

Lydia Kakabadse

# KEFI

Choral & Chamber Works



Choir of Royal Holloway | Rupert Gough *director*  
Cecily Beer *harp* | Mary Bull *flute* | Tom Wagner *percussion*  
The Rossetti Ensemble | Leon Bosch *double bass* | Dimitris Gionis *Greek bouzouki*

# KEFI - Lydia Kakabadse

## The Feast of Herod

- |    |                        |      |
|----|------------------------|------|
| 1. | I. The Veiled Dancer   | 1:51 |
| 2. | II. Dance of the Harem | 1:53 |

## Nomadic Dances

- |    |   |      |
|----|---|------|
| 3. | I. Ceremonial Gathering                       | 2:21 |
| 4. | II. Herding                                   | 3:06 |
| 5. | III. Trekking                                 | 2:40 |
| 6. | <b>Kefi</b>                                   | 2:08 |
| 7. | <b>Original Theme by Anton Diabelli</b>       | 0:58 |
| 8. | <b>Variation on a Theme by Anton Diabelli</b> | 1:23 |

## Thirty Steps

- |     |         |      |     |         |      |
|-----|---------|------|-----|---------|------|
| 9.  | Step 1  | 2:15 | 24. | Step 16 | 1:19 |
| 10. | Step 2  | 1:13 | 25. | Step 17 | 1:52 |
| 11. | Step 3  | 1:36 | 26. | Step 18 | 1:03 |
| 12. | Step 4  | 3:01 | 27. | Step 19 | 1:02 |
| 13. | Step 5  | 1:05 | 28. | Step 20 | 1:57 |
| 14. | Step 6  | 2:06 | 29. | Step 21 | 1:21 |
| 15. | Step 7  | 2:17 | 30. | Step 22 | 1:17 |
| 16. | Step 8  | 1:30 | 31. | Step 23 | 1:17 |
| 17. | Step 9  | 1:29 | 32. | Step 24 | 1:28 |
| 18. | Step 10 | 1:36 | 33. | Step 25 | 2:11 |
| 19. | Step 11 | 1:33 | 34. | Step 26 | 1:02 |
| 20. | Step 12 | 0:47 | 35. | Step 27 | 1:12 |
| 21. | Step 13 | 1:29 | 36. | Step 28 | 1:32 |
| 22. | Step 14 | 1:21 | 37. | Step 29 | 1:08 |
| 23. | Step 15 | 1:44 | 38. | Step 30 | 2:19 |

Total playing time 64:10

## Thirty Steps Soloists

James Gooding (tenor) Steps 1 and 26  
 Phoebe Wakefield (alto) Step 2  
 Joseph Morris (tenor) Steps 7, 15, and 24

Esmé Ellis (soprano) Step 19  
 Ruben Dales (alto), Alicia Hunt (soprano) Step 22  
 Sophie Janes (alto) Step 26  
 Lucy Mitten (soprano) Step 29

This album, Kefi, features a more diverse genre of music than my previous albums, incorporating the ethnic Greek bouzouki into western classical chamber music.

## THE FEAST OF HEROD

Completed in August 2023, this piece is scored for Greek bouzouki, violin, viola, cello and double bass. The Feast of Herod depicts a banquet scene, where a veiled dancer performs an exotic dance, followed by dancers of the harem. It is made up of 2 movements, characterized by an emphasis on melody and rhythm, rather than harmony and makes use of variational techniques (ornamentation, melodic/ rhythmic patterns).

### I. The Veiled Dancer

The 1st movement opens with the bouzouki playing a short bravura solo “ad lib” after which it introduces the main theme over a viola/cello open 5th drone accompaniment. Much use is made of the double harmonic scale of D, where the 2 augmented seconds (E<sup>b</sup> to F<sup>#</sup> and Bb to C<sup>#</sup>) give the scale a strong Middle Eastern flavour, whilst the double bass, playing *pizzicato*, reinforces the tonality of D. Both the violin and viola introduce variations to the main theme, followed by the bouzouki, which repeats the main theme over a *pizzicato* rhythm.

### II. Dance of the Harem

From the very outset, the double bass, playing *pizzicato*, establishes a Middle Eastern rhythm known as *maqsum*. The violin enters announcing the main theme, accompanied by the viola, cello and double bass, all playing *pizzicato*. The bouzouki then takes centre stage announcing the 2nd theme, which it repeats a 5th lower, and which is then taken up by the double bass in its higher register. The piece is brought to a *pianissimo* close following the reappearance of the 1st theme played by the bouzouki.

## NOMADIC DANCES

This is a collection of nomadic dances for violin, viola, cello and double bass, composed in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic. Made up of 3 dances, the work makes use of the double harmonic scale as well as rhythmic vying between the lower and upper strings. It is characterized by an emphasis on melody, ornamentation and syncopated rhythms, which seek to capture the soul and mystique of the nomadic dance.

### 1. Ceremonial Gathering

Played *molto energico*, the piece starts with the violin and viola playing an irregular pattern of syncopated rhythms against a flow of quavers in the lower strings, resulting in dissonant harmonies and a sense of the unexpected. As the mood changes and becomes calmer, there are a series of imitative semi-quaver runs between the double bass and cello, as well as some dialogue between the violin and viola.

### 2. Herding

The cello announces the 1st theme which, in turn, is elaborated by the viola, double bass and violin. All 4 instruments are presented as equals in a musical dialogue, made up of frequent imitative interplay.

### 3. Trekking

After a 13-bar introduction where there is much unison playing, the violin announces the main theme, which is then varied by each of the instruments. In keeping with the title "Trekking", there is an uninterrupted steady and persistent pace throughout this movement, representing the nomads making long arduous journeys venturing beyond ancient trails.

## KEFI

The Greek word "Kefi" is deeply embedded in Greek culture and, as such, there is no direct translation of the word. For purposes of this album, it means joy, vibrancy and excitement. Written for Greek bouzouki, violin, viola, cello and double bass, Kefi was completed in 2021. This piece is a showcase for the bouzouki and makes much use of the double harmonic scale of D, arpeggio sequences and fast semi-quaver passages.

