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Recordings produced by John Rutter
Balance engineer: David Jacob
Recorded in the Lady Chapel of Ely Cathedral,
June 1999 and March 2000,
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SUPER AUDIO CD
MULTICHANNEL

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

The Choir of
Clare College
Cambridge

directed by
Timothy Brown

Light of the Spirit

The location

The Lady Chapel of Ely Cathedral, the largest Lady Chapel in England, was begun in 1321 and completed by about 1350. It is virtually a separate structure, standing to the north side of the cathedral itself and connected to it by a short passageway. Built of stone with large elaborate windows (recently reglazed), it measures 100 feet long, 46 feet wide and 60 feet high; the unsupported stone roof represents a considerable feat of medieval engineering. The interior is richly decorated with stone carvings depicting the life and miracles of the Virgin Mary, most of which were sadly vandalized at the time of the Reformation; the floor is bare except for moveable wooden pews.

This impressive and beautiful building, a living symbol of medieval devotion to the Virgin, is blessed with an acoustic which, for the singing of a cappella chant and polyphony, is very possibly unequalled anywhere in northern Europe. A glorious five-second reverberation miraculously combines with transparent clarity that allows every strand of a complex texture to be heard, even in quite fast-moving music; the chapel almost seems to sing before the choir begins, and the music certainly continues, to magical effect, long after the last note has been sung.

For the first time, this extraordinary experience can be fully captured on disc thanks to the invention of SACD and Surround Sound. Five channels (the sub-woofer is not used) give the listener an uncanny sensation of 'being there', with the reverberation of the building heard, as it really is, on all sides. In Ely Lady Chapel, the acoustic of the building is an integral and inspiring part of the music, which has always deserved to be heard on disc in this new and three-dimensional way.

Clare College Choir

Sopranos: *Emily Benson, *Angela Billington, *Victoria Brentnall, Iona Coltart, †Katy Cooper, *Rebecca Daker, †Jennifer Davison, *Caroline Fullman, Vanessa Huntly, †Nicola Ichnatowicz, †Louise Kateck, Christina Sampson, Elin Manahan Thomas

Altos: Alexandra Barrett, *Gabriel Gottlieb, *Ruth Massey, †Matthew Orton, *Andrew Radley, James Rivett, †Emma Thompson, *Mythili Vamadevan

Tenors: *Jerome Finnis, John Harte, Alexander Jupp, *Alastair Long, Matthew Moon, *Nicholas Mulroy, †Paul Naish, *Michael Stevens

Basses: †Sam Barrett, *Edmund Connolly, *Hywel Dafydd, *Thomas Elias, *Neil Greenham, †Maxwell Grender-Jones, *Andrew Henderson, *Adrian Hutton, †Jan Lochmann, *Benjamin Lumsden, †Jeremy Marwell, Jonathan Midgley, John Reid, Jonathan Saunders, *Edward Snow, †Reuben Thomas, †Christopher Weston

* = Disc 1 only

† = Disc 2 only



The Choir of Clare College, Cambridge, directed by Timothy Brown (2000).

Unaccompanied choral music has always been an especially lovely and inspiring medium of spiritual expression, especially when it is heard in an appropriate acoustic setting such as the almost celestially reverberant Lady Chapel of Ely Cathedral where these two albums were recorded. The disembodied purity of *a cappella* choral singing is, for many listeners, the true music of heaven: poets have invariably referred to the 'heavenly choir' rather than heavenly soloists, medieval artists depicted angels singing in chorus, not singly.

Each album is devoted to a different facet of spiritual revelation: *Illumina* (Disc 1) explores the theme of light, *Blessed Spirit* (Disc 2) is about heaven and our journey to heaven. The music ranges in date from the dawn of notation in the middle ages to Ligeti in 1966 and Tavener in 1981. Geographically there is a spread from the England of Sheppard and Tallis, via Hildegard of Bingen's Germany and Palestrina's Italy, to the fervent sacred music of Finland and Russia. The differences in style are obvious, but surprising affinities are apparent: superficially William Byrd, who composed *Justorum animae* and the American slave who first sang *Deep river* have little in common, yet their longing for heaven was fundamentally the same. Today, when religious differences, not for the first time, threaten to tear the world apart, we need reminding that, in music, so many humans have shared a transcendent vision which can heal and unite.

JOHN RUTTER

LIGHT OF THE SPIRIT

Disc I: Illumina

The Choir of Clare College, Cambridge
directed by Timothy Brown

Total playing time: 76' 22"

Note: Words credits are given at the end of each text.

- 1 **Lumen** (2' 35") Gregorian chant
Cantor: Alexander Jupp
- 2 **Bring us, O Lord God** (4' 15") William Harris (1883–1973)
- 3 **Ehtoohymni (*Evening hymn*)** (2' 38") Einojuhani Rautavaara (*b.* 1928)
(from *Vigilia*)
- 4 **Nyínye otpushcháyeshi (*Nunc dimittis*)** (3' 35") Sergei Rachmaninov (1873–1943)
(from *the All-Night Vigil, op. 37*)
Soloist: Nicholas Mulroy
- 5 **O Lux beata Trinitas** (4' 56") William Byrd (1543–1623)
- 6 **O coruscans lux stellarum** (3' 11") Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179)
- 7 **O nata lux** (1' 36") Thomas Tallis (*c.*1505–85)
- 8 **Te lucis ante terminum** (1' 38") Thomas Tallis
- 9 **Hymn to the Creator of Light** (7' 31") John Rutter (*b.* 1945)

Timothy Brown, Director of Music at Clare College, Cambridge, succeeded John Rutter as director of Clare College Choir in 1979. With the choir he has made many recordings and broadcasts, and undertaken numerous overseas tours. He also directs the London-based professional chamber choir English Voices. Described recently in a leading newspaper as 'one of Britain's most effective choir conductors and a prime custodian of the tradition that makes Oxbridge chapels famous from Seattle to St Petersburg', he undertakes many freelance conducting engagements and is a popular tutor at international singing courses. He has been a guest chorus-master at the Berlin Staatsoper and, in 1988, at the Flanders Opera. He has edited a number of choral volumes for Faber Music and is a contributing editor to the complete edition of music by William Walton, published by Oxford University Press.

Clare College, founded in 1326, is the second oldest of the colleges of Cambridge University. Situated on the banks of the River Cam in the heart of Cambridge with its main buildings dating from the seventeenth century, Clare is a flourishing community of some 75 fellows, 400 undergraduates, and 130 graduate students. Music plays an important role in the life of the college. In 1971 the hitherto all-male chapel choir was re-established as a mixed-voice group of some 24 voices, since when it has gained an international reputation as one of the leading choral groups in Britain. The choir is conducted by the Director of Music, who is a Fellow of the college, assisted by two undergraduate organ scholars. It exists primarily to sing regular choral services in the college chapel, but in addition gives frequent concerts, both in Britain and abroad. Radio and television broadcasts, and recordings, form a regular part of the choir's increasingly busy schedule.

Though all their beauties joynd together were;
How then can mortall tongue hope to expresse
The image of such endlesse perfectnesse?

