



PETER RELPH

O VIRGO
VIRGINUM

For Choir SATB and semichorus

O VIRGO VIRGINUM

2022

SCORING: Choir (SATB), Semichorus (SATB)

DURATION: c. 3m

COVER IMAGE: Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci - Gradual from Santa Maria degli Angeli

MORE INFORMATION: peterrelph.com

TEXT

O Virgo virginum quomodo fiet istud?
Quia nec primam similem visa es nec habere
sequentem.

Filiae Ierusalem, quid me admiramini?
Divinum est mysterium hoc quod cernitis.

O Virgin of virgins, how shall this be?
For neither before thee was any like thee, nor shall
there be after.

Daughters of Jerusalem, why marvel ye at me?
The thing which ye behold is a divine mystery.

PROGRAMME NOTE

In December 2022 I was delighted to be asked to help with Will Hall's Service of Lessons and Carols; a collaboration between Wills Hall Chapel Choir, and Anchorae. As part of this, I was invited to write a new carol which could bring both vocal ensembles together to perform. This carol was written and premiered as part of that service.

The text of *O Virgo virginum* is an interesting one, being an addition to the traditional seven advent 'O' antiphons performed in the week leading up to Christmas. With its inclusion, the first letters of each of the antiphons create an acrostic (**V**irgo, **E**mmanuel, **R**ex, **O**riens, **C**lavis, **R**adix, **A**donai, **S**apientia), spelling out 'Vero cras' or 'truly, tomorrow': an extremely important idea in the season of Advent. In this setting *O Virgo virginum*, I have written the music to mirror my setting of *O Sapientia*, the first of the O Antiphons.¹ Lines of chant and melody gradually increase in intensity to the line beginning "Filiae Jerusalem" (Maidens of Jerusalem why do you wonder in me?), before gradually drifting away to open fifths.

PWR 2022

¹ GIA Publications have published my two other settings of "O" antiphons. *O Sapientia* (2016). Chicago: GIA Publications. *O Rex Gentium* (2017). Chicago: GIA Publications.

For Madeleine Reader

O VIRGO VIRGINUM

FROM THE 'O' ANTIPHONS

PETER RELPH

Ancora (♩ = 66)

SOPRANO *pp*
O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____

ALTO *pp*
O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____

TENOR *pp*
O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____

BASS *pp*
O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____

Semichorus *pp*
O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____

pp
O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____

*Add in if possible

5

S. O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____

A. _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____

T. O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____

B. _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____

SCh. O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____

_____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____ O, O, _____

A

9

S. *p* O Vir - go vir - gi - num *mf* quo - mo - do

A. *p* O Vir - go vir - gi - num *mf* quo - mo - do

T. *p* O Vir - go vir - gi - num *mf* quo - mo - do

B. *p* O Vir - go vir - gi - num *mf* quo - mo - do

SCh. *p* O, O, *mf* O, O, O, O, O, O,

B

13

S. *p* fi - et is - tud? *p* Qui - a nec pri - mam si - mi -

A. *p* fi - et is - tud? *p* Qui - a nec pri - mam si - mi -

T. *p* fi - et is - tud? *p* Qui - a nec pri - mam si - mi -

B. *p* fi - et is - tud? *p* Qui - a nec pri - mam si - mi -

SCh. *p* O, O, *p* O, O, O, O, O, O,

18 *mf*

S. lem vi - sa es nec ha - be - re se - quen - tem.

A. lem vi - sa es nec ha - be - re se - quen - tem.

T. lem vi - sa es nec ha - be - re se - quen - tem.

B. lem vi - sa es nec ha - be - re se - quen - tem.

SCh. O, O, O, O, O,

O, O, O, O, O,

23 **C** *p* *pp* *molto*

S. O, O, O, O,

A. O, O, O, O,

T. O, O, O, O,

B. O, O, O, O,

SCh. O, O, O, O,

O, O, O, O,

D

27 *ff*

S. Fi - li - ae le - ru - sa - lem, quid me ad - mi -

A. Fi - li - ae le - ru - sa - lem, quid me ad - mi -

T. Fi - li - ae le - ru - sa - lem, quid me ad - mi -

B. Fi - li - ae le - ru - sa - lem, quid me ad - mi -

SCh. O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O,

ff

O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O,

E

33 *f*

S. ra - mi - ni? Di - vi - num est mys - te - ri - um

A. ra - mi - ni? Di - vi - num est mys - te - ri - um

T. ra - mi - ni? Di - vi - num est mys - te - ri - um

B. ra - mi - ni? Di - vi - num est mys - te - ri - um

SCh. O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O,

f

O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O, O,

39

S. *p*
hoc quod cer - ni - tis.

A. *p*
hoc quod cer - ni - tis.

T. *p*
hoc quod cer - ni - tis.

B. *p*
hoc quod cer - ni - tis.

SCh. *p*
O, O, O, O,
O, O, O, O,

F

43

S. *pp* *ppp*
O, O, O, O,

A. *pp* *ppp*
O, O, O, O,

T. *pp* *ppp*
O, O, O, O,

B. *pp* *ppp*
O, O, O, O,

SCh. *pp* *ppp*
O, O, O, O,
O, O, O, O,