

for Dawn Herbert

O MAGNUM MYSTERIUM

Words from
Matins for Christmas Day

BEN PONNIAH
(b 1984)

Misterioso ♩ = 63

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS

PIANO
(for rehearsal only)

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

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

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

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

Misterioso ♩ = 63

5

-le sa - cra - men - tum, O ma - gnum mys - te - ri - um,

-le sa - cra - men - tum, O ma - gnum mys - te - ri - um,

-le sa - cra - men - tum, O ma - gnum mys - te - ri - um,

-le sa - cra - men - tum, O ma - gnum mys - te - ri - um,

11

mp vi - de - rent Do - mi - num na -

mp vi - de - rent Do - mi - num na -

p ut a - ni - ma - li - a

p ut a - ni - ma - li - a ah

16

f - tum, *p* *pp* O ma - gnum mys - te - ri - um.

f - tum, *p* *pp* O ma - gnum mys - te - ri - um.

f ja - cen - tem in prae - se - pi - o. *p* *pp* O ma - gnum mys - te - ri - um.

f *p* *pp* O ma - gnum mys - te - ri - um.

22

mp *f* *mp*

Be - a - ta Vir - go, cu - jus vi - sce - ra me - ru - e - runt,

mp *f* *mp*

Be - a - ta Vir - go, cu - jus vi - sce - ra me - ru - e - runt,

mp *f* *mp*

Be - a - ta Vir - go, cu - jus vi - sce - ra me - ru - e - runt

mp *f* *mp*

Be - a - ta Vir - go, cu - jus vi - sce - ra me - ru - e - runt,

27

mp

ja - cen - tem in præ - se - pi -

pp *mp* *mm*

por - ta - re Do - mi - num Je - sum Chri - stum.

pp *mp* *mm*

Do - mi - num Je - sum Chri - stum.

32

ppp

- o, ma - gnum mys - te - ri - um.

ppp

O ma - gnum mys - te - ri - um.

ppp

O ma - gnum mys - te - ri - um.

ppp

O ma - gnum mys - te - ri - um.

37

mf ————— *f*

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

mf ————— *f* ————— *ff*

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

mf ————— *f* ————— *ff*

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

mf ————— *f* Al - le - My - ste - ri - um.

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

molto rit

molto rit

Composer's note

O magnum mysterium was written in 2013 and is dedicated to Dawn Herbert, my ex-wife and the mother of my son, Reginald. I wrote the piece while staying at her family's farm in Cambridgeshire. Unintentionally, the wide open spaces infused my writing.

This work uses the following 7-note scale: G, A, B \flat , C, D, E and F \sharp . Only these notes are used throughout the piece and the scale is derived from Scriabin's 'Mystic Chord'. The uncertain and unresolved tonality, therefore, reflects the mystery surrounding the miraculous birth of Jesus, as well as my own personal doubts and wonder.

Duration: c3 minutes

Text

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

*O great mystery,
and wonderful sacrament,
that animals should see the Lord born,
lying in a manger.
Blessed is the virgin, whose womb was worthy
to bear the Lord, Jesus Christ.
Alleluia!*



Photo: Sarah MacDonald

Ben Ponniah

Ben Ponniah is a British composer. His music has been performed at cathedrals and chapels around the world, as well as being broadcast on radio, including by the BBC Singers on BBC Radio 3. It also features on a number of CDs including *Celestial Dawn* (Signum Classics) by The Pembroke College Girls' Choir and *Marvellous Light* (Regent Records) by The Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge. Ben was awarded the Derek Ogston Postgraduate Music Scholarship by the University of Aberdeen in support of his PhD in Composition. His love of sacred music stems from his choral background, which started at St Mary-le-Tower Church in Ipswich. His first degrees were in Economics, after which he explored jazz piano, which rekindled his love for composition.