(Edmund Spenser, from An Hymne of Heavenly Beautie, 1596)

-
- 10 **Hail, gladdening Light** (3' 22") Charles Wood (1866–1926)
11 **Christe, qui lux es et dies** (3' 19") Robert Whyte (c.1538–74)
12 **Nunc dimittis** (4' 03") Gustav Holst (1874–1934)
13 **Christe, qui lux es et dies** (5' 04") G. P. da Palestrina (1525–94)
14 **Nunc dimittis** (6' 19") Josquin Desprez (c.1440–1521)
15 **Svyétye tikhii (*Hail, gladdening Light*)** (3' 08") Alexander Grechaninov
(1864–1956) *(from the Liturgy of Holy Week, op. 58)*
16 **Svyétye tikhii (*Hail, gladdening Light*)** (2' 21") P. I. Tchaikovsky (1840–93)
(from the All-Night Vigil, op. 52)
17 **Lucis Creator optime** (5' 20") G. P. da Palestrina
18 **Lux aeterna** (10' 06") György Ligeti (*b.* 1923)

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Disc 2: Blessed Spirit

The Choir of Clare College, Cambridge
directed by Timothy Brown

Total playing time: 71' 34"

Note: Words credits are given at the end of each text.

At our departing

- 1 **Requiem aeternam** (1' 52") Gregorian chant
Cantor: Reuben Thomas
- 2 **Kontakion of the departed** (3' 24") Kiev chant
- 3 **Selig sind die Toten** (4' 11") Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672)
- 4 **Blessed are they (*Blazheni, iazhe izbral*)** (3' 36") P. I. Tchaikovsky (1840–93)
(*No. 7 of Nine Sacred Pieces, 1885*)
- 5 **Funeral Ikos** (8' 20") John Tavener (*b.* 1944)

Towards the gate of heaven

- 6 **Domine Jesu Christe** (3' 43") Gregorian chant
Cantor: Reuben Thomas
- 7 **O quam gloriosum** (2' 50") T. L. de Victoria (1548–1611)
- 8 **Psalm 121 and Requiem aeternam** (4' 18") H. Walford Davies (1869–1941)
Soloists: Vanessa Huntly, Alexander Jupp, Elin Manahan Thomas
- 9 **The Evening-watch** (4' 59") Gustav Holst (1874–1934), Op. 43 No. 1
Soloists: Alexander Jupp, Alexandra Barrett

18 **Faire is the heaven** (William Harris, 1883–1973)

(double choir SATB: SATB)

As a vision of heaven it is doubtful whether either the poetry or the music of this brief choral masterpiece ('anthem' seems an inadequate designation for it) have been surpassed. Edmund Spenser, the poet, needs no commendation here, but the little-known composer William Harris deserves note as the unexpected source of such a passionate musical outpouring, closer to Richard Strauss's *Metamorphosen* than to any precedent within the comparatively reserved Anglican tradition. For most of his long life Harris was a cathedral organist and teacher; from 1933–61 he was organist at St George's Chapel, Windsor, but *Faire is the heaven* was written before then, in 1925, though revised in 1948. It remains his finest work (arguably matched by the later and rather similar *Bring us, O Lord God*), one of only a handful of published compositions by a fondly-remembered organist who was touched by the hand of genius at least this once in his life.

Faire is the heaven, where happy soules have place,
In full enjoyment of felicitie,
Whence they doe still behold the glorious face
Of the Divine, eternall Majestie.

Yet farre more faire be those bright Cherubins,
Which all with golden wings are overdight,
And those eternall burning Seraphins,
Which from their faces dart out fiery light:
Yet fairer than they both, and much more bright
Be th'Angels and Archangels, which attend
On God's owne person, without rest or end.

These then in faire each other farre excelling,
As to the Highest they approach more neare,
Yet is the Highest farre beyond all telling,
Fairer than all the rest which there appeare,

Unde de divina rationalitate, quae te speculum suum fecit,
coronata es.

Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto.

(Hildegard of Bingen)

(O blessed spirit, in your journey through this world you trod the earth from which your body arose. Risen now above it, you have received your crown from the Divine Intelligence who made you in his image. Indeed the Holy Spirit has made you his dwelling. You have received your crown from the Divine Intelligence who made you in his image. Glory be the the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.)

17 **Audivi vocem de caelo** (John Sheppard, c. 1515–59)

(SSAA)

The music of John Sheppard represents a last glorious flowering of the pre-Reformation spirit in England, akin to Perpendicular architecture. The soaring lines of his polyphony reach heavenward like a spire, his choral textures seem filled with light like an East Anglian church interior. All too little is known of this extraordinary composer. He was choirmaster at Magdalen College, Oxford, from 1543 to 1548 and a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal from about this time until his death. Most of his surviving music is for the Latin rite, some of it dating from the brief and unhappy period of Catholic revival during the reign of Mary Tudor in the 1550s. *Audivi vocem*, a respond for All Saints' Day, is typical of much English church music of this time in consisting of alternating sections of Gregorian chant and polyphony.

Audivi vocem de caelo venientem: Venite omnes virgines sapientissimae. Oleum recondite in vasis vestris dum sponsus advenerit. Media nocte clamor factus est, ecce sponsus venit. Oleum recondite in vasis vestris dum sponsus advenerit.

(Respond at Matins for All Saints' Day, based on Matthew 25: 6)

(I heard a voice from heaven: Come, all you wise virgins. Store up oil in your vessels until the bridegroom comes. In the middle of the night came the cry, Behold the bridegroom comes. Store up oil in your vessels until the bridegroom comes.)

10 **Steal away** (3' 16") Spiritual, arranged by Timothy Brown (*b.* 1946)
Soloists: Elin Manahan Thomas, John Harte

11 **There is an old belief** (4' 25") C. H. H. Parry (1848–1918)
(No. 4 of Songs of Farewell)

12 **O quanta qualia** (3' 32") from the Rheinau Hymnal (1459)
Soloist: Jonathan Saunders

13 **Iustorum animae** (2' 53") William Byrd (1563–1623)

14 **Deep river** (3' 30") Spiritual, arranged by Norman Luboff (1917–87)
Soloist: Reuben Thomas

The heavenly kingdom

15 **In paradisum** (1' 16") Gregorian chant
Soloist: Reuben Thomas

16 **O felix anima** (4' 41") Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) transcribed by Susan Rankin
Soloist: Alexandra Barrett

17 **Audivi vocem de caelo** (4' 00") John Sheppard (*c.* 1515–59)

18 **Faire is the heaven** (5' 31") William Harris (1883–1973)

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Disc 1: Illumina

1 Lumen (Gregorian chant)

(men's voices)

This evocative chant is proper to Candlemas (February 2nd), the ancient Christian festival commemorating the infant Christ's presentation in the temple when Simeon took him in his arms and proclaimed him as the Light of the World. The old man's words, as quoted in St Luke's gospel, have long been used as a canticle—the *Nunc dimittis*—at Compline and at Anglican Evensong, but here the third verse is repeated as an antiphon before and between the verses to emphasise the idea of light. During the singing of the chant candles were blessed, lit, and carried in procession.

Lumen ad revelationem gentium: et gloriam plebis tuae Israel.

Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace.

Lumen &c.

Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum.

Lumen &c.

Quod parasti ante faciem omnium populorum.

Lumen &c.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.

Lumen &c.

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum, Amen.

Lumen ad revelationem gentium: et gloriam plebis tuae Israel.

(*Luke 2, vv. 29–32*)

(*A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. A light &c. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation. A light &c. Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people. A light &c. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. A light &c. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*)

The heavenly kingdom

15 In paradisum (Gregorian chant)

(men's voices)

This gentle, valedictory prayer comes from the old Catholic Burial Service and was sung as the funeral procession made its way to the cemetery. Fauré may well have been the first to incorporate it into a Requiem setting as the concluding movement.

