traditional French (arr. Kitson) *Quelle est cette odeur*

Poulenc *Quatre motets pour le temps de Noël*

Kim Porter *Christmas Eve*

Howells *A Spotless Rose*

Marco Galvani *On Christmas Morn*

Traditional *Somerset Carol*

Poulenc *Un soir de neige*

Traditional *Past three a clock*

Palestrina *O magnum mysterium, Quem vidistis pastores?*

Videntes stellam, Hodie Christus natus est

Bob Chilcott *Pilgrim Jesus*

Notes to Editors

The Sixteen

Whether performing a simple medieval hymn or expressing the complex musical and emotional language of a contemporary choral composition, The Sixteen does so with qualities common to all great ensembles. Tonal warmth, rhythmic precision and immaculate intonation are clearly essential to the mix. But it is the courage and intensity with which The Sixteen makes music that speak above all to so many people.

The Sixteen gave its first concert in 1979 under the direction of Founder and Conductor Harry Christophers CBE. Their pioneering work since has made a profound impact on the performance of choral music and attracted a large new audience, not least as 'The Voices of Classic FM' and through BBC television's *Sacred Music* series.

The voices and period-instrument players of The Sixteen are at home in over five centuries of music, a breadth reflected in their annual *Choral Pilgrimage* to Britain's great cathedrals and sacred spaces, regular appearances at the world's leading concert halls, and award-winning recordings for The Sixteen's CORO and other labels.

Recent highlights include the world premiere of James MacMillan's *Stabat mater*, commissioned for The Sixteen by the Genesis Foundation, an ambitious ongoing series of Handel oratorios, and a debut tour of China.

Classic FM

Classic FM is the UK's biggest single commercial radio station and the most popular classical music brand, reaching 5.4 million listeners every week. Classic FM's programmes are hosted by a mix of classical music experts and household names including John Suchet, Alexander Armstrong, Myleene Klass, Bill Turnbull, Alan Titchmarsh, Aled Jones, Margherita Taylor, Alex James, Nicholas Owen and Charlotte Green. Since its launch in 1992, Classic FM has aimed to make classical music accessible and relevant to everyone and in doing so, introduce an entirely new audience to the genre.

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