



MEDITATIO

music for mixed choir

SCHOLA CANTORUM
HÖRÐUR ÁSKELSSON

JAMES MACMILLAN (b.1959)

- [1] A CHILD'S PRAYER *(Boosey & Hawkes)* 3'23
Soloists: RAKEL EDDA GUÐMUNDSDÓTTIR, RAGNHEIÐUR SARA GRÍMSDÓTTIR

JOHN TAVENER (1944–2013)

- [2] THE LAMB *(Chester Music Ltd)* 3'42

HUGI GUÐMUNDSSON (b.1977)

- [3] HVÍLD *(Iceland Music Information Centre)* 3'32

JÓN LEIFS (1899–1968)

- [4] REQUIEM *(Iceland Music Information Centre)* 4'38

MORTEN LAURIDSEN (b.1943)

- [5] O NATA LUX *(Peermusic Classical)* 4'31

ERIC WHITACRE (b.1970)

- [6] LUX AURUMQUE *(Walton Music)* 3'51
Soloist: RAKEL EDDA GUÐMUNDSDÓTTIR

ÞORKELL SIGURBJÖRNSSON (1938–2013)

- [7] NÚ HVERFUR SÓL Í HAF *(Iceland Music Information Centre)* 3'14

SIGURÐUR SÆVARSSON (b.1963)

- [8] NUNC DIMITTIS *(Iceland Music Information Centre)* 4'46

ĒRIKS EŠENVALDS (b.1977)

- [9] O SALUTARIS HOSTIA *(Musica Baltica)* 3'26
Soloists: THELMA HRÖNN SIGURDÓRSDÓTTIR, KIRSTÍN ERNA BLÖNDAL

ANNA ÞORVALDSDÓTTIR (b.1977)

- [10] HEYR ÞÚ OSS HIMNUM Á *(Iceland Music Information Centre)* 4'16

ÞORKELL SIGURBJÖRNSSON

- [11] HEYR HIMNA SMIDUR *(Iceland Music Information Centre)* 3'12

HÖRÐUR ÁSKELSSON (b.1953)

- [12] HVÍLD *(Iceland Music Information Centre)* 4'38

HREIÐAR INGI (b.1978)

- [13] NUNC DIMITTIS *(Iceland Music Information Centre)* 3'18
Soloists: THELMA HRÖNN SIGURDÓRSDÓTTIR, JÓHANNA ÓSK VALSDÓTTIR, HELGI STEINAR HELGASON, FJÖLNIR ÓLAFSSON

ARVO PÄRT (b.1935)

- [14] NUNC DIMITTIS *(Iceland Music Information Centre)* 5'50
Soloist: THELMA HRÖNN SIGURDÓRSDÓTTIR

TT: 58'03

SCHOLA CANTORUM REYKJAVICENSIS

HÖRÐUR ÁSKELSSON *conductor*

In Western Christian tradition the beginning of November has for more than a millennium been associated with the commemoration of the dead. Already in the eighth century, 1st November was designated All Saints' Day, celebrating the memory of those who have been received into heaven. The following day was selected in the eleventh century by the Benedictine monastery of Cluny for the commemoration of the departed. This tradition spread across the Western Church, and developed into All Souls' Day, an occasion to pray for and meditate on the dead – one's relatives in particular, but not exclusively.

In Iceland, the home of Schola cantorum, these two feasts have merged into one, celebrated on the first Sunday in November. In the Hallgrímskirkja, as in countless churches around the world, it has become a tradition to perform memorial music on this occasion. The present recording includes examples of such music, expressive works for choir from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries which interpret grief and bereavement in the light of hope and comfort.

James MacMillan is one of Scotland's foremost composers. His music finds nourishment and inspiration in his deep religiousness and the musical traditions of the Catholic church, but also in traditional Scottish music. *A Child's Prayer* is MacMillan's poignant reaction to the school massacre in the Scottish town of Dunblane in March 1996, during which sixteen small children and their teacher lost their lives. The text is a traditional invocation to Christ which MacMillan recalled from his own childhood, and the words radiate a joy which creates a curious friction against the tense chords. It is possible to imagine that the two solo sopranos soaring high above the choir symbolize the souls of the dead children.

The English composer **John Tavener** became internationally known for his extensive output of religious works. During the final decades of the twentieth century he, along with Arvo Pärt, paved the way for a new spiritual and mystic dimension in art music. Tavener converted to the Russian Orthodox Church in 1977, which had a great impact on his music, but he also found inspiration in other religions and tradi-

tions. *The Lamb* is one of Tavener's best-known pieces, with a text from *Songs of Innocence*, a collection of poems by the poet and painter William Blake, published in 1789. Tavener wrote the piece, characterized by a great simplicity, during a single morning in 1982 to celebrate his nephew's third birthday.

This disc includes two different settings of the poem *Hvild (Repose)* by the Icelandic poet Snorri Hjartarson (1908–86), published in 1966 in Hjartarson's third collection of poems, *Lauf og stjörnur (Leaves and Stars)*. **Hugi Guðmundsson**, one of the most highly regarded members of the younger generation of Icelandic composers, composed his setting in 2009 in memory of Halldór Vilhelmsson, an Icelandic bass singer who had made a great impact on him as a singing teacher as well as a human being.

Jón Leifs was without question Iceland's most important composer during the first half of the twentieth century. Based on traditional Icelandic music and inspired by the country's nature and culture, his uncompromising and severe musical idiom did not give rise to any school, but has in recent years found many admirers. In July 1947, Leifs' daughter Líf drowned off the west coast of Sweden at the age of seventeen. The composer tried to still his grief by writing, and this resulted in four works, of which *Requiem* is the best known: a singularly serene composition which hovers between light and darkness through the continuous shifting of major and minor triads. In spite of the title, the text is not that of the Catholic mass for the dead but compiled from Icelandic folk poems and lines by Jónas Hallgrímsson, Iceland's foremost Romantic poet.

Morten Lauridsen is something of a grand old man in the American choral world. His many settings of both sacred and secular texts are widely performed and can be heard on more than 200 discs. At the death of his mother in 1977, Lauridsen wrote his requiem *Lux aeterna* to her memory: a five-movement work to Latin texts which all include references to light. *O nata lux* is the central movement of the requiem and its centre of gravity, if such a term can be used about this weightless and shimmering music. The text comes from an anonymous tenth-century hymn for the Morning Office of the Feast of the Transfiguration.

When the choral conductor and composer **Eric Whitacre**, one of the leading lights in the American choral community, read a short poem by Edward Esch about the newborn Christ, he was fascinated by the poet's spare and exact depiction of the first Christmas. He asked his friend Charles Anthony Silvestri to translate the poem into Latin and set the resulting text to music. *Lux aurumque* was premièred in 2000 and has since been performed all over the world in the composer's different versions. Whitacre himself writes in the printed score: 'if the tight harmonies are carefully tuned and balanced they will shimmer and glow'.

