



TENEBRAE
PASSION & PRECISION



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BIOGRAPHY

Their performance described as “*devastatingly beautiful*” (Gramophone), award-winning choir Tenebrae, under the direction of Nigel Short, blend their passion for singing as if in a large cathedral choir with the breath-taking precision of a chamber ensemble.

As the first ever group to be multi-nominated in the same category for the BBC Music Magazine Awards (2012), their recording of Victoria *Requiem* secured the accolade for Best Choral Performance. Their recent recording of Fauré *Requiem* with the London Symphony Orchestra was nominated for the 2013 Gramophone Awards, having been described as “*the very best Fauré Requiem on disc*”. Tenebrae’s everincreasing discography has seen the group work with Signum, Deutsche Grammophon, LSO Live, Decca, Warner Classics and EMI Classics, with their most recent recording on Deutsche Grammophon of Gesualdo Tenebrae Responsories and Victoria Lamentations for Holy Saturday receiving a five-star review in The Times (London).

Tenebrae is dedicated to supporting contemporary composers, and recent recordings have focused on works by Joby Talbot, Paul Mealer, Will Todd and Alexander Levine. Alongside this, they are masters of shedding a new and rich interpretative light on the choral canon, with programmes spanning centuries and continents, including hauntingly passionate works of Gesualdo and Victoria, the powerful and dramatic choral music of the Russian Orthodox Church, and the beautiful choral masterpieces of Poulenc. The unique demands of each piece are executed meticulously and performed with equal passion and musicality.

The choir have performed at some of the world’s most renowned festivals including the BBC Proms, Montreux Choral Festival, City of London Festival and the Edinburgh Festival with concerts taking place in venues such as St. Paul’s Cathedral, Abbaye Sainte Trinité de Lessay and Leipzig Gewandhaus. ‘Passion and Precision’ is Tenebrae’s motto, and through their continued dedication to performance of the highest quality, audiences the world over experience the power and intimacy of the human voice.





Internationally-acclaimed conductor, Nigel Short, is founder and Artistic Director of Tenebrae and Tenebrae Consort. A former member of the world-renowned vocal ensemble The King's Singers, Nigel studied singing and piano at the Royal College of Music in London before working with a number of leading ensembles, graduating to a solo career in opera and oratorio across Europe.

On leaving The King's Singers, Nigel formed Tenebrae in 2001 to create a virtuosic choir that embraced his dedication to passion and precision. Combining a large force of singers with the exactitude of a small ensemble, Tenebrae use movement, light and ambience to allow audiences to experience music from a fresh perspective.

Under his direction and vision, Tenebrae has enjoyed collaborations with talented composers and arrangers, pianists and organists of various musical genres, and now enjoys a reputation as one of the world's leading choirs. Nigel's live recording of Fauré Requiem with the London Symphony Orchestra was shortlisted in the choral category of the 2013 Gramophone Awards. Other orchestral collaborations have included the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the English Chamber Orchestra, the Aurora Orchestra and in Baroque repertoire, the English Concert. He has also made recordings with record labels EMI Classics, Warner Classics, Decca Records, LSO Live and Signum Records.



Victoria: Tenebrae Responsories (2013) - Signum Classics

Tenebrae return to the sublime music of Tomás Luis de Victoria on Signum with this recording of his timeless Tenebrae Responsories. The works mix the words of the Gospels with other texts commenting on collective suffering written around the 4th century, and would traditionally have been performed as part of a moving service in which candles are slowly extinguished to mark the progress and suffering of Christ that forms the Passion story. Tenebrae's previous disc of works by Victoria (Requiem Mass, 1605) won the BBC Music Magazine Award for Best Choral Album of 2012.

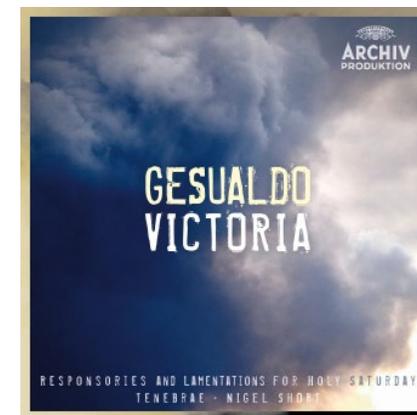
"a beautifully judged & scaled performance" - **The Guardian (UK)**

Gesualdo Tenebrae Responsories / Victoria Lamentations for Holy Saturday (2013) - Deutsche Grammophon

2013 marked Gesualdo's 400th anniversary. With this, their debut recording for Deutsche Grammophon, Tenebrae takes the opportunity to celebrate this visionary composer and his contemporary, Victoria.