The bouzouki makes its introduction with a series of semi-quaver runs over a tremolo drone, followed by a tonal sequence accompanied by *pizzicato* strings. It goes on to introduce the main theme (in 3rds) over an arpeggio accompaniment. There follows a passage of interplay between the violin and lower strings and then between the cello and double bass. Exhibiting a display of technical skill, the bouzouki plays a cadenza type passage "ad lib" and, having rejoined the other instruments, it repeats the main theme with much use of the tremolo over an arpeggio accompaniment.

**Original Theme by Anton Diabelli  
followed by  
Variation on a Theme by Anton Diabelli**

Austrian born publisher and composer Anton Diabelli (1781 – 1858) wrote a 32-bar waltz, which he sent to leading male composers of the Austrian Empire, asking each to write a variation on it. Fifty variations written by 50 (male) composers were consequently published by Diabelli. In 2021, German musicologist, Claudia Bigos, set about asking women composers worldwide to contribute to a project entitled “Diabelli Recomposed.” The project culminated in the edition of the complete works (published by Furore Verlag): *“Diabelli Recomposed: 50 Diabelli – Waltz Variations by Contemporary Women Composers from around the world.”* My variation, composed in August 2021, has been included in this edition.

Rather than basing itself on Diabelli’s melody or the 3/4 rhythm, my variation centres on Diabelli’s left hand octave progressions as well as the tonic and dominant chord progressions, to which I have added syncopated rhythms. The structure of the two repeated parts has been retained, although in 4/4 time. The first part is chordal and a little solemn. The second part is made up of triplet arpeggios and is faster and lighter, adding to the overall dramatic and exciting effect.

### **THIRTY STEPS**

To mark its 30th Anniversary, The Hellenic Institute at Royal Holloway commissioned me to write a choral work (Thirty Steps) to portray a musical journey of spiritual growth. The lyrics, sung in English (except for Steps 1 and 23, which are chanted in the original Greek) have been selected from The Ladder of Divine Ascent, an ascetic guide, written by the desert father St John Climacus of Sinai (ca. 579 – ca. 649 CE). In this most popular and remarkable work of Byzantine spirituality, St John guides his monks through their spiritual struggles to reach perfection, an inner process of self-discovery comparable to climbing thirty steps on a ladder. Each upward step represents each of the 30 stages of ascetic life, symbolizing our gradual and increasing battle against human vices, weaknesses, and passions through the acquisition of holy virtues. Thirty Steps takes us through this process, stage-by-stage, towards union with God and the salvation of the soul.

Scored for mixed choir (SATBB) with harp, flute and percussion (including timpani), the instrumental ensemble is used rather sparingly to provide distinctive tone colour and dramatic effects.

### Scene 1: Renunciation of the World

Step 1 commences with the solemn beat of the bass drum heralding the baritone and bass voices, chanting in Greek. Joined by the tenors, the male voices continue to chant, renouncing their earthly materialistic pleasures. The simplicity of the chanting not only symbolises the first stage of spiritual development but also the early beginnings of the Hellenic Institute. The mood changes when the sopranos and altos enter, each interacting with the other in antiphonal manner, over a perfect 5th male voice drone. Repeating the monophonic texture of the opening step, Step 2 starts with the voices singing in unison. The harp makes its first entry glissando *a piacere* (gliding at will) accompanying the solo alto, who issues a stark warning: “let him who runs the race imitate not Lot’s wife but Lot himself and flee.” Step 3 introduces a mood of foreboding and tension, created by percussion effects and the flute’s flutter tonguing, and centres around how dreams can really be tricks from devils. In contrast, Step 4 is calmer with the choir singing *a cappella* on the theme of practising unquestioning obedience to a superior.

### Scene 2: Penitence

Without sopranos and instrumental accompaniment, Step 5 is sung *grave solenne* (slow and solemn) by the altos, above a slow-moving humming accompaniment. It is reflective in nature, relating to escaping punishment by voluntarily accepting retribution. Written in a quasi-syncopated lullaby style, Step 6 continues the humming accompaniment and depicts the impossibility of repentance without remembrance of death. The main theme, first announced by the sopranos, is then taken up by the tenors over a baritone drone, and later by the altos. Step 7 begins with the sopranos alternating with the rest of the choir in antiphonal style on the importance of mourning. In a variation of the quasi-syncopated lullaby of the previous step, the solo tenor sums up the essence of the seventh step.

### Scene 3: Overcoming Vices

The male voices remain silent during Step 8. Accompanied by harp and percussion, and utilising the double harmonic major scale of C, the flute announces the main theme and goes on to interact with the altos and then the sopranos. Step 9 continues with the same musical scale. Accompanied by timpani and jazz-style harp, the baritone and bass voices introduce the main theme to the words: “Remembrance of wrongs is the consummation of anger.” The sopranos, altos and tenors each take up this theme with variations, as does the flute in syncopated style. Step 10, Step 11 and Step 12, all written in the key of A minor, make use of responsorial singing without instrumental accompaniment. Step 13, scored for sopranos and altos, blossoms from bare intervals to rich harmony, exuding an emotional depth and energy on the theme of despondency. Performed *pesante* (in a heavy, ponderous manner), Step 14 is characterized by the use of parallel octaves, augmented 2nds, open triads and

a heavy drumbeat. The main theme is introduced by the baritones and basses singing: “Gluttony is a delusion of the eyes.” Centring around the subject of purity, Step 15 begins with the solo tenor introducing the main theme, which is later developed by the sopranos with harp accompaniment. This further develops into a call-and-response form, where questions asked by the tenors are responded to by the upper voices. Step 16 is characterized by two distinct phrases – the first sung by male voices and the second, in direct response, by the female voices. Step 17 is similar in style, where two distinct sections of the choir interact with each other, singing alternative musical phrases.