Borkell Sigurbjörnsson was one of the pioneers of contemporary music in Iceland during the second half of the twentieth century, both as a prolific composer and in his activities as pianist, teacher, broadcaster and administrator. His religious music has played an important role in the musical life of the Church of Iceland, and many of his hymn tunes and choral pieces are heard regularly. Sigurbjörnsson composed *Nú hverfur sól í haf* (*The sun is sinking now*) to a hymn text that his father, bishop Sigurbjörn Einarsson, published in his book *Afhverju, afi?* (*Why, grandfather?*) in 1982.

The second chapter of the Gospel of Luke tells of when Mary and Joseph brought the infant Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem. Present at the occasion was an old man, Simeon, who in a revelation had been told that 'he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ'. Taking the infant in his arms Simeon said: 'Lord, now you let your servant go in peace; Your word has been fulfilled.' This is the beginning of the Song of Simeon, which forms part of Compline, the final church service of the day in the Christian tradition of canonical hours. The Latin text begins with the words *Nunc dimittis* and has been set by countless composers throughout history. This disc presents three recent examples, of which the first is a composition by **Sigurður Sævarsson**. Choral music forms an important chapter in Sævarsson's œuvre. Himself a trained singer and a member of Schola cantorum, he has written numerous smaller choral pieces as well as large-scale vocal works. Among these are his *Christmas Oratorio* and *Hallgrímsspassion*, both of which were first performed by Schola cantorum.

Nunc dimittis was composed in 2015 and was first performed at the Festival of Sacred Arts in Hallgrímskirkja in August the same year.

The Latvian composer **Ēriks Ešenvalds** is a highly experienced choral singer, which is quite obvious from his skilfully composed music for choir. *O Salutaris hostia* is written for two solo sopranos and eight-part choir. In a highly accessible idiom, the soloists sing attractive, and gracefully ornamented phrases to the chordal accompaniment from the choir. The text consists of the two last strophes of the hymn *Verbum supernum prodiens*, written by St Thomas Aquinas (1225–74) for the Feast of Corpus Christi. The text has inspired numerous vocal works from the Middle Ages up until our own time.

In a short space of time, **Anna Þorvaldsdóttir** has attracted much attention and received several distinctions. In 2012 she was the recipient of the Nordic Council Music Prize, and in 2015 the New York Philharmonic elected her ‘Kravis Emerging Composer’. *Heyr þú oss himnum á* (*Hear us in the heavens*) was composed in 2005 for a series of summer concerts in Skálholt in the south of Iceland. The piece is based on a melody from an old Icelandic manuscript with a text by the clergyman Ólafur Jónsson, whose hymns and poems were very popular in Iceland in the seventeenth century.

The exquisite and timeless *Heyr, himna smiður* (*Hear, Heaven’s creator*) by **Borkell Sigurbjörnsson** has gained recognition far beyond Iceland. Although seven centuries separate author and composer, text and music to a rare degree form a single whole. Regarded as the oldest extant Nordic hymn, the poem was written by Kolbeinn Tumason, an important chieftain on the island during the Sturlung Era. According to tradition he wrote it shortly before being killed during the Battle of Víðines on 9th September 1208.

In 2012 **Hörður Áskelsson** composed his setting of Snorri Hjartarson’s poem *Hvild* for the 150th anniversary of his home town Akureyri in northern Iceland. The piece was premièred in August of that year by a festival choir in the town’s recently opened Hof Culture Centre.

The disc closes with two settings of *Nunc dimittis*. The first one is the work of **Hreiðar Ingi** who, like Sigurður Sævarsson, sings bass in Schola cantorum. Hreiðar Ingi studied choral direction and composition in Finland, and then earned a master's degree in composition at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre. Since then he has developed a compositional technique of his own which brings together Icelandic and Eastern European musical traditions. Hreiðar Ingi wrote his *Nunc dimittis* in 2014 in remembrance of Þorkell Sigurbjörnsson, one of his first teachers of composition.

When he set out as a composer, the Estonian **Arvo Pärt** used various modern methods of composition such as twelve-tone technique and aleatoricism. Experiencing an artistic crisis in the beginning of the 1970s, he withdrew from creative work in order to search for his musical voice. Since his return to composition, his music has been characterized by distinct forms, simplicity and harmonic balance, with influences from Gregorian chant, medieval polyphony and Orthodox sacred music. He composed his setting of *Nunc dimittis* in 2001 for St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral in Edinburgh. The music reaches its climax on the word *lumen*, emphasizing the light and the hope expressed in Simeon's song of praise.

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Schola cantorum Reykjavicensis was founded in 1996 by Hörður Áskelsson and has developed into one of Iceland's most respected choirs, with a wide repertoire ranging from Renaissance to contemporary music. The choir performs regularly in Hallgrímskirkja and has given concerts in Norway, Finland, Germany, Italy, France, Spain and Japan. Schola cantorum has participated in recordings released on BIS Records of a number of choral works by the Icelandic composer Jón Leifs. The choir was appointed Official Music Group of the City of Reykjavík for the year 2006 and was nominated for the Nordic Music Prize in 2007 and the Icelandic Music Awards in 2013.

www.scholacantorum.is

After studies in Iceland, **Hörður Áskelsson** moved to Düsseldorf in 1976 to study at the Robert Schumann Hochschule. He graduated *summa cum laude* as organist and choir conductor in 1981, and was appointed music director of Hallgrímskirkja the following year. Also in 1982 Áskelsson founded the Motet Choir of Hallgrímskirkja and initiated the founding of the Friends of the Arts Society of Hallgrímskirkja, two cornerstones of the artistic activities in the church. In 1987 he established the Festival of Sacred Arts, a biannual event on the cultural scene in Iceland, and in 1993 the concert series ‘The Hallgrímskirkja International Organ Summer’. In 1996 Áskelsson founded the chamber choir Schola cantorum.

With his choirs Áskelsson has participated in various music festivals and international competitions, winning prizes in Cork (Ireland), Noyon (France), Gorizia (Italy) and in Catalonia. He has conducted many oratorios, often with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra, and premièred a number of Icelandic compositions. His performances have been broadcast on radio and television and issued on numerous CDs, and as concert organist and choir conductor he has given concerts across Europe and North America.

In 2002, Áskelsson was awarded the Icelandic Music Prize as well as being appointed Municipal Artist of Reykjavík, and two years later he received the Knight’s Cross of the Icelandic Order of the Falcon. From 2005 to 2011 Hörður Áskelsson served as director of music for the National Icelandic Church.

