

# magnum mysterium

*á 8*

by

**Charles H. Giffen**

for

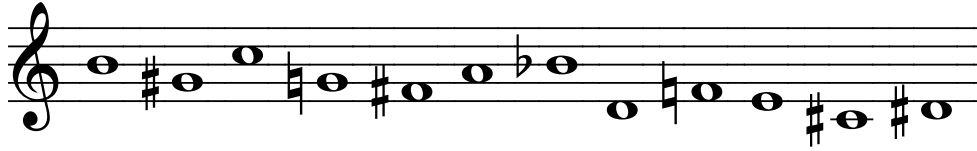
**SSAT - ATBB**

*a cappella*

**voices**

Adapted and arranged from the 12-part original motet





### Notes on the composition

In this work, I have tried to capture the awe and reflect an aura of the calm, deep-night mystery of the Incarnation of Jesus in Bethlehem, where stable animals witnessed, with Mary and Joseph, a cosmic event that changed the course of history for ever - occurring in that “fulness of time, fixed by the unsearchable counsel of God, when the Son of God took upon him the nature of man, that he might reconcile it to its Maker.”

The music includes mainly twelve tone thematic but also whole tone harmonic material, which lend a sense of mystery and reverence as the music unfolds. The given markings for tempo are approximate and may be adjusted to suit the performance acoustics. This double choir SSAT - ATBB setting has been adapted and arranged from the triple choir SSAT - SATB - ATBB original, but an attempt has been made to preserve the essence of the latter. The two 4-part choirs may be separated by some distance if there is adequate space in the performance venue.

The text is the full responsory to the fourth lesson at Matins of Christmas Day and hence includes the short *Ave Maria, gratia plena: Dominus tecum* that is often omitted in musical settings.

<i>O magnum mysterium et admirabile sacramentum, ut animalia viderent Dominum natum jacentem in præsepio!</i>	O great mystery and wonderful sacrament, that animals should see the new-born Lord lying in a manger!
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<i>O beata Virgo, cujus viscera meruerunt portare Dominum Christum.</i>	O blessed is the Virgin, whose womb was worthy to bear Christ the Lord.
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<i>Ave Maria, gratia plena: Dominus tecum.</i>	Hail Mary, full of grace: the Lord is with you.
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<i>O beata Virgo, cujus viscera meruerunt portare Dominum Christum.</i>	O blessed is the Virgin whose womb was worthy to bear Christ the Lord.
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*Alleluia!* Alleluia!



# magnum mysterium

for SSAT - ATBB *a cappella* voices

Fourth responsory for  
Matins of Christmas Day

Charles H. Giffen

*p* *ma -*

*p* *gnum*

*p* *O* *my - - - -*

*p* *gnum*

*p* *gnum*

*p* *ma - - - -* *ste - ri - um.*

*p* *my - - - - -* *um.*

*p* *ri - um.*

*d* = c. 48

*d* = c. 48

Original, a 12: 2011-06-24  
a 8: 2013-07-17, 2015-07-31  
2016-08-10, 2019-01-13

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**A**

11

C 1 *p*  
O my - ste - ri - um, \_\_\_\_\_

M 1 *p*  
O my - ste - ri - um, \_\_\_\_\_

A 1 *pp* *p*  
my - ste - ri - um, \_\_\_\_\_ O ma -

T 1 *ppp* *p*  
O ma - gnum \_\_\_\_\_ O ma -

A 2 *pp* *p*  
my - ste - ri - um, \_\_\_\_\_ O ma -

T 2 *ppp* *p*  
O ma - gnum \_\_\_\_\_ O ma -

Bt 2 *ppp* *p*  
O ma - gnum \_\_\_\_\_ O ma -

B 2 *ppp* *p*  
O ma - gnum \_\_\_\_\_ O ma -

— O ma - gnum \_\_\_\_\_ O ma -

**B**  $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 52$

20

C 1

M 1

A 1  
gnum my - ste - ri - um, \_\_\_\_\_ et \_\_\_\_\_ ad - mi - ra - bi - le

T 1  
gnum my - ste - ri - um, \_\_\_\_\_ Al - le - lu - ia! \_\_\_\_\_

A 2  
gnum my - ste - ri - um, \_\_\_\_\_ Al - le - lu - ia! \_\_\_\_\_

T 2  
gnum my - ste - ri - um, \_\_\_\_\_ Al - le - lu - ia!

