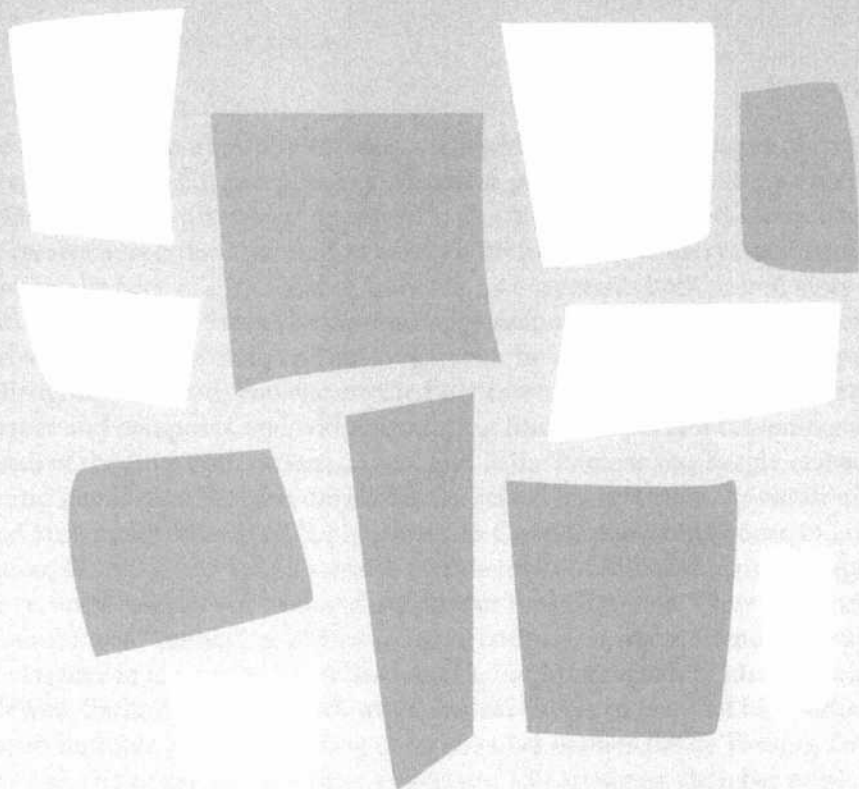


FRANCIS POULENC

O magnum mysterium

from
Quatre motets pour le temps de Noël



FRENCH CHORAL MASTERS

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Music

First Presbyterian Church
106 SW 3rd Street
Gainesville FL 32601
C1246

O magnum mysterium

from

Quatre motets pour le temps de Noël

Francis Poulenc

(1899–1963)

For mixed chorus a cappella.

Composed: 1951–52

Duration: approximately 3 minutes

Poulenc was born into a wealthy bourgeois household in Paris. He began playing piano at age five, encouraged by his mother, an amateur pianist who came from a family of artists. His father, the director of a successful pharmaceutical business, requested that Francis receive a traditional education before entering in the conservatory. Poulenc was left to follow the path of his choosing, however, as his parents both passed away before he turned nineteen. In 1914, he began studying composition with Ricardo Viñes. Not only did Viñes premiere many of Poulenc's works, he also acted as a spiritual guide for the fledgling musician. Poulenc credited Viñes with his embarking on a career as a performer and composer, and with introducing him to important contemporary composers of the time such as Auric, Satie, and Falla. Poulenc was deeply embedded in artistic and intellectual Parisian circles. He dedicated his first work, *Rapsodie nègre*, to Satie and Stravinsky recommended his music to Chester publishing house in London. In addition, his works were performed alongside those of Milhaud, Aric, Honegger, Tailleferre, and Durey at the studio of the painter Emile Lejeune. These gatherings led to the founding of "Les Six" in 1920, a group of composers whose friendship was strong despite variance in the aesthetics of their works. For long periods of his life, Poulenc was a devout Catholic, and his faith was a central theme in many of his works. His works span multiple genres, including the operas *Les mammelles de Tirésias*, *La voix humaine* and *Dialogues des carmélites*, concertos, 150 art songs, chamber music, piano music and choral works, including the oratorio *Gloria*.

Quatre motets pour le temps de Noël was completed in 1952. Poulenc often returned to traditional forms of French church music popular in the Renaissance, such as the motet, that had fallen out of favor in the late eighteenth century. According to Poulenc biographer Benjamin Ivry, the four vivid motets are "the product of a composer who has studied hundred of religious paintings, and who tried to evoke some landscapes in his writing for voices."¹ Following the narrative of the Nativity, Poulenc intended that the movements be performed together. However, there is a long history of them being performed separately.

O magnum mysterium

“O magnum mysterium” is a responsorial chant traditionally recanted during the Christmas Matins, the monastic nighttime liturgy that ends at dawn. It depicts the stable following Christ’s birth in quiet period of reprieve before its news is proclaimed to the shepherds. Poulenc dedicated this movement to his friend, the Dutch pianist and conductor Félix de Nobel.

O magnum mysterium,
et admirabile sacramentum,
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum,
jacentem in præsepio.
Beata Virgo cujus viscera
meruerunt portare
Dominum Christum.