Í meira en 1000 ár hafa fyrstu tveir dagar nóvembermánaðar verið helgaðir minningu látinna í kristinni hefð. Allt frá 8. öld var allraheilagramessa (1. nóvember) minningardagur þeirra sannhelgu kristnu einstaklinga sem menn trúðu að hefði hlotnast sess á himnum. Allrásálnamessa (2. nóvember) var hinsvegar helguð þeim sálum sem talið var að hefðu þurft að hafa viðkomu í hreinsunareldinum til að skírast af syndum sínum. Slík stéttaskipting látinna sálna er víða löngu aflögð. Í íslensku þjóðkirkjunni hafa messudagarnir tveir verið sameinaðir og er allra látinna minnst á fyrsta sunnudegi í nóvember.

Í Hallgrímskirkju, eins og í ótal kirkjum um allan heim, er hefð að halda tónleika á þessum degi og flytja tónlist sem hæfir tilefninu. Þessi geisladiskur geymir tónlist af því tagi, áhrifamikil kórverk frá 20. og 21. öld er túlka sorg og söknuð í eilífu ljósi vonar og huggunar.

James MacMillan er eitt eftirtektarverðasta tónskáld Skota. Tónmál MacMillans sækir innblástur og næringu í djúpa trú hans og tónlistarhefð kaþólsku kirkjunnar, en einnig í þjóðlega skoska tónlist. *A Child's Prayer* er einkar áhrifamikið viðbragð MacMillans við fréttum af skelfilegri skotárás sem átti sér stað í skoska bænum Dunblane 13. mars 1996 þar sem 16 forskólabörn og kennari þeirra létu lífið. Gleðin og birtan sem einkennir textann, alþýðlegt bænarákall til Jesú, sem MacMillan minnstist frá æsku sinni, myndar sérkennilegan núning við spennuhlaðna hljómana. Auðvelt er að ímynda sér að einsöngsraddir tveggja sóprana, sem svífa hátt yfir röddum kórsins, túlki sálir hinna látnu barna.

Enski tónsmiðurinn **John Tavener** er þekktastur fyrir trúarlega tónlist. Hann átti, ásamt Arvo Pärt, stóran þátt í því að ryðja nýjar leiðir fyrir tónskáld frá áttunda áratug síðustu aldar með því að ganga ótrauður sína slöð og hlýða persónulegri köllun sinni. Tavener snerist til rússnesks rétttrúnaðar árið 1977 og upp frá því höfðu hefðir rétttrúnaðarkirkjunnar mikil áhrif á tónlist hans. *The Lamb*, eitt af þekktustu verkum Taveners, er samið við ljóð úr ljóðaflökknum *Songs of Innocence* frá 1789 eftir enska skáldið og myndlistarmanninn William Blake. Tavener samdi þetta ofureinfalda verk

á einum eftirmiðdegi árið 1982 í tilefni af þriggja ára afmæli frænda síns.

Á geisladiskinum hljóma tvö nýleg verk sem samin eru við ljóðið *Hvild* eftir Snorra Hjartarson. Ljóðið birtist í þriðju ljóðabók Snorra, Lauði og stjörnum, árið 1966. **Hugi Guðmundsson**, sem telst til fremstu tónskálda þjóðarinnar þrátt fyrir ungan aldur, samdi sitt verk árið 2009 á útfarardegi Halldórs Vilhelmssonar söngvara. Hugi söng um tíma með Halldóri í sönghópnum Hljómeysi, sótti hjá honum söngtíma og varð fyrir djúpum áhrifum af honum.

Jón Leifs var án vafa merkasta tónskáld Íslendinga á fyrri hluta 20. aldar. Einkar persónuleg tónlist hans, innblásin af náttúru Íslands og menningu, hlaut lítinn hljómgrunn meðal samtímamanna hans en hefur víða notið virðingar á seinni árum. *Requiem* er eitt fjögurra verka sem Jón samdi til minningar um dóttur sína Líf, sem druknaði í júlí 1947 aðeins sautján ára gömul. Texti verksins er ekki hinn hefðbundni latneski sálumessutexti heldur fléttaði Jón saman brotum úr íslenskum þjóðkvæðum og fjórum línunum úr Magnúsarkviðu eftir Jónas Hallgrímsson. *Requiem* er eitt þekktasta og ástsælasta verk Jóns Leifs. Í tærum einfaldleika sínum vegur það salt á mörkum ljóss og skugga með sífelldu flökti á milli dúr- og mollhljóma.

Bandaríkjamaðurinn **Morten Lauridsen** nýtur óskoraðrar virðingar í heimalandi sínu og víðar sem tónsmiður og kennari. Hann hefur samið mikinn fjölda kórverka jafnt við andlega sem veraldlega texta og hafa þau verið hljóðrituð á yfir 200 geisladiskum. Árið 1997 samdi hann sálumessu til minningar um móður sína sem lést það ár. Texta verksins sótti Lauridsen í forna latneska helgitexta og eiga brotin það sameiginlegt að fjalla um ljós og birtu. *O nata lux* er miðkafla verksins og þungamiðja, ef hægt er að nota það orð um þessa björtu og blikandi tónlist. Textinn er úr sálmi frá 10. öld eftir óþekktan höfund og tengist morgunguðspjónustu hátíðarinnar sem haldin er til að minnast ummyndunar Krists.

Skömmu fyrir aldamótin rakst bandaríska tónskáldið og kórstjórinn **Eric Whitacre**, ein af stærstu stjörnunum í kórheiminum vestra, á lítið ljóð um hinn nýfædda Jesú eftir Edward Esch. Þar reynir skáldið að fanga hina „hlýju og þungu“ birtu í fjárhúsinu

á fyrstu jólanóttinni. Whitacre bað vin sinn Charles Anthony Silvestri um að þýða ljóðið á latínu og setti svo tóna við þá þýðingu. *Lux aurumque* var frumflutt árið 2000 og hefur síðan hljómað afar víða. Tónskáldið skrifar í nóturnar: „Ef hinir þétu hljómar eru vandlega stilltir og í góðu jafnvægi munu þeir glitra og ljóma.“

Þorkell Sigurbjörnsson hafði mikil áhrif á íslenskt tónlistarlíf á seinni hluta síðustu aldar, ekki aðeins sem afkastamikið tónskáld heldur einnig með fjölþættu starfi sínu sem píanóleikari, kennari, útvarpsmaður, skipuleggjandi og stjórnandi. Þorkell skildi eftir sig mikið af góðri kirkjutónlist og skipa sálmalög hans og kirkjuleg kórverk háan sess í kirkjutónlistarsögu Íslands. *Nú hverfur sól í haf* kom út í viðbæti við sálmalög hans árið 1991. Lagið samdi Þorkell fyrir föður sinn, Sigurbjörn Einarsson, en sálmurinn er í bók hans *Af hverju, afi?* sem út kom árið 1982.