#### Scene 4: Self Denial

The mood in Step 18 is anguished and melancholy. The sopranos sing in the lower register over slow moving chords in the key of G minor. The male voices then sing in chordal style, bringing this step to a close in the relative major key of B-flat. Step 19 begins in F major with the harp playing *tranquillo* in lullaby style. The upper voices enter, singing a third apart. The mood changes when the choir sings in chordal style following a key change to B-flat minor and, without pause, continues straight into Step 20. Accompanied by the harp, bass drum and suspended cymbal, the flute plays a haunting melody – repeated towards the end – creating an uneasy sense of foreboding. The sopranos enter over a slow descending chromatic sequence sung by the altos and male voices, further adding to the sense of unease. The mood swiftly becomes more upbeat in Step 21 as the baritones and basses introduce the main theme, in unison, which, in turn, is developed by the tenors and later the upper voices. Step 22 is written in the style of a ballad in compound duple time. Over an open 5th harp accompaniment, the solo alto sings: “Who among men knows the thoughts of a man, except the spirit of a man within him?” Joined by the solo soprano, they sing together in intervals of a 3rd and 6th. The altos, accompanied by humming male voices, repeat the opening melody of the solo alto, following which the sopranos bring the piece to a close with a repeat of the solo soprano’s melody. Similar to Step 1, Step 23 commences with the beat of the bass drum, heralding the sopranos and altos chanting in unison in Greek and continuing over a perfect 5th male voice drone. The chanting ends when the choir switches to English, proclaiming: “A proud monk has no need of a devil.”

Introduced by the solo tenor in compound duple time in a style similar to Step 22, Step 24 is characterized by the choir alternating with the flute and harp. Whilst Step 25 centres around slow-moving chordal progressions, interspersed with female voices alternating with the tenors, Step 26 concludes Scene 4 with cadence patterns widely used in the Russian Orthodox liturgy. Starting in the minor key and appearing at the end of each chant, the cadence pattern ends in the major key using the following melodic configuration: tonic-leading note-submediant-tonic.

#### Scene 5: Acquiring Peace of the Soul

Accompanied by the harp and sung in canon style, Step 27 centres around the subject matter of solitude and, in particular, the power of a solitary monk, which lies “in abundance of prayer.” Step 28 begins and ends with the tenors singing about the virtues of prayer. For the most part, the baritones and basses provide a perfect 5th bass drone, over which the tenors and sopranos alternate, followed by the altos and tenors singing in tandem. Beginning in E minor, Step 29 alternates between the choir’s rich four-part harmony and the solo soprano, ending with the solo soprano singing in the relative major (G) over the choir’s sustained humming.

#### Scene 6: The Supreme Trinity of the Virtues

The final step, Step 30, brings together a range of different styles and thematic material from earlier scenes and includes dramatic input from the flute, harp and percussion creating an atmospheric sonic landscape and ending in triumphant style.

### Thirty Steps

*St. John Climacus, The Ladder of Divine Ascent (ca. 600 CE)*  
*[Trans. Archimandrite Lazarus Moore. First edition Harper & Brothers, New York 1959; SPCK, London 1982. Adapted by the composer]*

#### Scene 1: Renunciation of the World

##### Step 1

Μοναχός ἐστὶν τάξις καὶ κατὰστασις ἀσωμάτων ἐν σώματι ὕλικῷ καὶ ῥυπαρῷ ἐπιτελουμένη. Μοναχός ἐστὶν ὁ μόνον τῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐχόμενος ὄρων καὶ λόγων, ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ, καὶ τόπῳ, καὶ πράγματι. Μοναχός ἐστὶν βία φύσεως διηνεκῆς, καὶ φυλακὴ αἰσθήσεων ἀνελλιπῆς. Μοναχός ἐστὶν ἡγνισμένον σῶμα, καὶ κεκαθαρμένον στόμα, καὶ πεφωτισμένος νοῦς. Μοναχός ἐστὶν κατὰδυνος ψυχὴ ἐν διηνεκῇ μνήμῃ θανάτου ἀδολεσχοῦσα, καὶ ὑπνώττουσα, καὶ γρηγοροῦσα.

[The monk is he who within his earthly and soiled body toils towards the rank and state of the incorporeal beings. A monk is he who strictly controls his nature and unceasingly watches over his senses. A monk is he who keeps his body in chastity, his mouth pure and his mind illumined. A monk is a mourning soul that both asleep and awake is unceasingly occupied with the remembrance of death.]

27. So who is a faithful and wise monk? He who has kept his fervour unabated, and to the end of his life has not ceased daily to add fire to fire, fervour to fervour, zeal to zeal, love to love. This is the first



step. Let him who has set foot on it not turn back.

### **Step 2**

10. After our renunciation, when the demons inflame our hearts by reminding us of our parents and brethren, then let us arm ourselves against them with prayer, and let us inflame ourselves with the remembrance of the eternal fire, so that by reminding ourselves of this, we may quench the untimely fire of our heart.

This is the second step. Let those who run the race imitate not Lot's wife but Lot himself and flee.

### **Step 3**

29. Devils often transform themselves into angels of light and take the form of martyrs and appear to us during sleep. Then, when we wake up, they plunge us into unholy joy and conceit. But you can detect their deceit by this very fact. For angels reveal torments, judgments and separations; and when we wake up, we find that we are trembling and sad. Devils. This is the third step, which is equal in number to the Trinity. He who has reached it, let him not look to the right hand nor to the left.

### **Step 4**

124. Just as trees swayed by the winds drive their roots deeply into the earth, so those who live in obedience get strong and unshakable souls.

125. He who has come to know his weakness by living in solitude and has then changed his place and sold himself to obedience, has without trouble recovered his sight and seen Christ.

126. Keep at it, brother athletes, and I will say it again, keep running, as you hear Wisdom crying of you. As gold in the furnace, or rather, in a community, the Lord has tried them, and as a whole burnt offering has He received them into His bosom. To Him belongs the glory and eternal dominion, with the eternal Father and with the Holy and adorable Spirit! Amen.

