

VERBUM CARO FACTUM EST



a Motet for Mixed Choir (SATB)

Phillip A. Cooke

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(2009)

PERFORMANCE NOTE

Breath marks are suggestions only.

The solo alto sections can either be taken by two members of the choir situated within the main body of the choir, or placed off stage for distant effect.

For Amelia, born 27 July 2009

Commissioned by Choir & Organ magazine for the November/December 2009 edition

First performed as part of the London Festival of Contemporary Church Music 2010 by the Choir of the Temple Church, conducted by James Vivian on the 09 May 2010

A recording of this piece is available on *Phillip Cooke: Choral Music* released on Regent Records, REGCD411

Duration: 6 minutes

Cover photograph: 'Candles in a church' (Arne Kuilman)

For more information: www.phillipcooke.com

TEXT

Verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis.
Cuius gloriam vidimus quasi unigeniti a Patre,
plenum gratie et veritatis. In principio erat verbum
et verbum erat apud Deum et Deus erat verbum.
Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto.

*The word became flesh and lived among us.
Whose glory we saw as of the only-begotten of the Father
Full of grace and truth. In the beginning was the word
and the word was with God and God was the word.
Glory be to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.*

Christmas Responsory: St John 1:14

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PROGRAMME NOTE

Some theologians consider the opening verses to the *Gospel of John* among the most profound doctrinal statements in the Christian scriptures. "In the beginning was the Word..." relates back to the Creation story at the beginning of *Genesis*, as well as the Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia) through which all of creation passed. Yet the *Gospel* verse does not end there; it proceeds to the holy mystery of the Incarnation: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory - glory like the only-begotten of the Father, full of glory and truth." (*John 1:14*). That Word, the *Gospel* writer tells, not only was a motive force in the Creation of the Universe, the same being on human flesh and came to live among us.

The famous text from the "prologue" to John's *Gospel* appears only once in its complete form during the Catholic Church's annual progress through the chanted liturgy, but it comes at a very special moment: the night before Christmas. The Church practices discipline, self-reflection, and penitence for 40 days before the two highest holy days, Easter and Christmas. The 40 days of Advent prepare each individual to receive the coming of the Christ child, which is celebrated on 25 December. In the middle of the night, the long waiting is ended, and a long service of worship celebrates the various stories of the first Christmas; the nocturnal liturgy culminates in the Midnight Mass, which is the complete celebration of the Child's taking on our flesh. And one of the last chants sung before the Mass begins is *Verbum caro factum est*.

My setting of *Verbum caro factum est* takes the atmosphere and sense of anticipation in the Midnight Mass as the basis for a slow, reverential meditation on these profound words. The work is largely homophonic, ebbing and flowing with the rhythm of the text; more animated and strident sections are present, but soon dissolve into the *tranquillo e sostenuto* material. One major departure from the original text is the use of the macaronic form, where the original Latin words are combined with fragments of the same text in English translation. This way of approaching traditional texts is something that I have used in recent pieces and gives a fresh approach to well known texts. The English translation is only ever sung by two solo altos (which can be placed off stage) which contrast with the main choir who sing the Latin original.

PAC

VERBUM CARO FACTUM EST

CHRISTMAS RESPONSORY:
ST. JOHN 1:14

a Motet for Mixed Choir (SATB)

PHILLIP A. COOKE (2009)

Liberamente (senza misura) (♩ = c.80)

rit. - - - - -

Soprano

Alto *Soli** **pp** *sempre, lontano*

Tenor

Bass

The word. The word. The word. The word. The word be - came flesh.

poco

* see preface for performance details

A

Lento: tranquillo e sostenuto (♩ = c.90)

2 **pp** *espress.*

poco *sub. p*

Ver - bum ca - ro fac - tum est Ver - bum ca - ro fac - tum est Ver - bum ca - ro

pp *espress.*

*Tutti** *poco* *sub. p*

Ver - bum ca - ro fac - tum est Ver - bum ca - ro fac - tum est Ver - bum ca - ro

pp *espress.*

poco *sub. p*

Ver - bum ca - ro fac - tum est Ver - bum ca - ro fac - tum est Ver - bum ca - ro

pp *espress.*

poco *sub. p*

Ver - bum ca - ro fac - tum est Ver - bum ca - ro fac - tum est Ver - bum ca - ro

pp

poco *sub. p*

allargando - - - - -

2
7

fac - tum est et hab - i - ta - vit in no - bis in

fac - tum est et hab - i - ta - vit in no - bis in

fac - tum est et hab - i - ta - vit in no - bis in

fac - tum est et hab - i - ta - vit in no - bis in

fac - tum est et hab - i - ta - vit in no - bis in

Libera - mente (♩ = c.80)

rit. - - - - -

11

no - bis.

no - bis. The word. The word. The word be - came flesh.

no - bis.

no - bis.

no - bis.

no - bis.