In paradisum deducant te Angeli: in tuo adventu suscipiant te Martyres, et perducant te in civitatem sanctam Jerusalem. Chorus Angelorum te suscipiat, et cum Lazaro quondam paupere aeternam habeas requiem.

(*Antiphon from the Burial Service*)

(*God's holy angels lead you to paradise: may saints in their glory receive you at your journey's end, guiding your footsteps into the Holy City Jerusalem. Choirs of angels sing you to your rest: and with Lazarus raised to eternal life, may you for evermore rest in peace.*)

16 O felix anima (Hildegard of Bingen, 1098–1179)

(women's voices)

Another sacred song from Hildegard's *Symphonia*, *O felix anima* is a responsory for the feast of a now obscure local saint, which expresses in soaringly poetic words and music the Christian vision of the saints in glory.

O felix anima,
cuius corpus de terra ortum est,
quod tu cum peregrinatione huius mundi conculcasti.
Unde de divina rationalitate,
quae te speculum suum fecit,
coronata es.
Spiritus Sanctus etiam te ut habitaculum suum intuebatur.

Justorum animae in manu Dei sunt, et non tanget illos tormentum mortis. Visi sunt oculi insipientium mori: Illi autem sunt in pace.

(*Offertory for All Saints' Day: Wisdom 3: 1–3*)

(*The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and the torment of death shall not touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die: but they are in peace.*)

14 **Deep river** (Spiritual, arranged by Norman Luboff, 1917–87)

(SATTB)

For the American slaves, crossing the River Jordan was a metaphor for passing from this world to the next. In *Deep river* the longing to ‘cross over’ is movingly expressed. The mood of this spiritual is perfectly captured in Norman Luboff’s classic arrangement; he was a leading American choir director and choral arranger who helped bring about a significant awakening of choral music in America in the second half of the twentieth century, both through the recordings and concert appearances of his own choir, and through his work as a conductor, arranger and publisher.

Deep River, my home is over Jordan;
Deep River, Lord, I want to cross over into camp ground.
Oh don't you want to go to that Gospel feast,
That promised land where all is peace.
Deep River, my home is over Jordan;
Deep River, Lord, I want to cross over into camp ground.

(*American spiritual*)

2 **Bring us, O Lord God** (William Harris, 1883–1973)

(double choir SATB: SATB)

For most of his long life Sir William Harris was a cathedral organist and teacher; from 1933–61 he was organist at St George’s Chapel, Windsor. His published compositions are few, all of them church or organ music. *Bring us, O Lord God*, published in 1959, is a spacious double-choir anthem in the rich key of D flat (like Harris’s earlier and equally renowned *Faire is the heaven*), with Donne’s visionary text looking towards a heaven where ‘there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light’. The unmistakably English aura of the music is combined with a perhaps rather un-English intensity of passionate emotion overtly revealed in a harmonic language of almost Straussian ripeness.

Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening into the house and gate of heaven to enter into that gate and dwell in that house, where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light; no noise nor silence, but one equal music; no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession; no ends nor beginnings, but one equal eternity; in the habitation of thy glory and dominion, world without end. Amen.

(*John Donne, 1572–1631*)

3 **Ehtoohymni (Evening hymn)** (Einojuhani Rautavaara, b. 1928)

(SATB)

Rautavaara has long been acknowledged within Finland as the leading Finnish composer of his generation, but internationally his work has gained full recognition only recently. Prolific in both instrumental and vocal music, his music for choir is nourished by Finland’s rich, thriving choral tradition. The *Evening hymn* comes from his All-Night Vigil setting, written in 1972 in response to a joint commission from the Helsinki Festival and the Orthodox Church of Finland. The text is a Finnish version of the same third-century Greek evening hymn set to music by Wood in English translation (no. 10), and by Grechaninov (no. 15) and Tchaikovsky (no. 16) in Church Slavonic.

Jeesus Kristus,
Rauhaisa Valkeus
Kuolemattoman Isän,
Taivaallisen, Pyhän Autuaan

rauhaisa Valkeus.
Auringon laskiessa ehtoovalon nähtyämme
me veisaten ylistämme Jumalaa,
Isää, Poikaa ja Pyhää Henkeä.
Jumalan Poika, Elämänantaja,
Kristus.
Otollista on autuain äänin
ylistää Sinua kaikkina aikoina.
Sentähden maailma Sinulle kiitosta kantaa.
Jumalan Poika.

(translated from a 3rd-century Greek hymn)

(For English translation, see No. 10.)

4 **Nyínye otpushcháyeshi (*Nunc dimittis*)** (Sergei Rachmaninov,
1873–1943)

(tenor solo and SATB choir)

This is the fifth of the fifteen movements comprising the *All-Night Vigil*, op. 37 (sometimes mis-named the *Vespers*), Rachmaninov's most enduring contribution to the repertoire of Russian church music. The interest of Russia's leading composers in the liturgy of the Orthodox church had been rekindled by Tchaikovsky's 1878 setting of the Liturgy of St John Chryostom, though creative freedom was limited since the traditional chants were held to be sacred, and over-elaborate or personal treatment of them was frowned upon by the church authorities; instruments, moreover, were forbidden. Rachmaninov's own 1910 setting of the Liturgy (which made no use of pre-existing chants) was in fact never sanctioned for liturgical use. Perhaps to make amends for this official rebuff, in 1915 he wrote the *All-Night Vigil*, in which he did incorporate a number of chant melodies, reverently treated though in his own distinctive style. The work was very well received, though its success was short-lived, since the 1917 Revolution led to the suppression of the church and its music. Rachmaninov retained a particular affection for the *Nunc dimittis* movement, and wanted it sung at his funeral: he could not have foreseen that in the very different environment of Beverly Hills, his home at the time of his death, this proved to be impractical. The *Nunc dimittis* is based on a chant of

*What are the Monarch, his court, and his throne?
What are the peace and the joy that they own?
Tell us, ye blest ones, that in it have share,
If what ye feel ye can fully declare.*

*Now in the meanwhile, with hearts raised on high,
We for that country must yearn and must sigh,
Seeking Jerusalem, dear native land,
Through our long exile on Babylon's strand.*

*Low before him with our praises we fall,
Of whom, and in whom, and through whom are all;
Of whom, the Father; and through whom, the Son;
In whom, the Spirit, with these ever One.*

(tr. J. M. Neale)

13 **Justorum animae** (William Byrd, 1563–1623)
(SSATB)

As a recusant Catholic in Protestant England, Byrd can scarcely have known the true peace of which the text of this lovely motet speaks; indeed he must have often recalled the 'torment of death' suffered by many of his co-religionists, from which, in his intolerant era, heaven itself was the only safe refuge. Perhaps this lent poignancy to his musical setting, which was published in 1605 in Vol. 1 of his *Gradualia*, a collection of motets for the church's year—one which could not then legally be used in worship and which should probably be seen as a testament of his compositional art and his religious faith. Within a succinct time frame, Byrd seems to evoke the calm vistas of heaven: the rigid imitative counterpoint of earlier generations of Renaissance composers has been replaced by a more flexible and chordal texture where the independence of voices is never sacrificed but where a clear and expressive declamation of the text is paramount. Particularly affecting is the final page, where descending scales in all five voice parts seem to lull us gently into endless peace.

O quanta qualia sunt illa Sabbata
Quae semper celebrat superna curia;
Quae fessis requies, quae merces fortibus,
Cum erit omnia Deus in omnibus!