*O great mystery
and wonderful sacrament
that animals should see the newborn Lord,
lying in a manger.
Blessed virgin, whose womb
was worthy to carry
Christ the Lord.*

I. O MAGNUM MYSTERIUM

5^e répons des matines de Noël

pour chœur a cappella

from *Quatre motets pour le temps de Noël*

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Francis Poulenc

Très calme et doux ♩ = 50

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Piano
(for rehearsal
purposes only)

ppp

O ma - gnum — mys - te - ri - um, — et ad - mi -

Très calme et doux ♩ = 50

ppp

4

1 *ppp* bien lié et bien doux

O ma - gnummys - te - ri - um — et

à peine articulé

- ra - bi - le sa - cra - men - tum — mys - te - ri - um, — mys -

à peine articulé

- ra - bi - le sa - cra - men - tum — mys - te - ri - um, mys -

à peine articulé

- ra - bi - le sa - cra - men - tum — O ma - gnum — mys -

1

8

2 *mf*

ad - mi - ra - bi - le sa - cra - men - tum ut a - ni - ma - li - a vi - de - rent

mf

- te - ri - um ma - gnum a - ma - li - a vi - de - rent

mf

- te - ri - um sa - cra - men - tum a - ni - ma - li - a vi - de - rent

mf

- te - ri - um ma - gnum a - ma - li - a vi - de - rent

2 *mf*

p Do - mi - num na - tum _____ *f* ja - cen - tem in prae - se - pi - o *pp*

p Do - mi - num na - tum _____ *f* ja - cen - tem in prae - se - pi - o *pp*

p Do - mi - num na - tum _____ *f* ja - cen - tem in prae - se - pi - o *pp*

p Do - mi - num na - tum _____ *f* ja - cen - tem in prae - se - pi - o *pp*

p Do - mi - num na - tum _____ *f* ja - cen - tem in prae - se - pi - o *pp*

3

ppp O ma - gnum mys - te - ri - um _____ et ad - mi - ra - bi - le sa - cra - men - tum

ppp mys - te - ri - um, _____ mys - te - ri - um sa - cra - men - tum

ppp mys - te - ri - um, mys - te - ri - um sa - cra - men - tum

ppp O ma - gnum _____ mys - te - ri - um sa - cra - men - tum

3

19 *mf* *p* *f* **4**

ut a - ni - ma - li - a vi - de - rent Do - mi - num na - tum — ja - cen - tem

mf *p* *f*

a - ni - ma - li - a vi - de - rent Do - mi - num na - tum — ja - cen - tem

mf *p* *f*

a - ni - ma - li - a vi - de - rent Do - mi - num na - tum — ja - cen - tem

mf *p* *f*

a - ni - ma - li - a vi - de - rent Do - mi - num na - tum — ja - cen - tem

mf *p* *f* **4**

23 *molto* *p*

in prae - si - pi - o —

molto *p* *div.* *p* très doux *unis. mf*

in prae - si - pi - o — Bouche fermée por -

molto *p, mf* doucement en dehors

prae - si - pi - o — Be - a - ta vir - go cu - jus vis ce - ra me - ru - e - runt

molto *p* *mf*

prae - si - pi - o — a - ta vir - go Be - a - ta vir - go

molto *p* *mf*

O MAGNUM MYSTERIUM

pp *Bouche fermée* *p* Be - a - ta

bien en dehors *p* *mf* - ta - re Do - mi num Chris - tum. Be - a - ta Vir - go

pp *Bouche fermée* *p* *mf* Be - a - ta Vir - go

pp *Bouche fermée* *mf* Vir - go

pp *p* *mf*

5

ppp O ma - gnum mys - te - ri - um et ad - mi - ra - bi - le sa - cra - men - tum

[ppp] *à peine articulé* mys - te - ri - um sa - cra - men - tum ma - gnum

[ppp] *à peine articulé* mys - te - ri - um sa - cra - men - tum ma - gnum

[ppp] *à peine articulé* mys - te - ri - um sa - cra - men - tum ma - gnum

5 *ppp*

33

mf *p* **6** *mf*

ut a - ni - ma - li - a vi - de - rent Do - mi - num na - tum — ja - cen - tem .

mf *p* *mf*

a - ma - li - a vi - de - rent Do - mi - num na - tum — ja - cen - tem .

mf *p* *mf*

a - ni - ma - li - a vi - de - rent Do - mi - num na - tum — ja - cen - tem .

mf *p* *mf*

a - ma - li - a vi - de - rent Do - mi - num na - tum — ja - cen - tem .

6

37

f *ff* *court* *p subito* *court* *pp*

— ja - cen - tem — ja - cen - tem in prae - se - pi - o . —

f *ff* *court* *p subito* *pp*

— ja - cen - tem — ja - cen - tem prae - se - pi - o . —

f *ff* *court* *p subito* *pp*

— ja - cen - tem — ja - cen - tem prae - se - pi - o . —

f *ff* *court* *p subito* *pp*

— ja - cen - tem — ja - cen - tem prae - se - pi - o . —

f *ff* *court* *p subito* *pp*

— ja - cen - tem — ja - cen - tem prae - se - pi - o . —

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