"...[the Gesualdo anniversary] will not be better marked than by this beautifully sung CD" - **The Times (UK)**

"Tenebrae's faultless control and balance bring the sacred texts to life, including some wild modulations and sudden side-slips...their powerful serenity and depth I find rather more compelling. The 16 singers of Tenebrae under Nigel Short's direction shine in the darkness." **The Observer (London)**



Fauré Requiem and Bach Partita No.2 in d (2012) - LSO Live

During the 2011 City of London Festival, Tenebrae joined a chamber ensemble from the LSO at St Paul's Cathedral for a performance of Fauré's Requiem. The Requiem was preceded by a selection of Bach's Chorales interspersed with his Partita in D minor, performed by Gordan Nikolitch, leader of the London Symphony Orchestra.

Fauré's Requiem favours serenity, joy and liberation over the dread and terror employed by most composers in settings of the Mass of the Dead. By adopting a more comforting approach, he crafted music of astonishing beauty, in particular the Pie Jesu. Bach's Partita for Violin No 2, with chorales interspersed, culminates in a reconstruction of the Ciaconna, highlighting the hidden chorale themes within this fascinating work.

"I have no hesitation in labelling this the very best Fauré Requiem on disc" - **Gramophone**



“Majestic interpretations with a beautiful bloom on the recorded sound.” - Choir and Organ

*“Tenebrae is current master of the Russian Sound.”
Classic FM*

“phenomenal” - The Times, London

There is a wealth of choral music associated with the liturgy from the Eastern Orthodox Churches, dating back to the 16th Century and evolving more-or-less uninterrupted until the sudden decline in the Church's fortunes which accompanied the Bolshevik Rebellion in 1917.

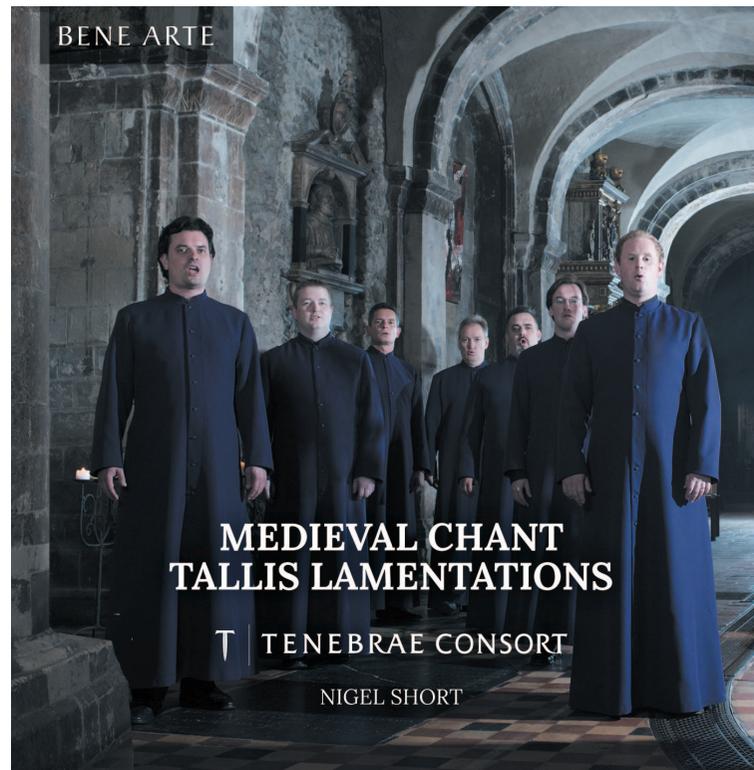
This programme was inspired by the rare manuscripts collected by director Nigel Short during his travels around Russia. Russian choral music has been a feature in Tenebrae's concert performances since the choir's inception and over the years they have worked extensively with Russian language coaches whilst nurturing their own characteristics of passion and precision to deliver a special and heartfelt tribute to the music of these great composers.

This debut recording on **Bene Arte Records**, out on 13th January 2014 includes works from two of the greatest names in Russian music, Rachmaninov and Tchaikovsky, but also some gems by far less well known composers, such as Chesnokov, Golovanov and Kalinnikov, rarely sung outside Russia.

The disc was launched to great acclaim at a concert in St James' Church, Spanish Place on 30 January 2014. Performing to a full-house, Tenebrae tackled this beautiful repertoire with ease, winning praise for their sonority of sound:

“Tenebrae's motto is “Passion and Precision”, and at St James's there was plenty of both, which succeeded in captivating its hearers and sending us out into the brash West End of London spiritually refreshed and with wonderful sounds ringing in our ears.” - The Church Times

New Recording on Bene Arte Records

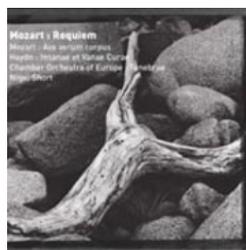


A programme of music representing the daily duties of a singer in a Medieval English Cathedral from late afternoon until dusk. The hypnotic rhythm of antiphonal psalms, the familiarity of ancient hymn tunes, and processions accompanied plainsong, provide a chance to relax, reflect and hear the simple beauty of this timeless music. The programme ends with what is regarded by many as the most beautiful and contemplative of all the Church's daily Offices – Compline. Thomas Tallis's intensely moving Lamentations is some of the greatest polyphony of the age and gives us a stark contrast in its richness to the simplicity of the Gregorian chant heard on a daily basis by so many over the centuries.