Vere Ierusalem est illa civitas,
Cuius pax iugis est summa iucunditas,
Ubi non praevenit rem desiderium,
Nec desiderio minus est praemium.

Quis rex, quae curia, quale palatium,
Quae pax, quae requies, quod illum gaudium?
Huius participes exponant gloriae,
Si, quantum sentiunt, possint exprimere.

Nostrum est interim mentem erigere,
Et totis patriam votis appetere,
Et ad Ierusalem a Babylonia
Post longa regredi tandem exilia.

Perenni Domino perpes sit gloria,
Ex quo sunt, per quem sunt, in quo sunt omnia:
Ex quo sunt, Pater est; per quem sunt, Filius;
In quo sunt, Patris et Filii Spiritus.

(Peter Abelard, 1079–1142)

*O what their joy and their glory must be,
Those endless Sabbaths the blessed ones see!
Crown for the valiant; to weary ones rest;
God shall be all, and in all ever blest.*

*Truly Jerusalem name we that shore,
'Vision of peace,' that brings joy evermore!
Wish and fulfilment can severed be ne'er,
Nor the thing prayed for come short of the prayer.*

the Kiev tradition, sung by the tenor soloist, surrounded with a lullaby-like accompaniment from the choir. The final bars have the basses descending to a low B flat; Danilin, the conductor of the Synodal Choir who were to give the first performance, asked the composer 'Where are we to find such basses? They are as rare as asparagus at Christmas.'

Nýnye otpushcháyeshi rabá Tvoýegó, Vladyíko, po glagólu Tvoýemú s mírom:
yáko vídyesta óchi moyí spassyéniye Tvoýé, yézhye yessí ugotóval,
pnyed litsyém vsyehk lyudyéi,
svyet vo otkrovyéniye yazýtkov,
i slávu lyudyéi Tvoýikh Izráyila.

(Canticle of Simeon: Luke 2, vv. 29–32)

(Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of thy people Israel.)

5 O Lux beata Trinitas (William Byrd, 1543–1623)

(SSAATB)

The text of Byrd's motet (proper to Vespers) is one of twelve hymns ascribed to St Ambrose, the fourth-century French bishop who is credited with establishing and codifying a tradition of chant in the Western church, preceding the more renowned Pope Gregory in this endeavour by some 200 years. Byrd's setting, which he designated 'hymnus', is in fact in a fairly contrapuntal motet style, though unusually clear and lucid in texture despite its six voices, and divided into three sections corresponding to the stanzas of the text. The third section is a triple canon, perhaps symbolic of the Holy Trinity. *O Lux beata Trinitas* dates from early in Byrd's career, appearing in his first collection of church music, the *Cantiones Sacrae* of 1575 in which seventeen of his compositions were published together with seventeen by Tallis.

O Lux beata Trinitas,
Et principalis Unitas,
Iam sol recedit igneus,
Infunde lumen cordibus.

*O Trinity of blessed light,
O Unity of princely might,
The fiery sun now goes his way;
Shed thou within our hearts thy ray.*

Te mane laudum carmine,
Te deprecamur vesperi,
Te nostra supplex gloria,
Per cuncta laudet saecula.

Deo Patri sit gloria,
Eiusque soli Filio;
Cum Spiritu Paracleto,
Et nunc et in perpetuum. Amen.

(*St Ambrose, 340–397*)

*To thee our morning song of praise,
To thee our evening prayer we raise;
Thy glory suppliant we adore
For ever and for evermore.*

*All laud to God the Father be;
All praise, eternal Son, to thee;
All glory, as is ever meet,
To God the holy Paraclete. Amen.*

(*tr. J. M. Neale*)

6 O coruscans lux stellarum (Hildegard of Bingen, 1098–1179)

(women's voices)

The music and poetry of Hildegard of Bingen—abbess, mystic and writer—has come to be widely appreciated only in recent years. She gathered together her 77 sacred songs in a liturgically ordered collection called the *Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum*; *O coruscans lux* is designated as proper to the ceremony of dedicating a church. Its text apostrophizes the church as a place of divine splendour and light; the melody is of appropriately soaring, rhapsodic freedom.

O coruscans lux stellarum,
o splendidissima specialis forma regaliū nuptiarum,
o fulgens gemma,
tu es ornata in alta persona,
quae non habet maculatam rugam.
Tu es etiam socia Angelorum
et civis sanctorum.
Fuge, fuge speluncam antiqui perditoris,
et veniens veni in palatium Regis.

(*Hildegard of Bingen*)

(*O twinkling light of the stars, O most shining and special image of royal marriage [between Christ and his church], O dazzling jewel, you are dressed in high raiment without blemish or*

Henry Vaughan and John Donne—set by Parry in this cycle; he is remembered today more as the first biographer of Sir Walter Scott. Yet his verses do articulate a more-or-less religious philosophy which was probably in line with that held by Parry and other leading spirits of the post-Darwinian age, and his line ‘That creed I fain would keep’ affords a good musical opportunity for quoting the Gregorian chant associated with the words ‘Credo in unum Deum’. Parry seems to write of belief in an after-life rather as did Thomas Hardy, ‘hoping it might be so’.

There is an old belief,
That on some solemn shore,
Beyond the sphere of grief
Dear friends shall meet once more.

Beyond the sphere of Time
And Sin, and Fate's control,
Serene in changeless prime
Of body and of soul.

That creed I fain would keep,
That hope I'll ne'er forgo:
Eternal be the sleep,
If not to waken so.

(*John Gibson Lockhart, 1794–1854*)

12 O quanta qualia (from the Rheinau Hymnal, 1459)

(men's voices)

It is not known who composed the haunting Dorian-mode melody of this hymn which survives only in a fifteenth-century German hymnal, but it could possibly be the work of Peter Abelard, the twelfth-century French theologian who indisputably wrote the text. Abelard is remembered today for the boldness of his theological views, which brought him into conflict with the church, and for the story of his great love for Heloise, niece of Canon Fulbert of Notre-Dame. *O quanta qualia* is the best-known of his hundred or so surviving hymns.

spare, almost angular reworkings of five familiar spirituals in Tippett's *A child of our time* (1942) set a new style. *Steal away*, heard here in Timothy Brown's vivid new arrangement, is typical of many spirituals in that its subject-matter is the slaves' longing for the reward of heaven after the hardship and misery of earthly life.

*Steal away, steal away, steal away to Jesus.
Oh steal away, steal away home,
I ain't got long to stay here.*

My Lord, he calls me,
He calls me by the thunder:
The trumpet sounds within my soul,
I ain't got long to stay here.
Steal away, &c.

Green trees are bendin',
Poor sinner stands a-tremblin':
The trumpet sounds within my soul,
I ain't got long to stay here.
Steal away, &c.

(American Spiritual)

11 There is an old belief (C. H. H. Parry, 1848–1918)
(SSATBB)

Like Brahms (perhaps his strongest musical influence), Parry had a lifelong interest in matters metaphysical and philosophical, and an attraction towards the contemplation of mortality. This found fullest expression in his *Songs of farewell*, a set of six unaccompanied choral pieces to texts by various authors. Parry began work on them around 1913 in the spirit of a personal testament; after much labour and reworking, he allowed a performance of five of the six by the Bach Choir in 1916, with which he was delighted. He never heard the complete set before his death in 1918; *There is an old belief*, no. 4 of the six, was sung at his funeral. The author of its text, John Gibson Lockhart, was not a poet comparable with the others—who included

wrinkle. You are truly the abode of the angels and the realm of the saints. Flee, flee, from the cave of the old Satan, and come, come into the palace of the King.)

