



“A well-integrated, transparent combination of vocalists and instrumentalists...a full, plush sound.”

*Washington Classical Review*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: WASHINGTON, DC, MAY 5, 2023:**

Record label Acis presents the Baroque masterwork, *Vespers of 1610* by towering genius of the Renaissance and Baroque, Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643). Conductor Matthew Robertson and professional choir and orchestra THE THIRTEEN—“transfigures the listener,” (*The Washington Post*)—collaborated on this historically informed project with early music specialists Dark Horse Consort, the award-winning Children’s Chorus of Washington, and GRAMMY®-nominated producer, Geoffrey Silver.

The first American recording of its kind in over a decade, this double album brings together over 40 performers for Robertson’s interpretation of Monteverdi’s *Vespers of 1610*. The structure includes monastic chants sung by children’s chorus, full choir and solo textures, and fully-orchestrated movements that would have been heard in the Basilica San Marco in Venice. Specialist early modern brass ensemble Dark Horse Consort (named after the bronze sculptures at St. Mark’s) and its families of cornettos, sackbuts, and recorders adds a vivid authenticity and warmth to the performance.

One notable departure from other recordings of this work is the recasting of the tenor aria “Nigra Sum” for soprano, in this instance performed by rising star, Michele Kennedy (“Excellent and engaging” *San Francisco Chronicle*). Robertson and Kennedy discussed the original Latin wording which translated was, “I am a black *but* beautiful daughter of Jerusalem” and embraced a change (from “sed” to “et”): “I am a black *and* beautiful.” Similar to minor linguistic changes that provoke disproportionately positive discussion in Bach works, this change aligns with The Thirteen’s social values. Kennedy is an exceptional Black soprano; after some research, we believe that this is the first commercial recording where this love song actually features a Black artist.

Recorded in the sumptuous acoustics of the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America, the double album is a glorious portrait of the pageantry and magnificence of the Venetian Republic at the sunset of its powers.

The Album drops on May 6, 2023.

**Spotify:** [spotify:album:6HgiqnRMfojzxb80ub5BjD](https://open.spotify.com/album/6HgiqnRMfojzxb80ub5BjD)

**Download Store:** <https://www.acisproductions.com/the-thirteen-monteverdi-vespers-1610>

**DPK, printable covers, audio:** [bit.ly/3NFmLJ5](https://bit.ly/3NFmLJ5)

**Press Contact:** [elizabeth@thethirteenchoir.org](mailto:elizabeth@thethirteenchoir.org)



## **MATTHEW ROBERTSON**

American conductor Matthew Robertson (b. 1986) is the founder and driving force of the professional choir and orchestra The Thirteen, which he has led in more than two hundred concerts, two dozen concert tours, seven commercial recordings, and numerous world premieres. Noted for boundary-defying performances that “transfigure the listener” (*The Washington Post*), for his “incisive tempos and dramatic pacing,” (*Washington Classical Review*) and “flowing lines and dramatic climaxes” (*Fanfare*), Robertson’s kaleidoscopic artistic vision has led to acclaimed performances of a vast and varied repertoire, often featuring inspired use of staging and multimedia. Robertson’s boundless imagination led to The Thirteen’s winning the Most Creative Programming Award from the Greater Washington Area Choral Music Awards.

## **THE THIRTEEN**

The Thirteen is a professional choir and orchestra celebrated for reimagining the potential of vocal music from many periods. Praised for performing with “striking color and richness” that “transfigures the listener” (*The Washington Post*) and “a tight and attractive vocal blend and excellent choral discipline” (*American Record Guide*), for a decade the ensemble has been at the forefront of invigorating performances of masterworks ranging from early chant to world premieres and the centuries in between. This is the ensemble’s third release on Acis. Their most recent release, SCOTT ORDWAY’s *The Outer Edge of Youth*, was awarded “Critics Choice” in May 2023 by *Opera News*.

**#vespers1610**

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