Í 2. kafla Lúkasarguðspjalls segir frá því er María og Jósef færa hinn nýfædda Jesú til musterisins í Jerúsalem. Þar er hinn aldni Símeon sem hafði vitrast að „hann skyldi ekki deyja fyrr en hann hefði séð Krist Drottins“. Þegar öldungurinn kemur auga á barnið tekur hann það í fangið og mælir: „Nú lætur þú, Drottinn, þjón þinn í friði fara eins og þú hefur heitið mér.“ Þetta er upphaf Lofsöngs Símeons, sem er fastur liður í náttöng kaþólsku kirkjunnar og hefst á latínu á orðunum *Nunc dimittis*. Ótal tónskáld hafa í aldanna rás sett tóna við hann. Á þessum geisladiski má finna þrjú dæmi frá 21. öld.

Kórtónlist er mikilvægur þáttur í tónsköpun **Sigurðar Sævarssonar**. Hann er sjálfur menntaður söngvari og hefur sungið í Schola cantorum um nokkurra ára skeið. Eftir Sigurð liggja jafnt óratóríur sem smærri kórverk. Hallgrímsspassía Sigurðar var frumflutt í Hallgrímskirkju, sem og Jólaóratoría hans. *Nunc dimittis* er samið 2015 handa Herði Áskelssyni og Schola cantorum og var frumflutt á tónleikum á Kirkjulistahátíð það sama ár.

Lettneska tónskáldið **Ēriks Ešenvalds** hefur lengi sungið í kórum og reynsla hans á því sviði gagnast honum vel við tónsmíðarnar. Verk Ešenvalds sem hér hljómar, *O salutaris Hostia*, er skrifað fyrir tvo sóprana og átta radda kór. Einsöngvaramir syngja ljúfar, smekklega skreyttar hendingar með hljómastuðningi kórsins á afar aðgengilegu

tónmáli. Textinn, sem fjölmörg tónskáld hafa sett tóna við allt frá miðöldum, er í raun tvö síðustu erindi altarisgöngusálmsins *Verbum supernum prodiens* sem Tómas frá Aquino orti fyrir dýradag (Kristlíkamahátíðina).

Anna Þorvaldsdóttir hefur á skömmum tíma öðlast mikla viðurkenningu víða um heim fyrir tónlist sína. *Heyr þú oss himnum á* er samið árið 2005 að tilstuðlan Sumartónleika í Skálholti út frá lagi úr gömlu íslensku handriti við texta eftir Ólaf Jónsson, sem var prestur á Söndum í Dýrafirði á fyrri hluta 17. aldar.

Sálmurinn *Heyr, himna smiður* eftir Kolbein Tumason er elsti texti sem enn er sunginn á upprunalegri tungu á Norðurlöndum. Talið er að hann hafi verið ortur rétt fyrir Víðinesbardaga haustið 1208, þar sem skáldið féll. Tónlistin sem **Þorkell Sigurbjörnsson** samdi við sálminn er einn fegursti kórsöngur sem Íslendingar eiga og nýtur hylli langt út fyrir landhelgi Íslands.

Hörður Áskelsson samdi sína gerð af *Hvöld* í tilefni af 150 ára afmæli Akureyrarkaupstaðar að beiðni Eypórs Inga Jónssonar, organista við Akureyrarkirkju. Verkið var frumflutt á tónleikum í menningarhúsinu Hofi þann 29. ágúst 2012 af sérstökum hátíðarkór undir stjórn Eypórs Inga.

Tónskáldið **Hreiðar Ingi** syngur í Scola cantorum eins og Sigurður Sævarsson. Tónlist Hreiðars Inga við *Nunc dimittis* er skrifuð árið 2014 í minningu Þorkels Sigurbjörnssonar, sem var meðal kennara hans í tónsmíðum við Listaháskóla Íslands. Að loknu mastersnámi í tónsmíðum við Eistnesku listakademiuna sneri Hreiðar Ingi sér að tónsmíðatekni sem sameinar íslenskar og slavneskar tónlistarhefðir og er *Nunc dimittis* skrifað með þeim hætti.

Framan af ferli sínum notaðist eistneska tónskáldið **Arvo Pärt** við margar af þeim tónsmíðaaðferðum sem þá voru efstar á baugi, svo sem tólfstónatekni og slembiaðferð, í framsæknum verkum. Um 1970 komst hann í listrænt þrot og dró sig í hlé til að leita að eigin rödd. Hann fann hana um síðir og hélt inn á nýja tónsmíðabraut sem er vörðuð eldri fyrirmyndum og áhrifavöldum eins og gregorstóni, fjölröddun miðalda og tónlist rétttrúnaðarkirkjunnar. Pärt samdi sitt *Nunc dimittis* árið 2001 fyrir kór Dómkirkju

Maríu guðsmóður í Edinborg. Tónlistin nær áhrifamiklum hápunkti á orðinu „lumen“ (ljós). Þannig leggur Pärt áherslu á ljósið og birtuna í Lofsöng Símeons.

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Kammerkórinn **Schola cantorum Reykjavicensis** var stofnaður árið 1996 af Herði Áskelssyni, stjórnanda kórsins. Kórinn hefur getið sér góðs orðstírs með öflugri starfsemi í þau 20 ár sem hann hefur starfað. Efnisskrá Schola cantorum spannar vítt svið frá tónlist endurreisnartímans til nýrrar tónlistar en kórinn hefur frumflutt fjölmörg verk íslenskra tónskálda. Kórinn heldur tónleika reglulega í Hallgrímskirkju og hefur að auki komið fram í Noregi, Finnlandi, Þýskalandi, Sviss, Ítalíu, Frakklandi, Spáni og Japan. Söngur Schola cantorum hefur áður verið gefinn út á vegum BIS í heildarflutningi á hljómsveitarverkum Jóns Leifs ásamt Sinfóníuhljómsveit Íslands. Árið 2006 var kórinn útnefndur Tónlistarhópur Reykjavíkur og ári síðar var hann tilnefndur til Tónlistarverðlauna Norðurlandaráðs.

www.scholacantorum.is

Hörður Áskelsson stundaði tónlistarnám á Akureyri og í Reykjavík en fluttist til Düsseldorf í Þýskalandi árið 1976 til þess að nema við Robert Schumann Hochschule. Þaðan útskrifaðist hann með láði sem orgelleikari og kórstjóri árið 1981. Ári síðar var hann ráðinn kantor við Hallgrímskirkju og hefur gegnt þeirri stöðu allar götur síðan. Strax árið 1982 stofnaði hann Mótettukór Hallgrímskirkju og var einn af stofnendum Listvinafélags Hallgrímskirkju, en kórinn og Listvinafélagið eru hornsteinar listastarfsins í kirkjunni. Árið 1987 ýtti Hörður Kirkjulistahátíð úr vör, en sú hátíð hefur upp frá því verið haldin annað hvert ár að jafnaði. 1993 hóf tónleikaröðin Alþjóðlegt orgelsumar göngu sína í Hallgrímskirkju fyrir tilstilli Harðar og 1996 stofnaði hann kammerkórinn Schola cantorum.