This step is equal in number to the Evangelists. Athlete, keep running fearlessly!

## **Scene 2: Penitence**

### **Step 5**

You who are repenting have now reached the fifth step. For by repentance, you have purified the five senses, and by voluntarily accepting retribution and punishment, you have escaped the punishment which is everlasting.

### **Step 6**

6. A true sign of those who are mindful of death is a voluntary detachment from every creature and

complete renunciation of their own will.

7. He who with undoubting trust daily expects death is virtuous; but he who hourly yields himself to it is a saint.

24. It is impossible, someone says, impossible to spend the present day devoutly unless we regard it as the last of our whole life.

This is the sixth step. He who has mounted it will never sin again. Remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.

### **Step 7**

55. The abyss of mourning has seen comfort, and purity of heart has received illumination.

Illumination is an ineffable activity which is unknowingly perceived and invisibly seen. Comfort is the solace of a sorrowing soul which, like a child, at once both whimpers to itself and shouts happily.

Divine intervention is the renewal of a soul depressed by grief which in a wonderful way transforms painful tears into painless ones.

This is the seventh step. May he who has been found worthy of it help me too; for he himself has already been helped, since through this seventh step he has washed away the stains of this world.

## **Scene 3: Overcoming Vices**

### **Step 8**

4. The beginning of freedom from anger is silence of the lips when the heart is agitated; the middle is silence of the thoughts when there is a mere disturbance of soul; and the end is a complacent calm under the breath of unclean winds.

For the eighth step is appointed the crown of freedom from anger. He who wears it by nature will perhaps wear no other crown. But he who has won it by sweat has conquered all eight together.

### **Step 9**

2. Remembrance of wrongs is the consummation of anger, the keeper of sins, hatred of righteousness, ruin of virtues, poison of the soul, worm of the mind, shame of prayer, stopping of supplication, estrangement of love, a nail stuck in the soul, pleasureless feeling beloved in the sweetness of bitterness, continuous sin, unsleeping transgression, hourly malice.

The ninth step. Let him who has reached it boldly ask the Saviour Jesus for release from his sins for the future.

### **Step 10**

2. Slander is an offspring of hatred, a subtle yet coarse disease, a leech lurking unfelt, wasting and

draining the blood of charity. It is simulation of love, the patron of a heavy and unclean heart, the ruin of chastity.

17. Do not condemn, even if you see with your eyes, for they are often deceived. The tenth ascent. He who has mastered it is one who practises love or mourning.

### **Step 11**

2. Talkativeness is the throne of vainglory on which it loves to show itself and make a display.

Talkativeness is a sign of ignorance, a door to slander, a guide to jesting, a servant of falsehood, the darkening of prayer.

3. Deliberate silence is the mother of prayer, a recall from captivity, preservation of fire, a prison of mourning, a friend of tears.

The eleventh step. He who has mastered it has cut off at one blow a multitude of evils.

### **Step 12**

2. A lie is the destruction of love, and perjury is a denial of God.

13. A babe knows nothing of lying; neither does a soul that is stripped of evil. The twelfth step. He who has mounted it shall obtain the root of all blessings.

### **Step 13**

2. Despondency is a slackness of soul, a weakening of the mind, hatred of the vow made.

12. Spiritual heroes come to light at the time of despondency, for nothing procures so many crowns for a monk as the battle with despondency.

This is the thirteenth victory. He who has really gained it has become experienced in all good.

### **Step 14**

4. Gluttony is a delusion of the eyes which receives in moderation but wants to gobble everything at once.

16. The heart of gluttons dream only of food and eatables, but the heart of those who weep dreams of judgment and castigation.

22. By stinting the stomach the heart is humbled, but by pleasing the stomach the mind becomes proud.

30. The prince of demons is the fallen Lucifer, and the prince of passions is gluttony.

The victory (over this vice) is a courageous one. He who is able, let him hasten to dispassion and to the highest degree of chastity.

### **Step 15**

1. Purity is the house of Christ and the earthly heaven of the heart. Purity means that we put on the

angelic nature.

2. He is pure who expels love with love and who has extinguished the material fire by the immaterial fire.

3. Chastity is the name which is common to all the virtues.

85. Who has conquered his body? He who has crushed his heart. And who has crushed his heart? He who has denied himself.

This is the fifteenth reward of victory. He who has received it while still living in the flesh has died and risen.

### **Step 16**

2. Avarice, or love of money, is the worship of idols, a daughter of unbelief, an excuse for infirmities, a foreboder of old age, a harbinger of drought, a herald of hunger.

7. He who has conquered this passion has cut out care; but he who is bound by it never attains to pure prayer.

This is the sixteenth struggle. He who has won this victory has either obtained love or cut out care.

### **Step 17**

1. Poverty is the resignation of cares, life without anxiety, an unencumbered traveller, alienation from sorrow, fidelity to the commandments.

6. He who has tasted the things on high easily despises what is below. But he who has not tasted the things above finds joy in possessions.

8. Let us monks, then, be as trustful as the birds are; for they do not have cares, and they do not collect.

This is the seventeenth step. He who has mounted it is journeying to Heaven stripped of material things.

## **Scene 4: Self Denial**

### **Step 18**

2. Insensibility is negligence that has become habit; benumbed thought; a snare for zeal; the noose of courage; a door to despair; the mother of forgetfulness, which gives birth to loss of the fear of God.

6. Be constant in vigil, meditating on the eternal judgment.

### **Step 19**

1. Sleep is a particular state of nature, an image of death, inactivity of the senses.

8. Just as a furnace tests gold, so the practice of prayer tests the monk's zeal and love for God. A praiseworthy work – he who makes it his own draws near to God and expels demons.

### **Step 20**

5. Vigil is a quenching of lust, deliverance from dream phantoms, a tearful eye, a softened heart, the guarding of thoughts, the dissolving of food, the subduing of passions, the taming of spirits, the bridling of the tongue, the banishment of phantasies.