Bt 2

B 2  
gnum my - ste - ri - um, \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for the piece 'O magnum mysterium' by Charles H. Giffen. The page is numbered 3 in the top right corner. At the top center, there is a box containing the letter 'B' and a tempo marking '♩ = c. 52'. The score begins at measure 20. It features eight vocal staves: C 1 (Coprino), M 1 (Mezzo-soprano), A 1 (Alto), T 1 (Tenor), A 2 (Alto), T 2 (Tenor), Bt 2 (Bass), and B 2 (Bass). The lyrics are: 'gnum my - ste - ri - um, \_\_\_\_\_ et \_\_\_\_\_ ad - mi - ra - bi - le' for the first group, and 'gnum my - ste - ri - um, \_\_\_\_\_ Al - le - lu - ia! \_\_\_\_\_' for the second group. The A 1 and T 1 parts have triplets in the second line of lyrics. Dynamics include *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *pp* (pianissimo). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and rests.

26

C 1 *mf* ut \_\_\_\_\_ a - ni - ma - li -

M 1 *pp* Al - le - lu - ia!

A 1 *pp* Al - le - lu - ia! \_\_\_\_\_

T 1 *mf* sa - cra - men - tum \_\_\_\_\_

26

A 2 *pp* Al - le - lu - ia! \_\_\_\_\_ Al - le - lu - ia!

T 2 *pp* Al - le - lu - ia! \_\_\_\_\_

Bt 2 *pp* Al - le - lu - ia! \_\_\_\_\_ *mf* sa - cra - men - tum \_\_\_\_\_

B 2 *mp* et \_\_\_\_\_ *pp* ad - mi - ra - bi - le Al - le - lu - ia! \_\_\_\_\_

31

C 1 *pp*  
*a* Al-le-lu - ia! \_\_\_\_\_

M 1 *mf*  
vi - - - de - rent \_\_\_\_\_

A 1 *pp*  
Al-le-lu - ia! \_\_\_\_\_ Al-le-lu - ia! \_\_\_\_\_

T 1 *pp*  
Al-le-lu - ia! \_\_\_\_\_ Al-le-lu - ia!

A 2 *mp*  
Al-le-lu - ia! \_\_\_\_\_ vi -

T 2 *mf*  
ut \_\_\_\_\_ a - ni - ma - li - a

Bt 2 *pp*  
Al-le-lu - ia! \_\_\_\_\_

B 2 *pp*  
Al-le-lu - ia! \_\_\_\_\_ Al-le-lu - ia! \_\_\_\_\_ Al-le-lu - ia!

36 C  $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 64$   
*p*  *f* *mp*

C 1 *Al-le-lu - ia!*  *Do - mi-num na - tum ja - cen - tem*  
*p*  *f* *mp*

M 1  *Do - mi-num na - tum ja - cen - tem*  
*p*  *f* *mp*

A 1  *Do - mi-num na - tum ja - cen - tem*  
*p*  *f* *mp*

T 1  *Do - mi-num na - tum ja - cen - tem*

A 2  $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 64$   
*p*  *f* *mp*

A 2 *de - rent*  *Do - mi-num na - tum ja - cen - tem*  
*pp*  *p*  *f* *mp*

T 2 *Al-le-lu - ia!*  *Do - mi-num na - tum ja - cen - tem*  
*p*  *f* *mp*

Bt 2  *Do - mi-num na - tum ja - cen - tem*  
*p*  *f* *mp*

B 2  *Do - mi-num na - tum ja - cen - tem*



45 *p* *mp* *pp* D  $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 52$

C 1  
— in — præ - se - pi - o! —  
*p* *mp* *pp*

M 1  
— in — præ - se - pi - o! —  
*p* *mp* *pp*

A 1  
— in — prae - se - pi - o! —  
*p* *mp* *pp*

T 1  
— in — præ - se - pi - o! —  
*p* *mp* *pp*

45 *p* *mp* *pp*  $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 52$  *p*