7 O nata lux (Thomas Tallis, c.1505–85)
(SATTB)

The Feast of the Transfiguration (August 6th) commemorates the incident when Christ took three apostles up a mountain 'and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light' (Matthew 17, v. 2). *O nata lux* is the office hymn for Lauds on this feast day. Tallis's brief but much-loved setting comes from the *Cantiones Sacrae* of 1575 (see note on No. 5).

O nata lux de lumine,
Jesu Redemptor saeculi,
Dignare clemens supplicum
Laudes precesque sumere.

*O Light of light, by love inclined,
Jesu, Redeemer of mankind,
With loving-kindness deign to hear
From suppliant voices praise and prayer.*

Qui carne quondam contegi
Dignatus es pro perditis,
Nos membra confer effici
Tui beati corporis.

*Thou who to raise our souls from hell
Didst deign in fleshly form to dwell,
Vouchsafe us, when our race is run,
In thy fair Body to be one.*

(10th-century Office hymn)

8 Te lucis ante terminum (Thomas Tallis)
(SATTB)

Another of Tallis's contributions to the 1575 *Cantiones Sacrae* (though probably composed some years earlier), *Te lucis ante terminum* is a simple setting of the famous Compline hymn believed to date from before the eighth century and surviving in many medieval manuscripts. As the final evening office of the monastic day, Compline is filled with references to light and darkness, imagery which had particular force in a medieval world 'lit only by fire'.

Te lucis ante terminum,
Rerum Creator, poscimus
Ut pro tua clementia
Sis praesul et custodia.

Procul recedant somnia,
Et noctium phantasmata;
Hostemque nostrum comprime,
Ne polluantur corpora.

Praesta, Pater piissime,
Patrique compar Unice;
Cum Spiritu Paraclito,
Regnans per omne saeculum. Amen.

(Office hymn for Compline: pre-8th century)

*Before the ending of the day,
Creator of the world, we pray
That with thy wonted favour thou
Wouldst be our Guard and Keeper now.*

*From all ill dreams defend our eyes,
From nightly fears and fantasies;
Tread under foot our ghostly foe,
That no pollution we may know.*

*O Father, that we ask be done,
Through Jesus Christ, thine only Son;
Who, with the Holy Ghost and thee,
Doth live and reign eternally. Amen.*

(tr. J. M. Neale)

9 Hymn to the Creator of Light (John Rutter, b. 1945)

(double choir SATB: SATB)

The occasion for the first performance of this piece was the dedication of a memorial window to the composer Herbert Howells in Gloucester Cathedral at the 1992 Three Choirs Festival. Howells was born near Gloucester in 1892, and the new stained-glass window was a tangible memento of his centenary celebrations, as was the commissioning of this anthem. Lancelot Andrewes, the author of the main part of the text, was a leading Anglican theologian of his day, one of the translators of the King James Bible, and Bishop of Winchester from 1618 until his death. His *Preces privatae*, from which the text is taken, is a collection of Latin prayers and meditations.

Glory be to thee, O Lord, glory be to thee,
Creator of the visible light,
the sun's ray, the flame of fire;
Creator also of the light invisible and intellectual:
that which is known of God, the light invisible.
Glory be to thee, O Lord, glory be to thee,

Soul
Go, sleep in peace; and when thou liest
Unnumber'd in thy dust, when all this frame
Is but one dram, and what thou now descriest
In sev'ral parts shall want a name,
Then may his peace be with thee, and each dust
Writ in his book, who ne'er betray'd man's trust!

Body
Amen! but hark, ere we two stray,
How many hours dost think till day?

Soul
Ah! go; thou'rt weak, and sleepy. Heav'n
Is a plain watch, and without figures winds
All ages up; who drew this circle even
He fills it: days and hours are blinds.
Yet this take with thee; the last gasp of time
Is thy first breath, and man's eternal Prime.

(Henry Vaughan, 1622–95)

10 Steal away (Spiritual, arranged by Timothy Brown)

(SSAATB)

The heritage of black American spirituals—the religious folksongs of the southern slaves—was first brought to international attention in the 1870s by the performances of groups such as the Jubilee Singers from Tennessee and by the publication of collections. Since then, each generation has in different ways made this heritage its own, and such is the inherent strength of the songs themselves that they have transcended every style of arrangement and performance. Early collectors testify that spirituals were originally sung in a kind of embellished unison, but it was not long before harmonized choral arrangements began to be popular, influenced perhaps by white hymnody. The sophisticated, lush choral versions heard in earlier twentieth-century concert programmes often tended towards sentimentality; the

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: yea, it is even he that shall keep thy soul.
The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in: from this time forth for
evermore.

(*Psalm 121*)

Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine: et lux perpetua luceat eis.

(*from the Missa pro defunctis*)

9 **The Evening-watch**, Op. 43 no. 1 (Gustav Holst, 1874–1934)

(SSAATTBB)

The overwhelming popularity of Holst's orchestral suite *The Planets* has sometimes obscured the fact that the majority of his wide-ranging output was vocal and choral. Like his friend and supporter Vaughan Williams, he had a strong interest in poetry, coupled with the ability to respond to it in musical terms, and the texts he set were drawn from both Eastern and Western traditions, even including the Hindu Rig Veda. This reflected his mystical leanings, which were not shared by Vaughan Williams; however, both composers wrote fine settings of the English metaphysical poets. Henry Vaughan, author of *The Evening-watch*, was in fact Welsh, Oxford-educated and by profession a doctor. His poem, inspired perhaps by first-hand experience of attending upon the dying, takes the form of a dialogue between the body and the soul. Holst's setting, written in 1924–5 as the first of a projected series of unaccompanied motets which never progressed beyond two inaugural pieces, is one of the most extraordinary and visionary pieces of music he ever wrote. Slow and hushed, its choral textures mainly note-against-note, the music creates dark towers of sound with resonant fourth-based chords, magically coalescing into a final climax which seems bathed in transcendental light. Uncomprehending reviews of the first performance at the 1925 Three Choirs Festival show that Holst was ahead of his time; but *The Evening-watch* was not without later influence on Benjamin Britten, whose *Hymn to St Cecilia* (1942) has passages strongly reminiscent of it.

Body

Farewell! I go to sleep: but when
The day-star springs, I'll wake again.

Creator of the light.

for writings of the law, glory be to thee:
for oracles of prophets, glory be to thee:
for melody of psalms, glory be to thee:
for wisdom of proverbs, glory be to thee:
experience of histories, glory be to thee:
a light which never sets.

God is the Lord, who hath shewed us light.

(*Lancelot Andrewes, 1555–1626, tr. Alexander Whyte*)

Light, who dost my soul enlighten;
Sun, who all my life dost brighten;
Joy, the sweetest man e'er knoweth;
Fount, whence all my being floweth.
From thy banquet let me measure,
Lord, how vast and deep its treasure;
Through the gifts thou here dost give us,
As thy guest in heaven receive us.