Hörður hefur ásamt kórum sínum tekið þátt í ýmsum tónlistarhátíðum og keppnum

á alþjóðlegum vettvangi, meðal annars unnið til verðlauna í Cork á Írlandi árið 1996, Noyon í Frakklandi 1998, í Gorizia á Ítalíu árið 2002 og árið 2014 á Festival Cancó Mediterrànea í Katalóníu. Hörður hefur stjórnað fjölda óratória, oft með Sinfóníuhljómsveit Íslands, og frumflutt margar íslenskar tónsmíðar. Tónlistarflutningur hans hefur oft verið tekinn upp fyrir sjónvarp og útvarp og gefinn út á geislaplötum, og hann hefur haldið tónleika víða um Evrópu og Norður-Ameríku sem orgelleikari og kórstjóri.

Hörður hefur notið velgengni í störfum sínum og hlotið margvíslegar viðurkenningar. Árið 2002 fékk hann bæði Íslensku tónlistarverðlaunin og Menningarverðlaun DV. Sama ár var hann útnefndur borgarlistamaður Reykjavíkur og tveimur árum síðar hlaut hann riddarakross hinnar íslensku fálkaorðu. Á árunum 2005–11 gegndi Hörður starfi söngmálastjóra þjóðkirkjunnar.

In der christlichen Tradition des Westens steht der Novemberbeginn seit mehr als einem Jahrtausend im Zeichen des Gedenkens an die Toten. Bereits im 8. Jahrhundert bestimmte man den 1. November als Allerheiligenfest zum Andenken an die in den Himmel Aufgefahrenen. Der Folgetag wurde im 11. Jahrhundert vom Benediktiner-Kloster Cluny als Gedenktag an die Verstorbenen festgelegt. Diese Tradition verbreitete sich in der Westkirche und entwickelte sich zum Allerseelenfest, an dem für die Toten – vornehmlich, aber nicht ausschließlich der eigenen Familie – gebetet und ihrer gedacht wird. Auf Island, der Heimat der Schola cantorum, sind die beiden Feste zu einem einzigen verschmolzen, das am ersten Sonntag im November begangen wird.

In der Hallgrímskirkja ist es – wie in unzähligen Kirchen auf der ganzen Welt – Tradition geworden, dabei Gedenkmusik aufzuführen. Die vorliegende Einspielung enthält Beispiele dieser Musik – expressive Chorwerke aus dem 20. und 21. Jahrhundert, die Trauer und Verlust im Licht von Hoffnung und Trost deuten.

James MacMillan ist einer der führenden Komponisten Schottlands. Seine Musik findet Inspiration in seiner tiefen Religiosität und den musikalischen Traditionen der katholischen Kirche, aber auch in der traditionellen schottischen Musik. *A Child's Prayer (Kindergebet)* ist MacMillans bewegende Reaktion auf das Schulmassaker in der schottischen Stadt Dunblane im März 1996, bei dem sechzehn Kinder mit ihrer Lehrerin das Leben verloren. Der Text ist ein traditionelles Bittgebet an Christus, das MacMillan seit seiner Kindheit kannte; die Worte strahlen eine Freude aus, die sich merkwürdig mit den angespannten Akkorden reibt. Die beiden Solo-Soprane, die hoch über dem Chor schweben, könnten die Seelen der toten Kinder symbolisieren.

Der englische Komponist **John Tavener** hat mit seinem umfangreichen religiösen Schaffen internationale Bekanntheit erlangt. In den letzten Jahrzehnten des 20. Jahrhunderts hat er zusammen mit Arvo Pärt der Kunstmusik eine neue spirituelle und mystische Dimension eröffnet. Tavener konvertierte 1977 zum russisch-orthodoxen Glauben, was großen Einfluss auf seine Musik hatte, doch ließ er sich auch von

anderen Religionen und Traditionen inspirieren. *The Lamb (Das Lamm)* ist eines von Taverers bekanntesten Stücken; sein Text ist den *Songs of Innocence (Lieder der Unschuld)* entnommen, einer 1789 veröffentlichten Sammlung von Gedichten des Dichters und Malers William Blake. Tavener komponierte das von großer Einfachheit geprägte Werk an einem einzigen Morgen des Jahres 1982 zur Feier des dritten Geburtstags seines Neffen.

Das vorliegende Programm enthält zwei verschiedene Vertonungen des Gedichts *Hvild (Ruhe)* des isländischen Dichters Snorri Hjartarson (1908–1986). *Hvild* wurde 1966 in Hjartarsons dritter Gedichtsammlung veröffentlicht, *Lauf og stjörnur (Blätter und Sterne)*. **Hugi Guðmundsson**, einer der angesehensten isländischen Komponisten der jüngeren Generation, komponierte seine Vertonung im Jahr 2009 im Gedenken an Halldór Vilhelmsson, einen isländischen Bassisten, der ihn als Gesangslehrer wie auch als Mensch tief beeindruckt hat.

Jón Leifs ist ohne Frage Islands bedeutendster Komponist der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts. Seine kompromisslose, raue Tonsprache, die in der traditionellen Musik Islands wurzelt und von der Natur und Kultur des Landes inspiriert ist, hat keine Schule begründet, aber in den letzten Jahren viele Bewunderer gefunden. Im Juli 1947 erkrankte Leifs Tochter Líf im Alter von 17 Jahren vor der Westküste Schwedens. Der Komponist versuchte, seine Trauer durch Arbeit zu bewältigen, und so entstanden vier Werke, unter denen das *Requiem* das bekannteste ist: eine außerordentlich ernste Komposition, die durch den beständigen Wechsel von Dur- und Molldreiklängen zwischen Licht und Dunkelheit schwankt. Trotz des Titels basiert das Werk nicht auf dem Text der katholischen Totenmesse, sondern auf isländischen Volksliedern sowie Versen von Jonas Hallgrímsson, Islands bedeutendstem Dichter der Romantik.

Morten Lauridsen ist eine Art „Grand Old Man“ der amerikanischen Chorszene. Seine zahlreichen Vertonungen sowohl geistlicher wie auch weltlicher Texte werden in aller Welt gesungen und sind auf mehr als 200 CDs zu hören. Als seine Mutter im Jahr 1977 starb, schrieb Lauridsen sein Requiem *Lux æterna* zu ihrem Gedächtnis:

ein fünfsätziges Werk auf lateinische Texte, die allesamt auf Licht Bezug nehmen. *O nata lux* ist Zentrum des Requiems und sein Schwerpunkt – wenn ein solcher Begriff für diese schwerelose, schillernde Musik gestattet ist. Der Text entstammt einem anonymen Hymnus des 10. Jahrhunderts für das Morgenoffizium zum Fest der Verklärung des Herrn.