Released March 2014

Launch Concert on 13 March 2014, 7:30pm, St Bartholomew the Great, West Smithfield, London

DISCOGRAPHY



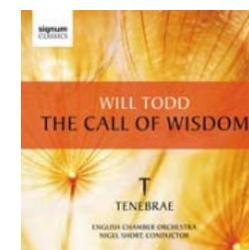
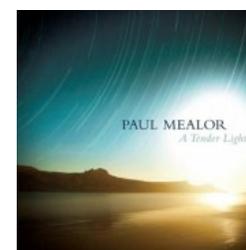
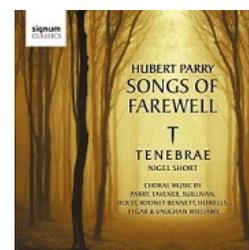
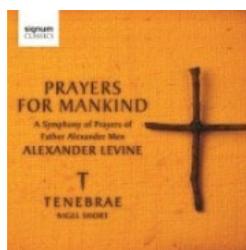
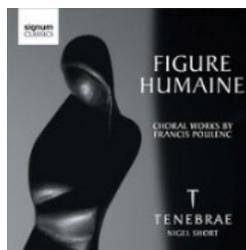
In the decade since the choir was founded, Tenebrae has released 19 albums and featured on two major motion picture soundtracks (*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* and *Children of Men*), reaching millions of listeners around the world, and proving the adaptability of their radiant sound with music from the mediaeval to the twenty-first century.

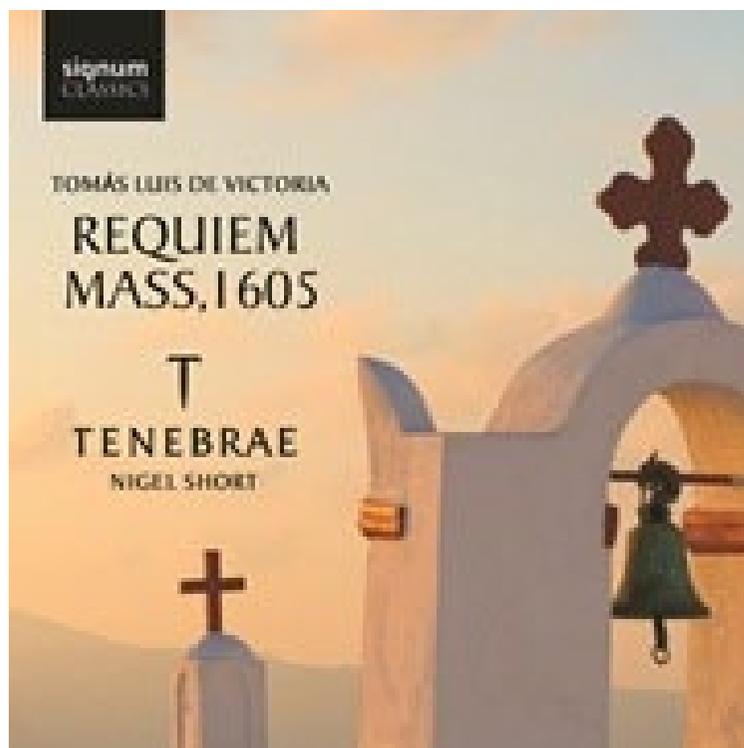
Beginning with *The Dream of Herod* in 2001, the choir has released the majority of its catalogue on the Signum label: from Sir John Tavener (*Mother and Child*) to John Rutter (*What Sweeter Music*); Joby Talbot (*Path of Miracles*) to Gregorio Allegri (*Miserere*); and Sergei Rachmaninov (*Vespers*) to Will Todd (*The Call of Wisdom*), the choir has explored a huge range of music in discs which have become firm favourites with all kinds of listeners. The discs also represent the first recordings of works by Tavener, Jenkins and Talbot, as well as Francis Pott, Nigel Short, and Peter Wishart.

Three albums featuring the choir have also been released on the LSO Live label, two with Sir Colin Davis and one with Nigel Short conducting the London Symphony Orchestra: Berlioz: *L'Enfance du Christ* was released in 2006 and was chosen as *The Independent's* 'CD of the Week'; Handel: *Messiah* was released in 2007 and features Susan Gritton, Mark Padmore and Alastair Miles in a performance described as 'jaw-droppingly beautiful' by *The Guardian*.

