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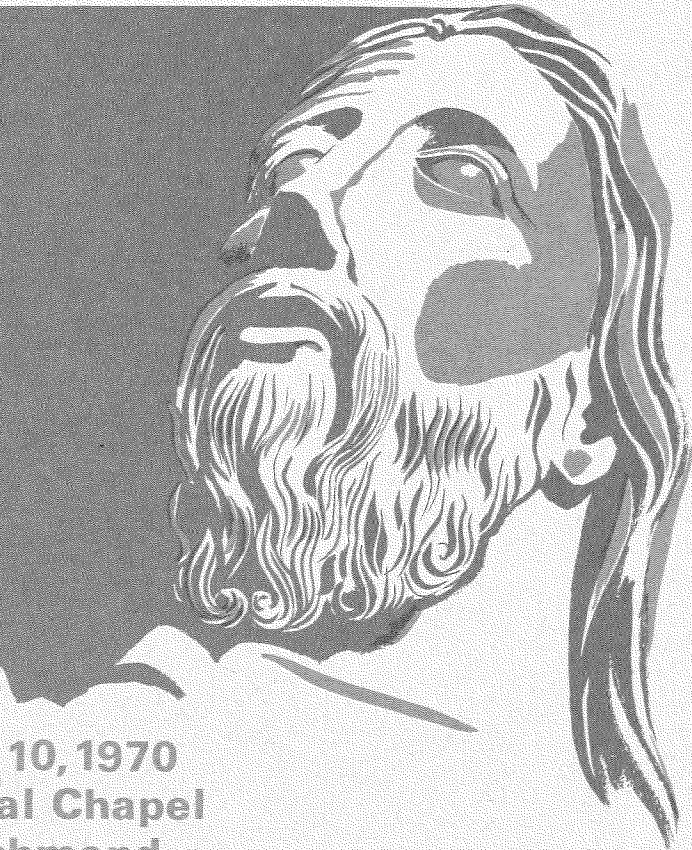
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THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC PRESENTS

THE NEW YORK PRO MUSICA

John Reeves White, Musical Director

THE PLAY OF THE RISEN CHRIST



8:30 P.M., March 10, 1970
Cannon Memorial Chapel
University of Richmond

PROGRAM NOTES

"The Play of the Risen Christ," which begins the "Manuscript 927" of the Tours Library in France, has proven to be one of the most interesting and valuable survivors of thirteenth-century drama. The anonymous composers, in attempting to bring together all of the events surrounding the Resurrection, created some of the most poignant medieval poetry and music one can encounter.

The problems of reconstructing this play have been somewhat greater than those in the "Play of Daniel" and the "Play of Herod." The Tours manuscript has several lacunae and at times the scribe, while copying the music, managed to scramble the chronology of some of the events. By following the Biblical accounts and borrowing three short passages from the thirteenth-century Easter Play in Cividale "Manuscript C1," it has been possible to revive this play after 700 years of silence.

The play opens with the lament of the three Marys, "Almighty Father most high, gentlest ruler of the angels, what shall we three miserable ones do? Alas! how great is our sorrow!" Pilate sends his soldiers to guard the tomb so that the disciples will not be able to steal the body. The Marys purchase some ointment from the merchants before going to the tomb. The archangel Michael, who has overcome the soldiers and rolled away the stone, meets the Marys at the empty tomb. He tells them of the resurrection, and sends them to bring the disciples from Galilee.

Meanwhile, the fearful soldiers return to Pilate and tell him about the visitation of the archangel. Pilate, fearing an uprising among the populace, gives a bribe to the soldiers

and commands them to keep secret the news of the resurrection.

Mary Magdalen, not comprehending the meaning of the angel's message, returns to the tomb and sings her poignant lament, "O Master! O would that I might see thee with these eyes." When Jesus does appear, she mistakes him for a gardener and recognizes him only when he says her name, "Maria."

The disciples and the Marys return together, singing a hymn of praise, and Jesus appears to them. Later, doubting Thomas joins the gathering but refuses to believe their joyous news until he touches with his own hand the marks of the spear and nails on the body of the risen Christ. The play concludes with the dramatized presentation of the Easter sequence, "Victimae Paschali Laudes," which recapitulates the major events of the resurrection and presents the sacred relics to the disciples. Then follows the final hymn, **Te Deum Laudamus**, which also ends "The Play of Daniel" and "The Play of Herod."

The various medieval Easter Plays are all historically descendant from the "Quem quaeritis" trope sung before the Introit for the Mass of Easter Sunday. In the tenth century, this trope was moved to Easter Matins, the service that begins in the late hours of the night and ends at dawn. It was then slowly expanded as various scenes were added according to the Biblical accounts and acted out in costume. "The Play of the Risen Christ" is one of the latest and most detailed of innumerable thirteenth-century Easter dramas.

THE PLAY OF THE RISEN CHRIST

CAST OF CHARACTERS (in order of appearance)

Mary Magdalen	Elizabeth Humes
Mary Jacobi	Joan Fuerstman
Mary Salome	Mary Strebing
Pilate	Edward Pierson
Soldiers to Pilate	Robert Kuehn, Neil Raber, Stanley Norsworthy
The Archangel Michael	Ray DeVoll
Merchant	Mark Pearson
Merchant's Apprentice	Daniel Collins
Jesus	Mark Pearson
Peter	Robert Kuehn
John	David Evitts
Andrew	Stanley Norsworthy
James	Neil Raber
Bartholomew	Edward Pierson
Thomas	Daniel Collins

PRODUCTION STAFF FOR THE PLAY OF THE RISEN CHRIST

Musical Direction	John Reeves White	Costume Design	Anne Hollander
Stage Direction	Ross Allen	Lighting Design	Len Alexander
Editors	Ron Reinoehl, William Earle Nettles	Musicological research	Ron Reinoehl
Scenic Design	Donald Beaman		William Earle Nettles

Costumes executed by Diego

Lighting equipment by Bash Stage Lighting

PRODUCTION STAFF FOR THE NEW YORK PRO MUSICA

Musical Director	John Reeves White	Company Manager	Frederick Horstmann
General Manager	Len Alexander	Research Associate	J. Evan Kreider
Administrative Assistant	Sue Simms		

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