19. When prayer is finished wait soberly, and you will see that swarms of demons try to invade us after prayer with absurd phantasies.

This is the twentieth step. He who has mounted it has received light in his heart.

### **Step 21**

2. Cowardice is a childish disposition in an old, vainglorious soul. Cowardice is a falling away from faith that comes of expecting the unexpected.

3. Fear is a rehearsing of danger beforehand; or again fear is a trembling sensation of the heart, alarmed and troubled by unknown misfortunes. Fear is a loss of conviction.

He who has conquered cowardice has clearly dedicated his life and soul to God.

### **Step 22**

14. Who among men knows the thoughts of a man, except the spirit of the man within him? And so let those who try to praise us to our face be silent and ashamed.

16. It is a great work to shake from the soul the praise of men, but to reject the praise of demons is greater.

This is the twenty-second step. He who is not caught by vainglory will never fall into that mad pride, so hateful to God.

### **Step 23**

23. Μοναχός ἐστὶν τοὺς πολεμίους, δίκην θηρῶν, προσκαλούμενος, καὶ ἐρεθίζων ἐν τῷ φεύγειν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ.

[A monk is he who calls his enemies to combat like wild beasts and provokes them as they flee from him.]

24. Μοναχός ἐστὶν ἀδιάστατος ἔκστασις, καὶ λύπη ζωῆς.

[A monk experiences unceasing rapture of mind and sorrow of life.]

25. Μοναχός ἐστὶν ὁ ποιωθείς ταῖς ἀρεταῖς, ὡς ἄλλος ταῖς ἡδοναῖς.

[A monk is one who is conditioned by virtues as others are by pleasures.]

26. Μοναχός ἐστὶν ἀληκτον φῶς ἐν ὀφθαλμῷ καρδίας.

[A monk possesses unflinching light in the eye of the heart.]

31. A proud monk has no need of a devil; he has become a devil and enemy to himself.

This is the twenty third step.

### **Step 24**

9. A meek soul is a throne of simplicity, but an angry mind is a creator of evil.

14. Simplicity is a constant habit of soul that has become immune to evil thinking.

19. Innocent is he whose soul is in its natural purity.

He who has the strength for this step, let him take courage; for he has become an imitator of Christ his Master and has been saved.

### **Step 25**

16. All visible things get their light from the sun, and all that is done gets its force from humility. Where there is no light, everything is dark; where there is no humility, all we have is rotten.

The mother of the fountain is the deep sea, and the fountain of discernment is humility

### **Step 26**

65. The keeping of the commandments is a sign of love; and the beginning of love is an abundance of humility; and an abundance of humility is the daughter of dispassion. Amen.

## **Scene 5: Acquiring Peace of the Soul**

### **Step 27**

2. Solitude of the body is the knowledge and reduction to order of the habits and feelings. And solitude of soul is the knowledge of one's thoughts and an inviolable mind.

87. The power of a king consists in his wealth and number of his subjects; the power of a solitary in abundance of prayer.

### **Step 28**

1. Prayer is the converse and union of man with God. It is the mother and also the daughter of tears, the work of angels, the spring of virtues, the source of graces, the wealth of monks. For him who truly prays, prayer is the court, the judgment hall and the tribunal of the Lord before the judgment to come.

64. Have all courage, and you will have God for your teacher in prayer. Prayer has a Teacher all its own – God – who teaches man knowledge, and grants the prayer of him who prays. Amen.

### **Step 29**

Blessed dispassion lifts the mind that is poor from earth to heaven and raises the beggar from the dunghill of the passions. But love whose praise is above all makes him sit with the princes, with the holy angels, and with the princes of the people of God.

## Scene 6: The Supreme Trinity among the Virtues

### Step 30

36. May this ladder teach you the spiritual combination of the virtues. On the top of it I have established myself. And now there remain faith, hope, love –these three; but the greatest of all is love. Ascend, brothers, ascend eagerly, and be resolved in your hearts to ascend. Run, I beseech you, with him who said: Let us hasten until we attain to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of God, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, who, when He was baptized in his thirtieth year, attained the thirtieth step in the spiritual ladder; since God is indeed love, to whom be praise, dominion, power, in whom is the cause of all goodness throughout infinite ages. Amen.



## **Biographies**

### **Lydia Kakabadse**

British born Lydia Kakabadse, a “very gifted and accessible composer” whose music is “so instantly appealing” (MusicWeb International), composes mainly choral, chamber and vocal music. Her works include string quartets, string duet, mixed ensembles, songs, musical dramas, cantata, concert Requiem Mass and sacred/secular choral works for male voices, mixed choir (SATBB) and children’s choir. She started composing at the age of 13 and, of her early compositions, only “The Song of the Shirt” (for soprano and piano), written when she was 15, is performed in its original form. All other early compositions have either been revised, adapted or disregarded.

Due to her multi-cultural parentage (Greek/Austrian mother and Georgian/Russian father), Lydia was brought up in the Greek Orthodox and Russian Orthodox faith and draws inspiration from Orthodox Church music – “Kakabadse’s talent at writing in the Greek Orthodox music style is supreme” (Tamvakos Archive). She has been included as a Greek heritage classical composer in the “Archive of Classical Greek Composers.” Her distinctive style has also been inspired by medieval music as well as Greek and Middle Eastern dance (which she previously taught at adult education centres). Lydia is an avid Latin enthusiast and has written original texts in Latin for her vocal works.

Beginning piano lessons at the age of five, then studying the double bass during her teens under Ida Carroll OBE, Lydia went on to read music at Royal Holloway, University of London. Keen to promote the double bass in her chamber works, Lydia’s string quartets are scored for violin, viola, cello & double bass – a timbral combination which works well, with the double bass adding a great richness and abundance of colour to the quartet’s sonority.