A 2  
— in — præ - se - pi - o! — O — ta  
*p* *mp* *pp* *p*

T 2  
— in — præ - se - pi - o! — be -  
*p* *mp* *pp* *p*

Bt 2  
— in — præ - se - pi - o! — a -  
*p* *mp* *pp* *p*

B 2  
— in — præ - se - pi - o! — a -  
*p* *mp* *pp* *p*

56 E

C 1 *p* ra\_\_\_\_\_

M 1 *mf* *p* sce - - - ra\_\_\_\_\_

A 1 *mf* *p* vi - - - ra\_\_\_\_\_

T 1 *mf* *mp* vi - - - me -

56 *mf* *p*

A 2 go, sce - - - ra\_\_\_\_\_

T 2 *mf* *p* Vir - cu - - - sce - - - ra\_\_\_\_\_

Bt 2 *mf* *p* Vir - jus\_\_\_\_\_ sce - - - ra\_\_\_\_\_

B 2 *mf* *p* go, jus\_\_\_\_\_ sce - - - ra\_\_\_\_\_

66 *p* *mp* *mf*

C 1  
e - - ta - mi - - - Chri - - -

*p* *mp* *mf*

M 1  
ru - por - mi - - - Chri - - -

*p* *mp* *mf*

A 1  
me - por - Do - - - Chri - - -

*p* *mf*

T 1  
runt re - Chri - - -

66 *mp*

A 2  
num - - -

*mp*

T 2  
num - - -

*mf*

Bt 2  
Chri - - -

B 2

76 **F**  $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 64$

C 1 *f* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp* *pp*  
stum. A - ve Ma - ri - a, gra - ti - a ple - na: Do -

M 1 *f* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp* *pp*  
stum. A - ve Ma - ri - a, gra - ti - a ple - na: Do -

A 1 *f* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp* *pp*  
stum. A - ve Ma - ri - a, gra - ti - a ple - na: Do -

T 1 *f* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp* *pp*  
stum. A - ve Ma - ri - a, gra - ti - a ple - na: Do -

A 2 *f* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp* *pp*  
stum. A - ve Ma - ri - a, gra - ti - a ple - na: Do -

T 2 *f* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp* *pp*  
stum. A - ve Ma - ri - a, gra - ti - a ple - na: Do -

Bt 2 *f* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp* *pp*  
stum. A - ve Ma - ri - a, gra - ti - a ple - na: Do -

B 2 *f* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp* *pp*  
stum. A - ve Ma - ri - a, gra - ti - a ple - na: Do -