2010 saw the release of *Figure Humaine*, a recording of music by Francis Poulenc that was nominated for a BBC Music Magazine Award that year, and *Prayers for Mankind*, a world premiere recording of a new work by Alexander Levine. 2011 releases included a new recording of Tomas Luis de Victoria's *Requiem* and works by Alonso Lobo, followed by a disc of C.H.H. Parry's *Songs of Farewell* alongside music by Elgar, Holst and Vaughan Williams - both of which were nominated for a BBC Music Magazine Award (with the Victoria winning in the 'Choral' category, as well as an album of music by celebrated composer, Paul Mealor entitled *A Tender Light*).

Recent releases include *Fauré Requiem* with the London Symphony Orchestra, which was selected by Classic FM as one of their Top Recordings of 2012 and proclaimed by Gramophone to be 'the very best *Fauré Requiem* on disc', *The Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom* by Alexander Levine, *Victoria Tenebrae Responsories* on the Signum label and *Gesualdo Tenebrae Responsories* on Deutsche Grammophon.





 *MUSIC MAGAZINE*
AWARDS 2012
CHORAL AWARD
WINNER

After two nominations in the Choral category of the BBC Music Magazine Awards – the first time a group has been nominated more than once in the same category – Tenebrae took the award for their recording of *Victoria: Requiem Mass, 1605*.

The group was present at the awards ceremony at Kings Place, London on Thursday 12 April, where we performed Alonso Lobo's *Versa est in luctum*. Hosts Oliver Condy and James Naughtie said of the group: “Well, this choir seems to have everything, our jury said – deep musical insight, technical finesse and an utterly mesmerising balance and poise. Beautiful singing for one the choral world’s great masterpieces”.

2014 HIGHLIGHTS

30 January 2014:	Tenebrae	Russian Treasures St James's, Church, Spanish Place, London
13 March 2014:	Tenebrae Consort	Chant and Lamentations by Candlelight St Bartholomew the Great, West Smithfield, London
28 March 2014:	Tenebrae Consort	Chant and Lamentations by Candlelight Zamora Festival, Spain
23 May 2014	Tenebrae Consort	Chant and Lamentations by Candlelight Shropshire Music Festival
25 May 2014	Tenebrae Consort	Chant and Lamentations by Candlelight Alderney Music Festival
7 June 2014	Tenebrae	Reconsecrated 'Tenebrae' Service Salisbury Cathedral
29 July 2014	Tenebrae	Russian Treasures Three Choirs Festival, Worcester
August 2014	Tenebrae	Russian Treasures, Lessay Festival, France
September 2014	Tenebrae Tenebrae Tenebrae Consort	Russian Treasures Brahms/Bruckner Chant and Lamentations by Candlelight Lammermuir Festival, Scotland

RECORDINGS

“Choral music doesn’t get more magnificent than this.” - **Classic FM** on Fauré Requiem / Bach Partita, Chorales & Ciaccona)

“I have no hesitation in labelling this the very best Fauré Requiem on disc...a performance of extreme richness and opulence...exquisite singing of Tenebrae...In short, this is a devastatingly beautiful performance” - **Gramophone Magazine** on Fauré Requiem / Bach Partita, Chorales & Ciaccona

“...the highly impressive Tenebrae directed by Nigel Short pull out all the vocal stops at the right moments” - **Gramophone Magazine** on A Tender Light

“Here, the chamber choir Tenebrae excel themselves: wonder radiates from every securely focused, cleanly voiced chord. They’re the performance’s rock.” - **The London Times** on L’Enfance du Christ

“Tenebrae reveals itself as one of those exceptional choirs whose individual singers have been moulded into a single superbly sensitive and responsive musical instrument.” - **The Telegraph** on Miserere

“It is a tour de force and absolutely stunning.” - **Choir and Organ** on Path of Miracles

‘More polished choral singing would be hard to find anywhere.’ - **BBC Music Magazine** on The Dream of Herod

CONCERTS

“...exquisitely beautiful throughout. This is music to carry you to heaven.” - **St Louis Today**

“Tenebrae’s precision, dynamic range, unanimity of sound and musicality were nothing short of astonishing...It was breathtakingly beautiful. One would be hard pressed to imagine a better performance.” - **Cleveland Classical**

“The enthusiasm of the large crowd that packed into the Church of St. Mary the Virgin for Tenebrae’s concert on Sunday evening show that there is a hunger for what this finely polished group has to offer.” - **The New York Times**

“Tenebrae are special. Directed by Nigel Short, these were exemplary performances, lucid, and so commanding it seemed as if singing perfectly in tune was the most natural thing in the world.” - **The Guardian**

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