Lydia’s works have been released on CD under the Naxos and Divine Art record labels to critical acclaim: “highly recommended disc” (Music for Several Instruments); “a must-have CD” (The Chronicle). Choral commissions include I Remember commissioned by Forest Preparatory School for the Bellevue Education Northern Music Festival and the “stunning and ambitious Odyssey” (New Classics) commissioned by The Hellenic Institute of Royal Holloway, University of London to mark its 25th Anniversary (2018). Both these works feature in Lydia’s choral/vocal album, Ithaka, released by Divine Art. Her latest choral commission, “Thirty Steps,” which appears on this recording, was premiered in the Chapel of Royal Holloway in October 2023.

Her works have been included in music festivals in the UK and abroad and excerpts from her choral album Cantica Sacra were included in a dance act on TV show “Britain’s Got Talent” in May



2020. Her popular string quartet, Russian Tableaux, has twice been broadcast on BBC Radio 3 to mark International Women's Day. Her compositions have been performed by acclaimed chamber ensembles and choirs, including The Rossetti Ensemble, Choir of Gloucester Cathedral and collegiate Choirs of Gonville & Caius College Cambridge, Clare College Cambridge and Royal Holloway. Lydia is currently undertaking a PhD in ethnomusicology at Royal Holloway, her research topic being women aulos players in ancient Athens.

[www.lydiakakabadse.com](http://www.lydiakakabadse.com)



Lydia Kakabadse, composer

## **Rupert Gough**

Rupert Gough has been director of Choral Music and College Organist at Royal Holloway, University of London since 2005. He is also Organist and Director of Music at London's oldest surviving church, Saint Bartholomew the Great, which maintains a professional choir.

At Royal Holloway, Rupert has developed the choral programme to include weekly choral recitals, choral conducting courses for undergraduates, frequent new choral commissions and transformed the Chapel Choir into an elite group of 24 choral scholars. The Choir has particularly come to prominence through their series of recordings for Hyperion Records and for their role in popularising contemporary composers from the Baltics States, USA and UK. Their recording Winter Songs of the music of Ola Gjeilo is one of Decca Classics most successful albums. The choir is now greatly in demand for recording work from a variety of record labels, composers and orchestras and travels widely for concert performances.

Rupert was a chorister at the Chapels Royal, St. James's Palace, and won a scholarship to the Purcell School. He received (with distinction) a Master's degree in English Church Music from the University of East Anglia whilst Organ Scholar at Norwich Cathedral. For 11 years he was Assistant Organist at Wells Cathedral during which time he made around 30 CD recordings as accompanist and director.

Rupert has worked with a variety of professional ensembles including the BBC Singers, King's Singers, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, London Mozart Players and Tallinn Chamber Orchestra. He regularly conducts and commissions new music for concerts and recordings. He is a regular reviewer of organ recordings and has a number of editions and arrangements published by OUP, Edition Peters and Carus Verlag.

## **The Choir of Royal Holloway**

The Choir of Royal Holloway is considered to be one of the finest mixed-voice collegiate choirs in Great Britain, with their recordings attracting top reviews from all major music publications. Created at the time of the foundation of Royal Holloway in 1886, the choir was originally only for women's voices. The mixed choir now comprises 24 Choral Scholars who undertake a busy schedule of weekly services, as well as concerts, international tours, recordings and TV and radio broadcasts. They are the only choir to give a weekly concert performance and during an average year give around 40-50 concerts with a particular specialism in contemporary music.

The choir has one of the busiest recording schedules of any collegiate choir with an extensive discography with Hyperion, Decca, Signum and Naxos amongst others. The choir is renowned for their performances of Nordic and Baltic music, and has recorded works by Vytautas Miškinis, Rihards Dubra, Bo Hansson, Tõnu Kõrvits and Ola Gjeilo to great acclaim.

The 2018 release *Winter Songs* with Gjeilo was No. 1 in the UK and US classical charts and they have now recorded a follow-up album with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra for release later this year. During the pandemic the choir have released recordings of the music of Ben Parry and Joanna Marsh, a live-concert recording of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with Thomas Adès and the Britten Sinfonia, a recently rediscovered mass by Pierre Villette with alumna Sarah Fox and a new oratorio, "As we are changed" by Carson Cooman. Last year's releases include a Requiem mass by American composer Dan Locklair (with the Southern Sinfonia and organist Martin Baker), the choral music of Flor Peeters (with Onyx Brass), and contemporary choral works by George Arthur. Following the death of Queen Elisabeth II, the choir recorded a number of tracks for a commemorative album released by Decca Classics which reached number 1 in the Christmas Classical Charts.

The choir regularly collaborates with, and performs alongside, many famous ensembles. These have included the King's Singers, the BBC Singers, The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, London Mozart Players, Onyx Brass, Fretwork and the jazz-trio Acoustic Triangle. The group also celebrates the work of living composers, and have commissioned works from Sir James MacMillan, Gabriel Jackson, Richard Rodney Bennett, Cecilia McDowall and Paul Mealor. International performances are also an integral part of the choir's work. They have toured most European countries and have been broadcast on national television and radio all over the world. A tour of all three Baltic states saw the choir performing in the Latvian Song Festival with the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra, in a concert (sung in Estonian) broadcast nationally on the Estonian Day of Independence. Further afield, the group has visited Beijing and numerous tours to the US and Canada.

The choir regularly sing at high-profile events which have included the Annual Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall (live on BBC television), an awards ceremony at Buckingham Palace, and for the Magna Carta 800 celebrations, in which they performed a new work by John Rutter in the presence of HM The Queen and the Archbishop of Canterbury. More recently they sang at the wedding of Ellie Goulding and Caspar Jopling at York Minster.