(*J. Franck, 1618–77, tr. Catherine Winkworth (adapted)*)

10 **Hail, gladdening Light** (Charles Wood, 1866–1926)

(double choir SATB: SATB)

The text of this resplendent double-choir anthem is one of the earliest known Christian hymns, first referred to by St Basil in the fourth century and used in the early church at the lighting of the evening lamp at sunset, hence its nickname of 'the candlelight hymn'. It was incorporated into the Orthodox liturgy of the All-Night Vigil, hence its many settings by Russian composers. John Keble's English translation attracted the attention of Charles Wood, who set it to music in 1912 as one of a set of anthems for the major festivals of the church. Wood was then Lecturer in Music at Cambridge University (he succeeded to the professorship on the death of Stanford in 1924) and also organist of Gonville and Caius College; the college choir very likely gave the first performance, though publication was delayed until 1919 because of the World War. This anthem has remained a cornerstone of the Anglican repertory ever since.

Hail, gladdening Light, of his pure glory poured,
Who is the immortal Father, heavenly, blest,
Holiest of holies, Jesus Christ our Lord!

Now we are come to the sun's hour of rest;
The lights of evening round us shine;
We hymn the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit divine.

Worthiest art thou at all times to be sung
With undefiled tongue,
Son of our God, giver of life, alone;
Therefore in all the world thy glories, Lord, they own. Amen.
(3rd century, Greek; tr. John Keble)

11 **Christe, qui lux es et dies** (Robert Whyte, c.1538–74)
(SSATB)

Little is known of Robert Whyte's life. Possibly born in London, he was first a chorister and then a student at Trinity College, Cambridge. He held cathedral posts in Ely and Chester before becoming Master of the Choristers at Westminster Abbey in 1569, remaining there until his death. His vocal music represents the older tradition of Latin polyphonic composition and was much admired in his century. He wrote four settings of the medieval Compline hymn *Christe, qui lux es et dies*, of which the present one is the simplest, with the chant melody appearing in the top part in the second and sixth stanzas and in the alto for the fourth stanza. The remaining stanzas are sung to the Gregorian chant unharmonized.

Christe, qui lux es et dies, Noctis tenebras detegis: Lucisque lumen crederis, Lumen beatum praedicans.	<i>O Christ, who art the Light and Day Thou drivest night and gloom away: O Light of Light, whose word doth show The light of heaven to us below.</i>
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1587 he accepted Philip II's offer to become choirmaster and chaplain at the convent of Descalzas Reales in Madrid, where he remained until his death. *O quam gloriosum*, one of the best-loved of Victoria's compositions, was published in 1572 in his First Book of Motets and reprinted a number of times. It was later used by Victoria as the basis of a mass setting, published in 1583. The text is proper to the Feast of All Saints (November 1st) when Christians remember the company of saints in heaven. Victoria matches the imagery of the text with flowing, transparent vocal lines which (unusually for the time) are not based on any pre-existing Gregorian chant but are freely composed.

O quam gloriosum est regnum, in quo cum Christo gaudent omnes Sancti! amicti stolis albis, sequuntur Agnum quocumque ierit.

(*Antiphon at Second Vespers for the Feast of All Saints*)

(*O how glorious is the kingdom, wherein all the saints rejoice with Christ! Clothed in white robes, they follow the Lamb wherever he goes.*)

8 **Psalm 121 and Requiem aeternam** (H. Walford Davies, 1869–1941)
(SATB)

The Anglican liturgy has no Requiem Mass, so there are no English Requiem settings for liturgical use. Conscious, perhaps, of this lack, in 1915 the church musician Henry Walford Davies (organist of the Temple Church in London) composed a work he called *A Short Requiem*, intended for church use, which assembled a number of appropriate texts from biblical and liturgical sources. It was inscribed 'in sacred memory of all those who have fallen in the war'. The present two movements, which follow without a break, are the fourth and fifth.

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills: from whence cometh my help.
My help cometh even from the Lord: who hath made heaven and earth.
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: and he that keepeth thee will not sleep.
Behold, he that keepeth Israel: shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord himself is thy keeper: the Lord is thy defence upon thy right hand;
So that the sun shall not burn thee by day: neither the moon by night.

Towards the gate of heaven

6 Domine Jesu Christe (Gregorian chant)

(men's voices)

Domine Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae, libera animas omnium fidelium defunctorum de poenis inferni, et de profundo lacu: libera eas de ore leonis, ne absorbeat eas tartarus, ne cadant in obscurum: sed signifer sanctus Michael repraesentet eas in lucem sanctam: Quam olim Abrahae promisisti, et semini eius.

Hostias et preces tibi Domine, laudis offerimus: tu suscipe pro animabus illis, quarum hodie memoriam facimus: fac eas, Domine, de morte transire ad vitam. Quam olim Abrahae promisisti, et semini eius.

(from the Missa pro defunctis)

(O Lord Jesus Christ, King of Majesty, deliver the souls of all the faithful departed from the hand of hell, and from the pit of destruction: deliver them from the lion's mouth, that the grave devour them not, that they go not down to the realms of darkness: but let Michael, the holy standard-bearer, make speed to restore them to the brightness of glory: which thou promisedst in ages past to Abraham, and his seed. Sacrifice and prayer do we offer unto thee, O Lord: do thou accept them for the souls departed, in whose memory we make this oblation: and grant them, Lord, to pass from death unto life: which thou promisedst in ages past unto Abraham and his seed.)

7 O quam gloriosum (T. L. de Victoria, 1548–1611)

(SATB)

Victoria has long been regarded as the greatest Spanish Renaissance composer, despite being both less prolific and less versatile than many of his contemporaries: virtually his entire output, all of it Latin church music, is contained in only eleven volumes, all published in his lifetime. He began his musical life as a choirboy at Avila Cathedral, then moved to Rome to study at the Jesuit Collegio Germanico; he may have received tuition from Palestrina. He was made director of music at the Collegio in 1573, and was ordained priest in 1575. Despite growing European fame as a composer, he wanted to return to a quieter life in Spain, and in

Precamur, sancte Domine,
Defende nos in hac nocte;
Sit nobis in te requies,
Quietam noctem tribue.

Ne gravis somnus inruat,
Nec hostis nos subripiat,
Nec caro illi consentiens
Nos tibi reos statuat.

Oculi somnum capiant,
Cor ad te semper vigilet.
Dextera tua protegat,
Famulos qui te diligunt.

Defensor noster, aspice,
Insidiantem reprime;
Guberna tuos famulos
Quos sanguine mercatus es.

Memento nostri, Domine,
In isto gravi corpore;
Qui es defensor animae,
Adesto nobis, Domine.

Deo Patri sit gloria
Eiusque soli Filio
Sancto simul cum Spiritu
Nunc et per omne saeculum. Amen.

(Lenten Compline hymn, c. 800)

*All-holy Lord, we pray to thee,
Keep us tonight from danger free;
Grant us, dear Lord, in thee to rest,
So be our sleep in quiet blest.*

*Our sleep be free from sin and pain;
Let not the Tempter vantage gain,
Or our unguarded flesh surprise,
And make us guilty in thine eyes.*

*Asleep though wearied eyes may be,
Still keep the heart awake to thee;
Let thy right hand outstretched above
Guard those who serve the Lord they love.*

*Behold, O God our shield, and quell
The crafts and subtleties of hell;
Direct thy servants in all good,
Whom thou hast redeemed with thy Blood.*

*O Lord, remember us who bear
The burden of the flesh we wear;
Thou, who dost o'er our souls defend,
Be with us even to the end.*

*All praise to God the Father be,
All praise, eternal Son, to thee,
Whom with the Spirit we adore
For ever and for evermore. Amen.*

(tr. from W. J. Copeland, 19th century)

12 **Nunc dimittis** (Gustav Holst, 1874–1934)

(SSAATTBB)

In 1914 R. R. Terry, organist of the then recently-built Westminster Roman Catholic Cathedral in London, invited four composers (including the young Herbert Howells) to write unaccompanied eight-part Nunc dimittis settings for use at the cathedral's Compline services during Holy Week. Holst's setting was performed on Easter Sunday 1915 but not then published. After lying forgotten for many years, it was revised and published in 1979 by the composer's daughter Imogen, quickly establishing itself in the repertoire as an imaginative and assured setting of its familiar text: Holst seized the opportunities offered by the eight-voiced medium and the very reverberant acoustic of the cathedral to create a setting of exceptionally full, sonorous texture, with a lovely opening that seems to evoke the gentle lighting of candles.

Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace.

Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum.

Quod parasti ante faciem omnium populorum:

Lumen ad revelationem gentium, et gloriam plebis tuae Israel.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

(*Luke 2, vv. 29–32*)

(*Translation as for No. 4*)

13 **Christe, qui lux es et dies** (G. P. da Palestrina, 1525–94)

(SATTB)

Gregorian chant runs like a golden thread through the sacred music of most Renaissance composers. In Palestrina's case it is most clearly to be discerned in his only collection of polyphonic hymn settings, published in 1589, where the outlines of chant melodies are recognizable in most of the voice parts, notably the soprano. *Christe, qui lux es et dies* comes from the 1589 publication; its version of the chant differs slightly from that used by Whyte in No. 11. Palestrina achieves an impressively cumulative effect by reserving the use of all five voices until the final stanza.

(*Text and translation as for No. 11, verses 1, 3, 5, and 7*)

music master Edward Chapman, is an early example of his many sacred choral pieces. Its strophic structure and simple homophonic textures throw the text into sharp relief while creating an atmosphere which is reverent, solemn, and yet not without a spirit of consolation.

Why these bitter words of the dying, O brethren, which they utter as they go hence? I am parted from my brethren. All my friends do I abandon, and go hence. But whither I go, that understand I not, neither what shall become of me yonder; only God, who hath summoned me knoweth. But make commemoration of me with the song: Alleluia.

But whither now go the souls? How dwell they now together there? This mystery have I desired to learn, but none can impart aright. Do they call to mind their own people, as we do them? Or have they forgotten all those who mourn them and make the song: Alleluia.

We go forth on the path eternal, and as condemned, with downcast faces, present ourselves before the only God eternal. Where then is comeliness? Where then is wealth? Where then is the glory of this world? There shall none of these things aid us, but only to say oft the psalm: Alleluia.

If thou has shown mercy unto man, O man, that same mercy shall be shown thee there; and if on an orphan thou hast shown compassion, the same shall there deliver thee from want. If in this life the naked thou hast clothed, the same shall give thee shelter there, and sing the psalm: Alleluia.

Youth and the beauty of the body fade at the hour of death, and the tongue then burneth fireceily, and the parched throat is inflamed. The beauty of the eyes is quenched then, the comeliness of the face all altered, the shapeliness of the neck destroyed; and the other parts have become numb, nor often say: Alleluia.

With ecstasy are we inflamed if we but hear that there is light eternal yonder; that there is Paradise, wherein every soul of Righteous Ones rejoiceth. Let us all, also, enter into Christ, that all we may cry aloud thus unto God: Alleluia.

(*from the Order for the Burial of Dead Priests*)

Selig sind die Toten, die in dem Herren sterben, von nun an.
Ja, der Geist spricht: Sie ruhen von ihrer Arbeit,
und ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach.

(*Revelation 14: 13*)

(*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*)

4 **Blazheni, iazhe izbral** (*Blessed are they*) (P. I. Tchaikovsky, 1840–93)

(SATB)

In this passionately vivid and declamatory setting of a hymn from the Orthodox liturgy of remembrance, Tchaikovsky shows his mastery of the choral medium and his dramatic grasp of issues of life and death which, as a Romantic artist, he often confronted in music, though rarely in the religious sphere. His first sacred work was the *Liturgy of St John Chrysostom* in 1878; its success prompted the Tsar to ask him, at an audience early in 1884, to write more for the church. The *Nine liturgical choruses*, of which *Blazheni, iazhe izbral* is no. 7, were written later that year as his response. The imperial chapel choir under their director, Balakirev, performed the set for the Tsar, who must surely have been impressed with the fervour and rich choral sonority of the music.

Blazheni, iazhe izbral i priial esi, Gospodii!
I pamiat' ikh v rod i rod.
Alliluiia, alliluiia, alliluiia.

(*Communion hymn from the Liturgy of Memorial*)

(*Blessed are they, whom thou hast chosen and taken, O Lord. Their remembrance is from generation to generation. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*)

5 **Funeral Ikos** (John Tavener, b. 1944)

(SATB)

The distinctive and visionary style which John Tavener has made his own is nourished by the liturgy and chants of the Orthodox Church, of which he has been a member for some years. The *Funeral Ikos*, written in 1981 for the memorial service of his much-loved former school

14 **Nunc dimittis** (Josquin Desprez, c.1440–1521)

(SATB)

Such was the prestige enjoyed by the music of Josquin during and immediately after his lifetime that an unusually large number of compositions which he probably or definitely did not write were attributed to him, some no doubt on the principle that an orphan given a famous name is more likely to succeed in the world. This appears to be the case with the present *Nunc dimittis*, which was included in the collected Josquin edition but subsequently shown to be of unreliable attribution. Whoever the composer, it is a setting of affecting simplicity and expressiveness which bears some of the hallmarks of Josquin's style, notably in the alternation of high and low pairs of voices. Particularly effective is a reprise near the end (unusual in Renaissance motets) of the opening words and music.

(*Text and translation as for No. 12*)

15 **Svyétye tikhii** (*Hail, gladdening Light*) (Alexander Grechaninov,

1864–1956)

(SATB)

Grechaninov's life began in Moscow and ended in New York. He was a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov and enjoyed some early success in various genres, notably songs, piano pieces, and music for children, but it is his church music, a lifelong interest, which has best endured. In 1910 the Tsar granted him a pension in recognition of his music for the Orthodox church. In 1925 he settled in Paris, and in 1940 emigrated to America where he continued to compose church music, not all for the Orthodox liturgy, however. The present *Svyéte tikhii*, a typical example of his warmly resonant choral writing, is from his *Liturgy of Holy Week*, op. 58 (1911).

Svyétye tikhii svyatyíya slávyi, byessmyértnago Otsá nyebyéssnago,
Svyatágo blazhénnago, Iissússye Khristyé!
Prishyédsbye na západ sólntsa, vídyevshye svyet vyechyérnii,
Poyém Otsá, Syina i Svyatago, Dúkha, Boga!
Dostóyin yessí vo vssyá vryemyená pyet byítii glássyi pryepodóbnyimi,

Syínye Bózhi, zhivót dayai; tyem zhe mir Tya slávit.

(Slavonic translation of a 3rd-century Greek hymn)

(For English translation, see No. 10.)

