

GRACES For SATB Choir

PROGRAMME NOTES

There was something magical about the medieval surroundings of Jesus College, Cambridge where grace before dinner is spoken in Latin. The magic didn't stop there when the elderly gentleman seated next to me, the Persian scholar Ilya Gershevitch, proceeded to translate the text when I enquired as to its meaning. I then set the words for unaccompanied choir, my first composition for that genre with a reproduction of Australian artist Lloyd Rees' painting of Chartres Cathedral *Ascension* always in sight. After a copy of the setting was sent to Ilya Gershevitch nothing more was heard. An invitation to the College's Quincentenary celebratory dinner on 27 April 1996 arrived with no mention of my music but I hadn't given up hope; subsequently, the College choir, conducted by Duncan Aspden, filed out along the gallery and sang my setting of their Latin grace.

The two minute 'Grace' was subsequently dedicated to Ilya Gershevitch but it needed some companion pieces of equal brevity to make a set and this gave rise to ***Graces***.