## Cecily Beer

Cecily has been Resident Harpist at The Waldorf Hotel, Covent Garden since 2014 and enjoys a varied freelance music career. She studied at Trinity College of Music, and Royal Holloway, University of London where she graduated in 2012 with a first in harp performance. Alongside playing for high profile events at venues such as Blenheim Palace, Goodwood Estate and National Trust properties, she has performed on separate occasions for the late Queen Elizabeth II and the late Duke of Edinburgh; HRH Princess Anne; and a 60th birthday concert with the Philharmonia Orchestra for HM King Charles III at The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, which was also recorded for BBC Radio 3. Cecily has performed all over the world, most notably as guest recitalist of the British Embassy of Kuwait in Kuwait City in 2014. She has taken part in broadcasts on BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio London, Classic FM, and television. The latter includes recently appearing as a harpist in the small chamber orchestra in 'Enola Holmes 2' film on Netflix. On the concert platform she has performed Mozart's 'Concerto for Flute and Harp' in The Shipley Festival; Debussy's 'Danses Sacrée et Profane' for harp solo and strings at St Martin in the Fields; and Tchaikovsky's 'Sleeping Beauty' and 'The Nutcracker' at Cadogan Hall, among many others.

Cecily has been very passionate about choral music ever since becoming one of the inaugural girl choristers at Ely Cathedral and is now a professional alto singer in the Choir of St Bartholomew the Great in West Smithfield. As a harpist she specialises in music for harp and choir which combines her two passions. She has featured as a harpist on a number of varied recordings, including 'The Pearl of Freedom' by Joanna Marsh, recorded with The London Mozart Players and Choir of Royal Holloway; new work 'Speciosa' by George Arthur, a companion piece to the Britten 'A Ceremony of Carols' for upper voices and harp, released in November 2022; a new recording of Paul Mealor's 'A Welsh Prayer,' which was released on the Decca Classics label in December 2022 and reached number 1 in the Christmas Classical Charts; and 'Angelus' for soprano, harp and organ with organist Rupert Gough, and soprano Sarah Fox, released in July 2023.



### **Mary Bull**

Mary is a flautist from London. After studying Music and Maths at Royal Holloway, she is now an MMus student at Trinity Laban learning with Fiona Kelly and Sameeta Gahir. Mary has a keen interest in contemporary music and enjoys exploring new works. She has worked with the composer Simone Spagnolo and is credited in the score of his piece *Gimnopedia Rapsodica* and in the official recording. She has performed in numerous venues including the Old Royal Naval College Chapel, Royal Holloway Chapel, Blackheath Halls, and Wigmore Hall. As a flute and piccolo player, she has been a member of Royal Holloway Symphony Orchestra, Trinity Laban Symphony Orchestra, and Surbiton Symphony Orchestra. Furthermore, she played flute and piccolo for the UK premiere of Libby Larsen's opera *Frankenstein*, or the *Modern Prometheus*. Next year, Mary is looking forward to taking part in Street Orchestra Live's summer tour. As well as performing, Mary enjoys exploring improvisation and composition as a part of her own creative practice.



### **Tom Wagner**

Tom Wagner holds a PhD in Ethnomusicology from Royal Holloway, University of London and a MMus in Ethnomusicology from Goldsmiths, University of London. He also holds a Masters in Percussion Performance from Rutgers University, New Brunswick and a Bachelors in Percussion Performance from the New England Conservatory of Music. As a classical percussionist in the United States, Tom performed with orchestras such as the New World Symphony under Michael Tilson Thomas, new music and chamber outfits such as the Great Noise Ensemble, and theatre groups such as Maryland Opera Company. As a drummer, he regularly backed a variety of jazz and popular music groups. Since moving to the UK, Tom has worked primarily in London's world music scene as percussionist for the Balkan music quintet *Tatcho Drom* and the Greek band *Daemonia Nymphe*. Tom is currently a Teaching Fellow in Musical Performance at Royal Holloway.



## Rossetti Ensemble

The Rossetti Ensemble was created in 2018 from long-standing collaborations between pianist John Lenehan, violinist Sara Trickey, violist Sarah-Jane Bradley and cellist Tim Lowe. Named after Dante Gabriel, the eminent British poet and Pre-Raphaelite artist, the group is passionate about the repertoire of the era and composers who derived inspiration from his work during the late romantic period and early 20th Century. In addition to piano quartets the group is flexible, working with other high profile instrumentalists to produce imaginative and varied programmes.

Recent appearances include the world premiere of "Crystal" for piano quartet by Nathan Williamson at the grand finale of the William Alwyn Festival, Cambridge IAML Festival, the Hertfordshire Festival of Music, Little Missenden Festival, York Chamber Music Festival, Chester Celebrity Concerts, Cratfield Music and Norwich Chamber Music as well as warmly received London concerts at King's Place and Conway Hall. Forthcoming major concerts include the Kendal Midday Series, Witney, Sidmouth, Seaton Music, Kettles Yard and London concerts at Leighton House, Fellowship House Hampstead and the Conway Hall.

The group is currently including works commissioned by the Schubert Ensemble under the auspices of their trust to promote these works – in 2023 David Matthews' piano quartet in his 80th birthday year, and in 2024, Judith Weir's piano quartet in honour of her 70th birthday year. The groups' recording in 3 volumes of the complete chamber works of Austrian composer Robert Furstenthal is available on Toccata Classics. His music, written in the first half of the 20th century is very much in the romantic genre with echoes of Brahms and Richard Strauss- truly beautiful. Lydia Kakabadse's chamber works were recorded by the Rossetti Ensemble and double bass player, Leon Bosch, with whom the group regularly collaborates.

**Sara Trickey** enjoys an exciting and diverse career as a solo violinist and chamber musician. Noted for her "fiery and passionate" performances (The Strad) and her "beautifully refined tone" (Musical Opinion), she performs at many of the major UK festivals and venues, including in the Presteigne, Alwyn, Oxford May Music, York, Ashburton and Wye Valley Chamber Music festivals. She plays regularly with pianist Dan Tong with whom she has recorded the Schubert Sonatinas to critical acclaim ("Irresistible!" – Barry Millington). Her album of solo violin music, "From an Empty Room" recently won her a double five star review in BBC Music Magazine.

