



JOSÉ
DE NEBRA

Vísperas
de Confesores

La Grande Chapelle
Schola Antiqua
Ángel Recasens

JOSÉ DE NEBRA Vespers of Confessors

La Grande Chapelle

Soloists: **Anne Cambier, Timothy Travers-Brown,
Nicholas Mulroy, Jonathan Brown**
Schola Antiqua / **Juan Carlos Asensio**
Director: **Ángel Recasens**

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1 CD

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JOSÉ DE NEBRA (1702-1768): *Vespers Verso* (organ), *Dixit Dominus*, *Beatus vir*, *Laudate Dominum*, *Magnificat*, *Credidi*
Plainsong: *Deus in adiutorium*, *Domine quinque talenta*, *Euge serve bone*, *Fidelis servus*, *Beatus ille servus*, *Laudate pueri*,
Vestri capilli, *Iste confessor*, *Hic vir despiciens*, *Benedicamus Domino*

Fauxbourdon: *Confitebor tibi*

World Premiere Recording

Reconstruction of the Vespers Office for the Common of Confessors (not Popes)

José de Nebra (1702-1768) is, without a doubt, the most important figure of Spanish music of the mid-eighteenth century. He worked at the Royal Chapel, where he was named first organist, and then *vicemaestro* in 1751. Starting in the 1720's, Nebra composed many zarzuelas for the theatres of Madrid, and was also well-regarded as a teacher.

As a consequence of the fire at the Alcázar of Madrid in 1734 that all but destroyed the music archives of the Royal Chapel, Nebra was able to focus on sacred music, which in keeping with the period were written primarily for a double choir and instrumental accompaniment. In this context, the *Vísperas del Común de los Santos y de la Virgen* (1759), written *a cappella* in only four parts, is unique. The *Vísperas* is a collection of psalms and a Magnificat composed for the office of vespers. Nebra had the work copied, richly bound, and sent to the most important cathedrals of Spain, and to the Sistine Chapel as well.

On this occasion, La Grande Chapelle and the Schola Antiqua have reconstructed one of the possible offices, that of the Vespers for the Common of Confessors (not Popes). In addition to the structural elements of the liturgy, the psalmody responds to the practice of *alternatim* between plainchant, polyphony and "verses" for organ. All of the music for this first world recording is unpublished and comes from the archives of the Royal Palace, Santiago de Compostela and the Escorial.

In composing the vespers, Nebra deliberately employed a traditionally austere style, in contrast to the rest of his oeuvre. On the whole, the serenity, bareness and beauty of the melodic lines prevail.

The interpretation of La Grande Chapelle is especially attractive for its impeccable transparency of line and wide array of nuances. The search for expressiveness together with an absolute respect of the content of the text, the balance and tidiness all bear the seal of Ángel Recasens. The exquisiteness and delicacy of this version are an awesome revelation of one of the geniuses of eighteenth-century Spain.