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Ensemble Concerts: The University Concert Choir, December 11, 1973

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SING WE NOW OF CHRISTMAS

THE UNIVERSITY CONCERT CHOIR

Assisted by

**The Department of Theatre Dance
Marcellus Brown, Director**

Tuesday, 11 December 1973

8:15 p.m.

Hayden Auditorium

Department of Music

College of Fine Arts

Illinois State University

NOTES AND TRANSLATIONS

FOUR MOTETS FOR THE SEASON OF CHRISTMAS

O MAGNUM MYSTERIUM

O great mystery, and ineffable sacrament, that animals should see
The Lord born humbly in a stall. O Blessed Virgin whose body was
Deemed worthy to carry the Lord Christ.

QUEM VIDISTIS PASTORES DICITE

Whom did you see, Shepherds, tell us! Tell us who came down to earth.
We saw the birth, and Angels' choruses glorifying God.
Tell us what you saw there, and tell us of Christ's birth!

VIDENTES STELLAM

Beholding the star the Wise Men came with great joy,
And entered the house, offering the Lord gold, incense, and myrrh.

HODIE CHRISTUS NATUS EST

Today Christ is born, today a Savior appears;
Today on earth angels sing, and archangels rejoice;
Today the just give glory, saying:
Glory to God on high, Alleluia!

LAUD TO THE NATIVITY

Ottorino Respighi is perhaps most famous in the United States as the composer of the two tone poems the **Pines** and the **Fountains of Rome**. Opera was of course an important staple of his production. Vocal and choral music played relatively little importance in his total oeuvre, the latter medium represented only by **La Primavera** in 1923 and **Laud to the Nativity** in 1930.

Laud to the Nativity owes much of its origin no doubt to the Italian early baroque oratorio, and the earlier mystery plays. This piece is written for representative dancing, with the chorus and instrumental ensemble preferably invisible to the audience. The poem is primarily pastoral and non dramatic, with the chorus serving a turba role, commenting upon the lowly state of the birth of Christ. The poem is not unlike **Stabat Mater**, also attributed to Jacopone da Todi, and also largely a contemplative piece. The simple but effective vocal solo writing—particularly the aria for the Virgin Mary—is outstanding.