Als der Chorleiter und Komponist **Eric Whitacre**, eine Lichtgestalt der amerikanischen Chorszene, ein kurzes Gedicht von Edward Esch über den neugeborenen Christus las, faszinierte ihn die karge und exakte Darstellung der ersten Weihnacht. Er bat seinen Freund Charles Anthony Silvestri, das Gedicht ins Lateinische zu übertragen, um diese Fassung dann zu vertonen. *Lux Aurumque* wurde im Jahr 2000 uraufgeführt und wird seitdem in den verschiedenen Fassungen des Komponisten in der ganzen Welt gesungen. „Wenn die dichten Harmonien“, so Whitacre in der gedruckten Partitur, „sorgfältig abgestimmt und ausbalanciert werden, schimmern und leuchten sie“.

Borkell Sigurbjörnsson war einer der Pioniere der zeitgenössischen Musik Islands in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts – sowohl als höchst fruchtbarer Komponist wie auch als Pianist, Lehrer, Rundfunkmoderator und Organisator. Seine religiöse Musik spielte eine wichtige Rolle im Musikleben der Kirche von Island, und viele seiner Kirchenlieder und Chorstücke erklingen heute noch regelmäßig. Sigurbjörnsson komponierte *Nú hverfur sól í haf* (Nun geht die Sonne unter) auf den Text eines Kirchenlieds, das sein Vater, Bischof Sigurbjörn Einarsson, 1982 in seinem Buch *Af hverju, afi?* (Warum, Großvater?) veröffentlichte.

Das zweite Kapitel des Lukasevangeliums berichtet davon, wie Maria und Josef das Jesuskind in den Tempel nach Jerusalem brachten. Bei dieser Gelegenheit war ein alter Mann zugegen, Simeon, dem in einer Offenbarung geweissagt worden war, „er werde den Tod nicht schauen, ehe er den Messias des Herrn gesehen habe“. Das Kind in den Arm nehmend, sagte Simeon: „Nun lässt du, Herr, deinen Knecht, wie du gesagt hast, in Frieden scheiden.“ Dies ist der Anfang des Lobgesang des Simeon, der einen

Teil der Complet darstellt, des letzten Gottesdiensts des Tages in der christlichen Tradition der Stundengebete. Der lateinische Text beginnt mit den Worten *Nunc dimittis* und wurde im Laufe der Geschichte von zahllosen Komponisten vertont. Die vorliegende Einspielung präsentiert drei neuere Beispiele: Das erste stammt von **Sigurður Sævarsson**, in dessen Schaffen die Chormusik eine wichtige Rolle spielt. Selber ein ausgebildeter Sänger und Mitglied der Schola cantorum, hat er zahlreiche kleinere Chorwerke und große Vokalwerke komponiert. Hierzu gehören ein *Weihnachtsoratorium* und die *Hallgrímspassion*, die beide von der Schola cantorum uraufgeführt wurden. *Nunc dimittis* stammt aus dem Jahr 2015 und wurde beim Kirchenkunsthfest in Hallgrímskirkja im August desselben Jahres uraufgeführt.

Der lettische Komponist **Ēriks Ešenvalds** ist ein ausgesprochen erfahrener Chorsänger, was seiner kunstvoll komponierten Chormusik deutlich anzumerken ist. *O Salutaris hostia* ist für zwei Solo-Sopranen und achttimmigen Chor geschrieben. In einem sehr zugänglichen Idiom singen die Solisten reizvolle, anmutig verzierte Phrasen zur akkordischen Begleitung des Chors. Der Text besteht aus den beiden letzten Strophen des Hymnus *Verbum supernum prodiens*, den Thomas von Aquin (1225–1274) für das Fronleichnamfest verfasste und der vom Mittelalter bis in unsere Zeit zahlreiche Vokalwerke inspiriert hat.

Innerhalb kurzer Zeit hat sich **Anna Þorvaldsdóttir** einen vielbeachteten Namen gemacht und mehrere Auszeichnungen erhalten. 2012 wurde sie mit dem Musikpreis des Nordischen Rates gewürdigt, 2015 verliehen die New Yorker Philharmoniker ihr den Komponisten-Nachwuchspreis „Kravis Emerging Composer“. *Heyr þú oss himnum á* (*Höre uns im Himmel*) wurde 2005 für eine Reihe von Sommerkonzerten im südisländischen Skálholt komponiert. Das Werk basiert auf einer Melodie aus einem alten isländischen Manuskript mit einem Text des Geistlichen Ólafur Jónsson, dessen Kirchenlieder und Gedichte im Island des 17. Jahrhunderts sehr beliebt waren.

Das so herrliche wie zeitlose *Heyr, himna smiður* (*Herr, Schöpfer des Himmels*) von **Porkell Sigurbjörnsson** hat weit über Island hinaus Anerkennung gefunden. Ob-

wohl Dichter und Komponist durch sieben Jahrhunderte getrennt sind, bilden Text und Musik eine ungewöhnlich stimmige Einheit. Das Gedicht von Kolbeinn Tumason, einem bedeutenden Stammesfürsten des Sturlung-Zeitalters, gilt als der älteste erhaltene nordische Hymnus. Der Überlieferung zufolge schrieb er es kurz vor seinem Tod in der Schlacht von Víðines am 9. September 1208.

Im Jahr 2012 komponierte **Hörður Áskelsson** seine Vertonung von Snorri Hjartarsons Gedicht *Hvild* zum 150. Jahrestag seiner im Norden Islands gelegenen Heimatstadt Akureyri. Das Stück wurde im August desselben Jahres von einem Festivalchor im kurz zuvor dort eröffneten Kulturzentrum Hof uraufgeführt.

Diese Einspielung endet mit zwei *Nunc dimittis*-Vertonungen. Die erste stammt von **Hreiðar Ingi**, der wie Sigurður Sævarsson Bassist in der Schola cantorum ist. Hreiðar Ingi studierte Chorleitung und Komposition in Finnland, um dann einen Master-Abschluss in Komposition an der Estnischen Akademie für Musik und Theater zu erwerben. Seitdem hat er eine eigenständige Kompositionstechnik entwickelt, die isländische und osteuropäische Musiktraditionen vereint. Hreiðar Ingi schrieb sein *Nunc dimittis* im Jahr 2014 im Gedanken an Þorkell Sigurbjörnsson, der einer seiner ersten Kompositionslehrer war.

In seinen ersten Jahren als Komponist verwendete der Estländer **Arvo Pärt** moderne Kompositionstechniken wie die Zwölftonmusik und die Aleatorik. Anfang der 1970er Jahre durchlebte er eine künstlerische Krise und zog sich von der kreativen Arbeit zurück, um nach seiner eigenen musikalischen Stimme zu suchen. Seit seiner Rückkehr zum Komponieren ist seine Musik von klaren Formen, Einfachheit und harmonischer Balance geprägt und zeigt Einflüsse des Gregorianischen Gesangs, der mittelalterlichen Polyphonie und der orthodoxen Kirchenmusik. Pärt schrieb seine *Nunc dimittis*-Vertonung im Jahr 2001 für die St. Mary Episcopal Cathedral in Edinburgh. Die Musik erreicht ihren Höhepunkt auf dem Wort *lumen* und unterstreicht damit das Licht und die Hoffnung, die Simeons Lobgesang zum Ausdruck bringt.