86 G  $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 48$

C1  
- mi - nus te - cum. \_\_\_\_\_

M1  
- mi - nus te - cum. \_\_\_\_\_ O be - a - ta Vir - go,

A1  
- mi - nus te - cum. \_\_\_\_\_ O be - a - ta \_\_\_\_\_

T1  
- mi - nus te - cum. \_\_\_\_\_ O be - a - ta Vir - go,

86  $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 48$

A2  
- mi - nus te - cum. \_\_\_\_\_

T2  
- mi - nus te - cum. \_\_\_\_\_

Bt 2  
- mi - nus te - cum. \_\_\_\_\_

B 2  
- mi - nus te - cum. \_\_\_\_\_ O be - a - ta \_\_\_\_\_ Vir - go,

95 H *mp* *mf*

C 1 *me - ru - e - runt — por - ta - re Do - mi - num*

M 1 *cu - jus vi - sce - ra*

A 1 *mf* *Vir - go, cu - jus vi - sce - ra —*

T 1 *cu - jus vi - sce - ra*

95 *p*

A 2 *me - ru - e - runt por - ta - re Do - mi -*

T 2 *mf* *me - ru - e - runt por - - - ta - re*

Bt 2 *p* *me - ru - e - runt por - ta - re Do - mi -*

B 2 *cu - jus vi - sce - ra —*

♩ = c. 56

*mf*

102

C 1

Chri - stum. \_\_\_\_\_ Chri - stum. \_\_\_\_\_

*mf*

M 1

Chri - stum. \_\_\_\_\_

*mf*

A 1

Do-mi - num Chri - stum. \_\_\_\_\_

*mf*

T 1

Do-mi - num Chri - stum. \_\_\_\_\_

102

*mf*

A 2

num Chri - stum. Do-mi - num Chri - stum. \_\_\_\_\_

*mf*

T 2

Do-mi-num Chri - stum. \_\_\_\_\_ Chri - stum. \_\_\_\_\_

*mf*

Bt 2

num Chri - stum. Do-mi - num \_\_\_\_\_

*mf*

B 2

Do-mi - num \_\_\_\_\_

**I**  $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 48$

C1 *mf* *lu* - - -

M1 *mf* *Al* - - -

A1 *mp* *Al* - - - *mf* *ya!* \_\_\_\_\_

T1 *mp* *mf* *le* - *le* -

A2 <sup>111</sup>  $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 48$  *p* *mp* *le* - - - *ya!* \_\_\_\_\_

T2 *p* *ya!* \_\_\_\_\_

Bt 2 *p* *mp* *Al* - - - *lu* - - -

B2 *p* *lu* - - -



**J**  $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 52$  *mp*  $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 56$

C 1 *mp* Al - lu -

M 1 *mp* le - - - ia! \_\_\_\_\_

A 1 *mf* *mp* Al-le-lu-ia, al - le - lu-i - a, al-le-lu-i - a! \_\_\_\_\_

T 1

A 2 <sup>123</sup> *mf* *mp*  $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 52$   $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 56$  Al-le-lu-ia, al - le - lu-i - a, al-le-lu-i - a! \_\_\_\_\_

T 2 *mf* Al - le - lu-ia! \_\_\_\_\_

Bt 2 *mf* Al - le - lu-ia! \_\_\_\_\_

B 2 *mf* Al - le - lu-ia! \_\_\_\_\_

**K**  $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 48$   $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 52$

*mp* *p* *mp*

C 1 *mp* *p* *mp*

Al-le-lu-ia, — al - le - lu-i - a, al - le - lu - i - a!

M 1 *mp* *p* *mp*

Al-le-lu-ia, — al - le - lu-i - a, al - le - lu - i - a!

A 1 *p* *mp*

le - - - ia! — Al - le - lu -

T 1 *p* *mp*

Al - lu - Al - le - lu -

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 48$   $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 52$

133 *p* *mp*

A 2 *p* *mp*

Al - lu - Al - le - lu -

T 2 *p* *mp*

le - - - ia! — A - le - lu -

Bt 2 *p* *mp*

Al - le - lu -

B 2 *p* *mp*

Al - le - lu -

142  $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 48$  **L** *mp* *rallentando* *p* *pp*

C 1  
Al - le - lu - i - a, al - le - lu - i - a!

M 1  
Al - le - lu - i - a, al - le - lu - i - a!

A 1  
*mf* *mp* *p* *pp*  
- i - a! Al - le - lu - i - a, al - le - lu - i - a!

T 1  
*mf* *mp* *p* *pp*  
- i - a! Al - - - le - lu - ia!

A 2  
 $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 48$  *mf* *mp* *rallentando* *p* *pp*  
- i - a! Al - le - lu - i - a, al - le - lu - i - a!

T 2  
*mf* *mp* *p* *pp*  
- i - a! Al - - - le - lu - ia!

Bt 2  
*mf* *mp* *p* *pp*  
- i - a! Al - - - le - lu - ia!

B 2  
*mf* *mp* *p* *pp*  
- i - a! Al - - - le - lu - ia!

Original motet a 12: 24 June 2011  
Motet a 8 version: 17 July 2013  
revised: 31 July 2015, 10 August 2016