B

come prima (♩ = c.90)

3

13 *pp* *espress.* *poco*

Cu - ius glor - i - am vi - di - mus Cu - ius glor - i - am vi - di - mus

pp *espress.* *Tutti* *poco*

Cu - ius glor - i - am vi - di - mus Cu - ius glor - i - am vi - di - mus

pp *espress.* *poco*

Cu - ius glor - i - am vi - di - mus Cu - ius glor - i - am vi - di - mus

pp *espress.* *poco*

Cu - ius glor - i - am vi - di - mus Cu - ius glor - i - am vi - di - mus

pp *poco*

Maestoso (a tempo)

rit. - - - - -

17 *sub. p* *mp* *p* *f* *appass.*

qua - si un - i - gen - it - i a Pat - re plen - um gra - tie et

sub. p *mp* *p* *f* *appass.*

qua - si un - i - gen - it - i a Pat - re plen - um gra - tie et

sub. p *mp* *p* *f* *appass.*

qua - si un - i - gen - it - i a Pat - re plen - um gra - tie et

sub. p *mp* *p* *f* *appass.*

qua - si - un - i - gen - it - i a Pat - re plen - um gra - tie et

sub. p *mp* *p* *f* *appass.*

22

mp *p* *pp*

ver - i - ta - tis. ver - i - ta - tis.

mp *p* *pp* *Soli* *pp* *sempre, lontano*

ver - i - ta - tis. ver - i - ta - tis. The word... The word... The word was

mp *p* *pp*

ver - i - ta - tis. ver - i - ta - tis.

mp *p* *pp*

ver - i - ta - tis. ver - i - ta - tis.

mp *p* *pp*

ver - i - ta - tis. ver - i - ta - tis.

C

24

mf *p*

In prin - ci - pi - o

mf *p* *Tutti* *mf* *p*

with God In prin - ci - pi - o

mf *p* *sub. mf* *p*

In prin - ci - pi - o er - at ver - bum

mf *p* *sub. mf* *p*

In prin - ci - pi - o er - at ver - bum

mf *p* *sub. mf* *p* *mf* *p*

pochiss. accel. - - - - - A tempo

28 *sub. mf* *p* *sub. mf* *ff* *appass.*

er - at ver - bum ver - bum er - at ap - ud De - um et De - us _____

sub. mf *p* *sub. mf* *ff* *appass.*

er - at ver - bum ver - bum er - at ap - ud De - um et De - us _____

mf *ff* *appass.*

ver - bum er - at ap - ud De - um et De - us _____

mf *ff* *appass.*

ver - bum er - at ap - ud De - um et De - us _____

sub. mf *p* *mf* *ff* *appass.*

rit. - - - - - Liberamente (♩=c.80)

32 *sub. pp* *espress.*

er - at ver - bum. _____

sub. pp *espress.* *Soli pp* *sempre, lontano* *poco*

er - at ver - bum. The word... The word... The word be - came flesh _____

sub. pp *espress.*

er - at ver - bum. _____

sub. pp *espress.*

er - at ver - bum. _____

sub. pp

D

Lento: tranquillo e sostenuto (♩ = c.90)

rit. - - - - -

35

pp espress. *poco* *sub. p*

Ver - bum ca - ro fac - tum est Ver - bum ca - ro fac - tum est Ver - bum ca - ro

pp espress. *Tutti poco* *sub. p*

Ver - bum ca - ro fac - tum est Ver - bum ca - ro fac - tum est Ver - bum ca - ro

pp espress. *poco* *sub. p*

Ver - bum ca - ro fac - tum est Ver - bum ca - ro fac - tum est Ver - bum ca - ro

pp espress. *poco* *sub. p*

Ver - bum ca - ro fac - tum est Ver - bum ca - ro fac - tum est Ver - bum ca - ro

pp *poco* *sub. p*

Devotissimo, tranquillissimo (♩ = c.60)

40

mp *pp* *lunga* *pp sempre*

fac - tum est Glor - i - a Pat - ri et Fil - i - o et

mp *pp* *lunga* *pp sempre*

fac - tum est Glor - i - a Pat - ri et Fil - i - o et

mp *pp* *lunga* *pp sempre*

fac - tum est Glor - i - a Pat - ri et Fil - i - o et

mp *pp* *lunga* *pp sempre*

fac - tum est Glor - i - a Pat - ri et Fil - i - o et

mp *pp* *lunga* *pp sempre*

45

Musical score for five vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor 1, Tenor 2, Bass) and piano accompaniment, measures 45-47. The score includes lyrics: "Spir - i - tu - i Sanc - to. Sanc - to." and "The word. The word.".

Dynamic markings: *ppp* (pianissimo) for all parts. *Soli pp sempre, lontano* (Solo, pianissimo, always, distant) for the Soprano part starting at measure 46.

Rehearsal mark 'X' is placed at the end of each vocal line and the piano accompaniment line at measure 47.

rit. al fine. - - - - -

48

Musical score for the Soprano part, measures 48-50. The score includes lyrics: "The word. The word. The word. The word. The word. The".

Dynamic marking: *dim. al fine.* (diminuendo to the end).

48

Musical score for the Bass part, measures 48-50. The score includes lyrics: "word. The word. The word.".

Dynamic marking: *lunga* (long note).