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Die **Schola cantorum Reykjavicensis** wurde 1996 von Hörður Áskelsson gegründet und hat sich zu einem der renommiertesten Chöre Islands entwickelt, dessen weit gefächertes Repertoire von der Renaissance bis hin zur zeitgenössischen Musik reicht. Der Chor tritt regelmäßig in Hallgrímskirkja auf und hat in Norwegen, Finnland, Deutschland, Italien, Frankreich, Spanien und Japan Konzerte gegeben. Schola cantorum hat für BIS Records bei einer Reihe von Einspielungen der Chorwerke des isländischen Komponisten Jón Leifs mitgewirkt. 2006 wurde der Chor zum Offiziellen Musikensemble der Stadt Reykjavík ernannt, 2007 für den Nordischen Musikpreis und 2013 für den Isländischen Musikpreis nominiert.

Nach dem Studium auf Island ging **Hörður Áskelsson** 1976 nach Düsseldorf, um an der Robert Schumann Hochschule zu studieren. Er schloss sein Studium als Organist und Chorleiter 1981 mit *summa cum laude* ab und wurde im Jahr darauf zum Musikalischen Leiter der Hallgrímskirkja ernannt. Ebenfalls 1982 gründete Áskelsson den Motettenchor Hallgrímskirkja und initiierte die Gründung des Vereins der Freunde der Künste Hallgrímskirkja, zwei Eckpfeiler der künstlerischen Aktivitäten in dieser Kirche. Im Jahr 1987 etablierte er das Kirchenkunstfestival, ein zweijährliches Ereignis im isländischen Kulturleben, und im Jahr 1993 die Konzertreihe „The Hallgrímskirkja International Organ Summer“. 1996 gründete Áskelsson den Kammerchor Schola cantorum.

Mit seinen Chören hat Áskelsson bei verschiedenen Musikfestivals gastiert, an internationalen Wettbewerben teilgenommen und in Cork (Irland), Noyon (Frankreich), Gorizia (Italien) und Katalonien Preise gewonnen. Er hat zahlreiche Oratorien geleitet, oft unter Mitwirkung des Isländischen Symphonieorchesters, und eine Reihe isländischer Kompositionen uraufgeführt. Seine Aufführungen wurden in Radio und Fernsehen ausgestrahlt und auf vielen CDs dokumentiert; als Konzertorganist und Chorleiter hat er Konzerte in ganz Europa und Nordamerika gegeben.

Im Jahr 2002 wurde Áskelsson mit dem Isländischen Musikpreis ausgezeichnet

und zum Stadtkünstler von Reykjavík ernannt; zwei Jahre später erhielt er das Ritterkreuz des Isländischen Falkenordens. Von 2005 bis 2011 war Hörður Áskelsson Musikdirektor der Isländischen Staatskirche.



Hörður Áskelsson

1 JAMES MACMILLAN: A CHILD'S PRAYER

Welcome Jesu,
Deep in my soul forever stay,
Joy and love my heart are filling
On this glad and sacred day.

(Trad.)

2 JOHN TAVENER: THE LAMB

Little lamb, who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee,
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?

Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee;
Little lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is called by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild,
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by His name.

Little lamb, God bless thee!
Little lamb, God bless thee!

William Blake

3 HUGI GUÐMUNDSSON: HVÍLD

Lygnt geymir vatnið
leið mína yfir fjallið,
felur hana rökkri
og ró í nótt.

Vær geymir svefninn
söknuð minn í lautu,
með degi ris hann aftur
úr djúpsins ró.

Snorri Hjartarson (1906–86)
Reprinted with permission

The still lake masks
My way over the mountain,
Hides it in the hush
And dusk of night.

Gentle sleep holds
My heartache in a hollow;
It rises again at dawn
From the silence of the deep.

Translation: Andrew Wawn
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4 JÓN LEIFS: REQUIEM

Sofinn er fífill
fagr í haga,
mús undir mosa,
már á báru,
lauf á limi,
ljós í lofti,
hjörtr á heiði
en í hafi fiskar.

Sefr selr í sjó,
svanr á báru,
már í hólmi,
manngi þau svæfir.
Sofa manna börn
í mjúku rúmi,
bía og kveða,
en babbi þau svæfir.

Sof þú nú sæl og sigrgefin.
Sofðu, eg unni þér.

Now sleeps the dandelion
In the field,
The mouse in its mossy bed,
The mew on the billow,
The leaf on the twig,
The light in the sky,
The heart on the hearth,
The herring in the deep.

The seal on the skerry,
The swan on the moat,
The newt in the pond,
With no one to lull them.
The babies sleep
In their beds of down,
And Daddy sings them
Softly to sleep.

Sleep, my love, in the Lord's keeping.
Sleep, my daughter dear.

Sofinn er fífill
fagr í haga,
mús undir mosa
már á báru.

Blæju yfir bæ
búanda lúins
dimmra drauma
dró nótt úr sjó.

Við skulum gleyma
gráti og sorg;
gott er heim að snúa.
Láttu þig dreyma
bjarta borg,
búna þeim, er trúa.

Sofinn er fífill
fagr í haga,
mús undir mosa
már á báru.

Sof þú nú sæl og sigrgefin.
Sofðu, eg unni þér.

Þjóðvísur – Jónas Hallgrímsson

[5] MORTEN LAURIDSEN: O NATA LUX

O nata lux de lumine,
Jesu redemptor sæculi,
dignare clemens supplicum
laudes precesque sumere.

Qui carne quondam contegi
dignatus es pro perditis,
nos membra confer effici
tui beati corporis.

Anonymous (10th century). Office hymn at Lauds of the Feast of the Transfiguration

Now sleeps the dandelion
In the field,
The mouse in its mossy bed,
The mew on the billow.

Over the weary
Workman's cottage
A veil of dreams
Is drawn by the night.

Let's forget
Our grief and care,
Going home is blessedness.
Dream about
The city fair,
That the faithful shall possess.

Now sleeps the dandelion
In the field,
The mouse in its mossy bed,
The mew on the billow.

Sleep, my love, in the Lord's keeping.
Sleep, my daughter dear.

Icelandic folk poetry and lines by Jónas Hallgrímsson

O Light born out of light,
Jesus, saviour of the world,
Deign, full of mercy, to receive
Your supplicants' praise and prayers.

Thou who agreed to be clothed in flesh
For the sake of us lost ones,
Grant us to be members
Of thy blessed body.

6 ERIC WHITACRE: LUX AURUMQUE

Lux,
calida gravisque pura velut aurum
et canunt angeli molliter
modo natum.

Edward Esch (b. 1970); Latin translation by Charles Anthony Silvestri

Light,
Warm and heavy as pure gold
And angels sing softly
To the new-born babe.

