

O Nata Lux

for SATB voices (divisi)

Christopher Churcher

(2025)



Composed February 2025
First performance by Somerville Choir on the 11th May 2025

O Nata Lux
a motet for SATB voices (divisi.)

O nata lux de lumine
Jesu redemptor saeculi
dignare clemens supplicum
laudes precesque sumere.
Qui carne quondam contegi
dignatus es pro perditis
nos membra confer effici
tui beati corporis

O light born of light
Jesus, redeemer of the world
kindly accept our humble
praises and prayers.
You were once clothed in flesh
for the sake of the lost,
make us worthy
of your blessed body.

~ text: 10th century anonymous ~

Total duration: *ca.* 5'

Composer's Note

This setting takes two verses from the office hymn for the Feast of the Transfiguration, a text that juxtaposes the radiant light of Christ with the darkness of human iniquity. I was particularly drawn to the tension between illumination and darkness in the text—a contrast that underpins the musical language of the piece. Shifting augmented harmonies and expressive dissonances aim to evoke a mood of supplication and quiet sorrow. At the centre is an extended tenor solo, which voices the hymn's intimate petition: *dignare clemens supplicum laudes precesque sumere* ("kindly accept our humble praises and prayers"). The grace notes should be sung with clarity and expression, on the beat, while the choral writing—largely hummed—should remain entirely *colla voce*, shaped by the soloist's line but never competing with it.

Christopher Churcher

O Nata Lux

Text: 10th-century anon.

Christopher Churcher
(b. 2004)

Suspended, hushed $\text{♩} = 56$

Soprano *pp*
O na - ta - lux

Alto *pp*
O na - ta lux

Tenor *pp*
O na - ta lux

Bass *pp*
O na - ta lux

S. *pp* *cresc.* *p* *poco accel.* *mf*
O. O, na - ta lux de

A. *pp* *p* *mf*
O na - ta lux na - ta lux de

T. *pp* *p*
O na - ta lux de

B. *pp* *p*
O na - ta lux

Tempo 1 ♩ = 56

13

pp **ppp**

S. oh de lu - mi - ne

pp **ppp**

lu - mi - ne, de lu - mi - ne

pp **ppp**

A. oh de lu - mi - ne

pp **ppp**

lux de lu - mi - ne, de lu - mi - ne

pp

T. lux de lu - mi - ne

pp **ppp sempre**

lu - - - mi - ne

pp

B. lux

[illegible]

Tenor Solo
mp freely; *espress.*

25 **A Tempo**

Solo *p* *sub. pp* dig - na - re dig -

S. *p* *sub. pp* dig - na - re cle - mens *mm* *mm*

A. *p* *sub. pp* dig - na - re cle - mens *mm* *mm*

T. *p* *sub. pp* na - re cle - mens *mm* *mm*

B. *p* *sub. pp* na - re cle - mens *mm* *mm*

29 *mf*

Solo - na - re cle-mens sup - pli-cum lau - des pre - ces - que

S. *sim.*

A. *sim.*

T. *sim.*

B. *sim.*

33 *p*

Solo su - me - re. // *pp* Qui car - ne Qui car -

S. // *pp*

A. // *pp*

T. // *pp*

B. // *pp*

37

Solo

p

poco f

mp dim.

cresc.

mp dim.

cresc.

mp dim.

cresc.

mp dim.

cresc.

mp dim.

ne quon-dam con - te - gi dig - na tus es pro

41

Solo

mp

p

ppp

ppp

ppp

pp

pp

per - di - tis pro per - di - tis

pro - per - di -

pro per - di -

45

S.

rit.

p graceful

pp

ppp

ppp

ppp

Nos

Nos

Nos

tis

tis

49 **Tempo 2; with newfound vitality** ♩ = 68 *mp cresc.*

S. *p* Nos _____

A. *p* Nos _____

T. *p cresc.* Nos mem - bra con - fer _____ nos mem - bra

B. *p* Nos mem - bra con - fer _____ nos

53 *mf cresc.* *ff*

S. mem - bra con - fer ef - fi - ci

A. *mf* mem - bra con - fer ef - fi - ci

T. *mf* fer _____ nos mem - bra con - fer ef - fi - ci

B. *mf* mem - bra con - fer, con - fer ef - fi - ci

f cresc. *ff*

A. con - fer _____ nos mem - bra con - fer ef - fi - ci

T. *mf* Nos mem - bra con - fer ef - fi - ci

B. *mf cresc.* mem - bra con - fer, con - fer ef - fi - ci

Tempo 1; restful ♩ = 56

57

pp *mf*

S. Tu - i be - a - - - - ti

pp *mf*

A. Tu - i be - a - - - - ti

pp *mf*

T. Tu - i be - a - - - - ti

pp *mf*

B. Tu - i be - a - - - - ti

61

p *pp dim.*

S. cor - po - ris. A - - - men.

p *pp dim.*

A. cor - po - ris. A - - - men.

p *pp dim.*

T. cor - po - ris. A - - - men.

p *pp dim.*

B. cor - po - ris. A - - - men.