**Sarah-Jane Bradley**, "ardent and affecting soloist" (The Daily Telegraph), is well-known for her championing of new works for the viola. She has worked as soloist with the Philharmonia, Hallé, and BBC Symphony Orchestra amongst others, and her acclaimed recordings include CDs for Hyperion,

Chandos, Naxos and Dutton Epoch. A founder member of the Leopold String Trio, and subsequently Sorrel Quartet, Fidelio Piano Quartet and London Soloists Ensemble, she is a sought-after chamber musician.

**Tim Lowe** is firmly established as one of the new generation of outstanding British cellists. He has played as a soloist and chamber musician throughout Europe and the UK. His most recent recital at the Wigmore with pianist Andrew Brownell was described as “compelling in every respect, probing, virtuosic and yielding by turns – a true example of outstanding musicianship.” (Musical Opinion). Tim is Co-Principal cellist of the English Chamber Orchestra and regularly plays as Guest Principal with the BBC Scottish and Royal Northern Sinfonia amongst others. He is a Professor of Cello at the Guildhall, and is the Artistic Director of York Chamber Music Festival.

**John Lenehan** is described as “One of our most celebrated musicians” (Classic FM Magazine) and “Simply one of the best chamber pianists going” (The Scotsman). He has recorded over 70 CDs, and is renowned internationally both as a soloist and chamber musician. He regularly partners artists such as Tasmin Little and Emma Johnson, and is also acclaimed for his work as a composer and arranger.

[www.rossettiensemble.online](http://www.rossettiensemble.online)

With guests: Dimitris Gionis (Greek bazouki) and Leon Bosch (double bass).

### **Dimitris Gionis**

Dimitris has dedicated himself to the bouzouki since childhood and methodically studied the folk instrument at the National Odeon Athens under Professor Dimitris Alexiou.

Showing outstanding virtuosity and musicality, he quickly rose through the ranks, performing with very popular Greek artists and engaging in multiple projects to date.

Considered to be one of the top bouzouki players, Dimitris has participated in projects for Mikis Theodorakis, Mimis Plessas, Antonis Repanis and more contemporary artists such as Eleni Tsalgopoulou and Melina Aslanidou. Residing in London, he is currently organising multiple concerts and events for the greek community in London.



## Leon Bosch

During his playing career, Leon performed concertos around the world and served as a guest with ensembles such as the Lindsays, Brodsky Quartet and Zukerman Chamber Players.

Leon is committed to rediscovering neglected music, as well as expanding and diversifying the double bass repertoire, and has recorded 16 CDs of wide-ranging programmes, with more in planning.

Throughout his career he has worked with leading composers, and his latest project is to revive the sonatina form for a programme he will tour and record for Meridian Records in 2024. He also commissions chamber arrangements of well-known symphonic classics for his ensemble I Musicanti, and set up I Musicanti Publishing in order to distribute these works.

He is professor of double bass at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London and gives masterclasses in the US, Europe, South Africa and the Far East. He has also served as double bass coach for youth orchestras including the I, Culture Orchestra, National Youth String Orchestra, Miagi Orchestra and Buskaid. He has contributed to programmes on BBC Radio 3 and 4 and written for The Strad and Classical Music magazines.

Leon grew up in South Africa, the son of the political activist Jonas Fred Bosch, and spent time in a police cell for organising protests while at school. He left the apartheid regime behind to study at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester.

He became a British citizen in 2000. In recent years he has returned to his roots, musically, forming the Ubuntu Ensemble with other UK-based South African musicians, and commissioning music for the South African Double Bass project, the first CD of which was released in 2020. He also acts as a mentor for South African musicians worldwide.



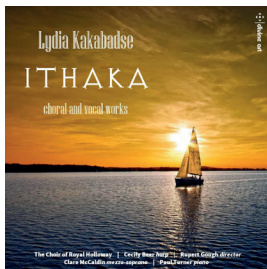




### **The Rossetti Ensemble**

Left to right:

Tim Lowe, cello; Sara Trickey, violin; ; Sarah-Jane Bradley, viola; John Lenehan, piano



## **Ithaka: vocal and choral works by Lydia Kakabadse**

"Amazing... an impeccable production and a masterpiece of interpretation of the magnificent "Odyssey" for choir and harp. I urge you to look for this album and get it as soon as possible."  
— Thomas Tamvakos

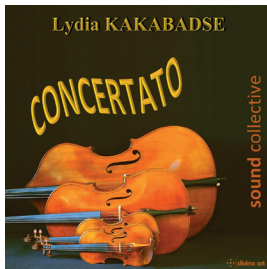
**Divine Art  
DDA 25188**



## **Cantica Sacra**

"The influence [of the Orthodox faith], together with medieval music, pervades this disc. [Kakabadse's] work is finely constructed and can be very beautiful. The Cantica Sacra are given a stunning performance. Spectre of the Maiden Scorned is a concert Requiem and is an interesting concept. Again the performance is exceptional." — Shirley Ratcliffe

**Divine Art  
DDA 25135**



## **Concertato: Chamber Music by Lydia Kakabadse**

"Lydia Kakabadse's Russian/Georgian as well as Greek/Austrian descent, enriched by Arabian and medieval ideas, give birth to a an inspiring music mix. The Ensemble 'sound collective' as well as singer Jess Dandy prove committed and high-class performers." — Uwe Krusch

**Divine Art  
DDA 25149**

The Feast of Herod, Nomadic Dances, Kefi, Variation on a theme by Anton Diabelli was recorded on 28th November 2023 at St George's Church, 96 Pinner View, Harrow.  
Produced by: Michael Ponder

"Thirty Steps" was recorded by the Choir of Royal Holloway + harp, flute and percussion under the directorship of Rupert Gough on 11th November 2023 at St Augustine's Church, Kilburn Park Road, London.  
Produced by: Michael Ponder and Adaq Khan.

Publishing details:

Variation on a Theme by Diabelli: Furore Verlag.

The Feast of Herod, Nomadic Dances, Kefi and Thirty Steps: Naxos Sheet Music Publishing

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