16 **Svyétye tikhii (*Hail, gladdening Light*)** (P. I. Tchaikovsky, 1840–93)

(SATB)

Tchaikovsky's setting of the same text as No. 15 comes from his 1881 *All-Night Vigil*, op. 52, the second of his two substantial liturgical works. His 1878 *Liturgy of St John Chrysostom* had incurred the disapproval of the church authorities, and, like Rachmaninov thirty years later, Tchaikovsky seems to have been anxious to avoid further trouble. In a lengthy preface to the *All-Night Vigil*, he stresses the care with which he approached the task of harmonizing the traditional chants and his determination to purge his style of all 'foreign' influences which might dilute its essential Russianness. His approach to the text of *Svyétye tikhii* is more joyous, less consistently reflective and homophonic than Grechaninov's, and he is willing to risk a hint of contrapuntal writing in the second section of the piece, a technique liable to incur the disapproval of the church. In fact, his *All-Night Vigil* was officially sanctioned for liturgical use and became very popular, serving as a model for other composers including Rachmaninov.

(Text and translation as for No. 15)

17 **Lucis Creator optime** (G. P. da Palestrina)

(SATTB)

This is a setting (from the same 1589 publication as No. 13) of an Office hymn generally used at Sunday Vespers, believed to be by Pope Gregory—from whom Gregorian chant takes its name. As with No. 13, Palestrina reserves his full five voices for the final stanza; here he achieves additional contrast by setting the middle stanza for just three voices.

Lucis Creator optime,
Lucem dierum preferens,
Primordiis lucis novae
Mundi parans originem.

*O blest creator of the light,
Who mak'st the day with radiance bright,
And o'er the forming world didst call
The light from chaos first of all;*

Kontakion

So sviatymi upokoi, Khriste, dushy rab tvoikh,
idezhe nest bolezni' ni pechal, ni vozdykhanie,
no zhizn' beskonechnaia.

Ikos

Sam edin esi bessmertnyi, sotvorivyi i sozdavyi cheloveka,
zemnii ubo ot zemli sozdakhomsi, i v zemliu tuiuzhde poidem,
iakozhe povelel esi, sozdavyi mia i rekii mi, iako zemlia esi,
i v zemliu otideshi, amozzhe vsi chelovetsi poidem,
nadgrobnoe rydanie tvoriashche pèsn'.
Alliluiia, alliluiia, alliluiia.

(Give rest, O Christ, to thy servant with thy saints: Where sorrow and pain are no more; Neither sighing, but life everlasting. Thou only art immortal, the Creator and Maker of man: And we are mortal, formed of the earth, And unto earth shall we return: For so thou didst ordain, When thou createdst me saying: 'Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return.' All we go down to the dust; And weeping o'er the grave we make our song: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.)

3 **Selig sind die Toten (*Blessed are the dead*)** (Heinrich Schütz,

1585–1672)

(SSATTB)

This dignified and consolatory motet, one of the relatively few by Schütz to be widely known and appreciated, was first published in the *Geistliche Chormusik* of 1648, an important collection of 29 of the composer's motets. They represent a turning away from the Venetian extravagance of Schütz's earlier work, placing more emphasis on traditional imitative polyphony, which the composer's preface to the volume recommends as a discipline for budding composers. *Selig sind die Toten* is indeed just as imitative in style as any Renaissance motet, though the strong expressive contrasts between the slow-moving sections and the more active treatment of the words 'und ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach' belong clearly to the Baroque era. The text of this motet, from the Book of Revelation, forms part of the Burial Service in both Lutheran and Anglican liturgies.

Disc 2: Blessed Spirit

At our departing

1 **Requiem aeternam** (Gregorian chant)

(men's voices)

The first two sections of this programme are introduced by Gregorian chants taken from the *Missa pro defunctis*, the Mass for the dead which is one of the most solemn rites of the Christian church. Requiem masses were, according to medieval custom, celebrated on All Souls' Day (November 2nd) and also at burials and on certain anniversaries of burials. *Requiem aeternam* is the opening prayer, incorporating a verse from Psalm 65 (*Te decet hymnus*).

Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine: et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Te decet hymnus Deus in Sion, et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem:
Exaudi orationem meam, ad te omnis caro veniet.
Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine: et lux perpetua luceat eis.

(from the *Missa pro defunctis*)

(*Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord: and may light perpetual shine upon them. Thou, O God, art praised in Sion, and unto thee shall the vow be performed in Jerusalem: thou that hearest the prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come. Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord; and may light perpetual shine upon them.*)

2 **Kontakion of the departed** (Kiev chant)

(SATB)

In the Orthodox liturgy of matins, a *kontakion* is a one-stanza hymn which is generally followed by an *ikos*, that is, one or more further stanzas to a different chant melody. There are kontakions for all the major occasions of the church's year. The Kontakion of the Departed, performed here with its accompanying *ikos*, is an appropriately sombre chant of the Kiev tradition, 'modernized' by a nineteenth-century harmonization. The music of the kontakion is in regular metre, the *ikos* is freer and more chant-like.

Ne mens gravata crimine,
Vitae sit exsul munere,
Dum nil perenne cogitat,
Seseque culpae illigat.

*Let us not sink in sin and strife,
And lose the gift of endless life;
While thinking but the thoughts of time,
To weave new chains of woe and crime.*

Praesta, Pater piissime,
Patrique compar Unice,
Cum Spiritu Paraclito,
Regnans per omne saeculum.

*O Father, that we ask be done,
Through Jesus Christ, thine only Son;
Who, with the Holy Ghost and thee,
Doth live and reign eternally.*

(6th-century Office hymn, attributed to
Pope Gregory, c.540–604)

18 **Lux aeterna** (György Ligeti, b. 1923)

(SSSSAAAATTTTBBBB)

Born in Transylvania, in the border region between Hungary and Romania, Ligeti studied composition at first locally and then at the Budapest Academy, where he became a professor in 1950. Leaving Hungary in 1956, the year of the Uprising, he settled in Vienna, establishing his reputation with a series of avant-garde compositions beginning with *Apparitions* (1959). His *Requiem* (1965), a response to the horrors of World War II, made a deep impression, and was swiftly followed by the present *Lux aeterna* (1966), which can be seen as a pendant to it. The *Lux aeterna* was commissioned by the conductor of the Stuttgart Schola Cantorum for inclusion in a recording of new music. If the prevailing mood of the *Requiem* is one of death, the *Lux aeterna* carries the hope of resurrection, consistent with the eternal light referred to in its text. A sense of harmony and tonality (largely absent in the *Requiem*) is discernible, with the periodic recurrence of clear unison notes and a three-note 'rainbow' chord (E flat, F, A flat on its first appearance). No rhythmic pulse can be detected, because eternity has no sense of time, but the shape and structure of *Lux aeterna* is lucid and even strict. At the time Ligeti wrote it, he was interested in concepts of space and distance—his next work after the *Lux aeterna* was called *Lontano*—and at the top of the score of the *Lux aeterna* appears the general instruction 'as if from afar'. Ligeti divides the choir into sixteen parts, which enables him to form, literally, nebulous clusters of notes slowly shifting in subtle and ever-changing patterns. All of this

suggests that the ‘eternal light’ of the title may be cosmological rather than spiritual; in 1968 the American film director Stanley Kubrick used portions of the *Lux aeterna* and the *Requiem* in his immensely influential film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, which further encouraged a ‘galactic’ interpretation of the music. Whether we should think of the eternal light as coming from distant galaxies or from God, there is no doubt that *Lux aeterna* is a masterpiece, taking choral music—and the listener—into a new and eerie sound-world of the imagination.

Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine: cum sanctis tuis in aeternum, quia pius es.
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat . . .

*(May light eternal shine upon them, O Lord: with all thy saints for evermore, for thy mercy’s sake.
Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord: and may light perpetual shine upon . . .)*



Clare College Chapel, Cambridge (photo copyright Andy Staples)