7 ÞORKELL SIGURBJÖRNSSON: NÚ HVERFUR SÓL Í HAF

Nú hverfur sól í haf
og húmið kemur skjótt.
Ég lofa góðan Guð,
sem gefur dag og nótt,
minn vökudag, minn draum og nótt.

Þú vakir, faðir vor,
ó, vernda börnin þín,
svo við sem veröld er
og vonarstjarna skín,
ein stjarna hljóð á himni skín.

Lát daga nú í nótt
af nýrri von og trú
í myrkri hels og harms
og hvar sem gleymist þú
á jörð, sem átt og elskar þú.

Kom, nótt, með náð og frið,
kom nær, minn faðir hár,
og leggðu lyfstein þinn
við lífsins mein og sár,
allt mannsins böll, hvert brot og sár.

Sigurbjörn Einarsson (1911–2008)
Reprinted with permission

The sun is sinking now
As sun's own dusk is light.
I raise my love to thee
Who giveth wake and night,
My wonders, dreams and hallowed night.

Our father, who art thou,
Who givest thine own sight
To all that this world is
And this star ever bright
This innermost of stars so bright.

Let all my days tonight
Be new in faith and true
Let hell and sufferings
And heaven, who are you
In heaven's glory be just you.

Come nigh, thou night in peace,
Come nigh, my father dear,
And lift thine lifestone
And love to those who share
All those who grieve and truly share.

Translation: Sigurður Ingólfsson
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8 SIGURÐUR SÆVARSSON: 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 tuæ Israël.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper,
et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Luke 2: 29–32 and the Lesser Doxology

Lord, now you let your servant go in peace;
Your word has been fulfilled. My eyes have seen
the salvation you have prepared in the sight of
every people, a light to reveal you to the nations
and the glory of your people, Israel.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy
Spirit, both now and always, and unto the ages of
ages. Amen.

9 ĒRIKS EŠENVALDS: O SALUTARIS HOSTIA

O salutaris Hostia,
quæ cæli pandis ostium:
Bella premunt hostilia,
da robur, fer auxilium.

Unī trinoque Domino
sit sempiterna gloria,
qui vitam sine termino
nobis donet in patria.

Amen.

St Thomas Aquinas (1225–74)

O salutary Victim,
Who widens heaven's gates:
Hostile wars threaten us,
Give us strength; bear aid.

To the Lord One in Three,
May there be eternal glory;
May He grant us endless life
In the land of our Father.

Amen.

10 ANNA ÞORVALDSDÓTTIR: HEYR ÞÚ OSS HIMNUM Á

Heyr þú oss himnum á,
hýr vor faðir, börn þín smá,
lukku oss þar til ljá,
líf eilíft þér erfum frá,
og að þér aldrei flæmumst frá.

Hear us in the heavens,
Holy Father, thy little children,
Bestow on us thy blessing
That we inherit with thee eternal life
And be not ever cast from thee.

Þitt ríki þróist hér,
það þín stjórn og kristni er,
svo að menn sem flestir,
safnist, Guð, til handa þér,
fegin yfir því fögnun vér.

Síst skarta sönglist má,
sé þar ekki elskan hjá.
Syngjum því þýtt lof þá,
þér, Guð Drottinn, himnum á.
Maður rétt kristinn mun þess gá.

En þegar aumur vér,
öndumst burt úr heimi hér,
oss tak þá, Guð, að þér,
í þá dýrð, sem aldrei þver.
Amen, amen, það eflaust sker.

Ólafur á Söndum (1560–1627)

May thy kingdom prosper here,
That is thy rule and Christian faith,
So that men in multitudes
May gather, Lord, for thy sake.
Happy in this we rejoice.

Our song may least adorn thy name
Unless raised up with loving heart.
So let us sing melodious praise
To thee, our Lord God in heaven.
True Christian men will pay this heed.

And whensoever wretched we
Shall die away from this earth here,
Then take us, Lord God, unto thee,
To the glory that never fades.
Amen, Amen, so shall it be.

*Translation: Nicholas Jones
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[11] ÞORKELL SIGURBJÖRNSSON: HEYR HIMNA SMIÐUR

Heyr, himna smiður,
hvers skáldið biður,
komi mjúk til mín
miskunnin þín.
Því heiti' eg á þig,
þú hefur skaptan mig,
ég er þrællinn þinn,
þú ert Drottinn minn.

Hear, Heaven's creator,
How the poet prays,
Let thy gentle grace
Be granted to me.
So I call thy name,
Created hast thou me,
I am thy slave,
Thou art my Lord.

Guð, heiti' eg á þig,
að græðir mig,
minnst, mildingur, mín,
mest þurfum þín.
Ryð þú, röðla gramur,
ríklyndur og framur,
hólds hverri sorg
úr hjartaborg.

Gæt, mildingur, mín,
mest þurfum þín
helst hverja stund
á hólða grund.
Set, meýjar mögur,
máls efni fögur,
öll er hjálp af þér,
í hjarta mér.

Kolbeinn Tumason (c. 1173–1208)

God, I call to thee
That thou curest me,
Merciful, remember me,
We have most need of thee.
Remove, Lord of Heaven,
High-minded and supreme,
Every human sorrow
From our hearts away.

Watch o'er me, merciful,
We have most need of thee
Every hour we live
On this earth of men.
Furnish, virgin's son,
Fair cause and thought,
– All help is from you –
In this heart of mine.

*Translation: Nicholas Jones
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[12] HÖRÐUR ÁSKELSSON: HVÍLD

See track 3

[13], [14] HREIÐAR INGI / ARVO PÄRT: NUNC DIMITTIS

See track 8

SCHOLA CANTORUM

Soprano

Fjóra Kristín Nikulásdóttir
Kirstín Erna Blöndal
Ragnheiður Sara Grímsdóttir
Rakel Edda Guðmundsdóttir
Thelma Hrönn Sigurdórsdóttir

Tenor

Björn Thorarensen
Guðmundur Vignir Karlsson
Helgi Steinar Helgason
Þorkell Helgi Sigfússon
Örn Arnarson

Alto

Guðrún Edda Gunnarsdóttir
Hildigunnur Einarsdóttir
Jóhanna Ósk Valsdóttir
Lilja Dögg Gunnarsdóttir

Bass

Benedikt Ingólfsson
Fjöltnir Ólafsson
Hafsteinn Þórólfsson
Hreiðar Ingi Þorsteinsson
Sigurður Sævarsson

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RECORDING DATA

Recording: October 2015 at Hallgrímskirkja, Reykjavík, Iceland
Producer and sound engineer: Jens Braun (Take5 Music Production)
Equipment: BIS's recording teams use microphones from Neumann and Schoeps, audio electronics from RME, Lake People and DirectOut, MADI optical cabling technology, monitoring equipment from B&W, STAX and Sennheiser, and Sequoia and Pyramix digital audio workstations.
Original format: 24-bit / 96 kHz
Post-production: Editing and mixing: Jens Braun
Executive producer: Robert Suff

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