JOHN RUTTER
The Gift of Life
and seven sacred pieces
The Cambridge Singers ♦ Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
JOHN RUTTER
The Gift of Life
Six Canticles of Creation
and seven sacred pieces

The Cambridge Singers
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (leader: Duncan Riddell)
conducted by John Rutter

Total playing time: 77' 27"
Words credits are listed with each text (see pp. 4–19)
All music is by John Rutter

1–6 The Gift of Life (40' 00")
1 O all ye works of the Lord (8' 43")
2 The tree of life (6' 15")
3 Hymn to the Creator of Light (7' 27")
4 O Lord, how manifold are thy works (8' 09")
5 The gift of each day (3' 18")
6 Believe in life (5' 51")

7 Give the king thy judgements, O God (7' 08")
8 A flower remembered (3' 33")
9 The Quest (6' 40")
10 Solo oboe: David Theodore
11 Psalm 150 (5' 37")
12 Solo vocal trio: Kate Ashby, Helen Ashby, Alice Gribbin
13 Christ is the morning star (4' 35")
14 All bells in paradise (5' 25")
15 Rejoice and sing (3' 58")


THE CAMBRIDGE SINGERS
Sopranos: Helen Ashby, Kate Ashby, Christine Buras, Jessica Cale, Hannah Ely, Rachel Ambrose Evans, Alice Gribbin, Eloise Irving, Marie Macklin, Dani May, Ruth McElvanney, Philippa Murray, Louise Prickett, Amy Wood
Altos: Nancy Cole, Rosie Goodall, Lara Harvey, Harriet Hougham-Slade, Becky Jones, Carris Jones, Katie Schofield
Tenors: Ben Alden, Ruairi Bowen, David Condy, Thomas Herford, Robert Jenkins, Matthew Sandy, Julian Stocker, Peter Di-Toro
Basses: Nicholas Ashby, Neil Bellingham, Tim Dickinson, Josh Edwards, Cheyney Kent, Richard Latham, Alex Learmonth, Andrew Rupp, Edmund Saddington
Choral management: Simon Wall
This album presents eight of my recent choral works. The largest of these, *The Gift of Life*, is my first extended choral work since *Mass of the Children* (written over ten years ago), and it has been a pleasure to be able to record it less than three months after its première in April 2015. The other seven pieces have been written for a variety of occasions, private and public, which are detailed in the notes that follow. Five of these new pieces were originally written with accompaniments for organ or small-scale instrumental forces, but they are heard here in versions with orchestral accompaniment, some of which I scored specially for this recording. Christmas carols continue to feature in my output, and as a seasonal PS I have concluded our album with three new ones.

As ever, a deep and grateful bow goes to my choir the Cambridge Singers and to the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, my partners in many concerts and recordings in recent years.

**JOHN RUTTER**

**NOTES AND TEXTS**

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**The Gift of Life**

I wrote *The Gift of Life* early in 2015 as a result of a chance conversation at a choral convention in 2013 with an old friend, Terry Price. He was planning to retire from his position as Minister of Music at a church in Dallas, and his church wanted to give him an appropriate gift to mark his many years of service; I was already thinking I would like to write a fairly substantial new choral work with orchestra, and these two thoughts came together. Terry’s church immediately agreed that this new work would be the right gift, and a theme soon suggested itself: in 1985 I had written a Requiem – which, like any Requiem, inevitably reflects on death – why not write the opposite, a work celebrating life?

Unlike a Requiem, where a set form of words is laid down in Catholic liturgy, no framework exists for a celebration of life, and I had to choose (and in three cases, write) texts which were appropriate to a theme rarely expressed in music since Haydn’s wondrous oratorio *The Creation* in 1798.

The six movements of *The Gift of Life* reflect different facets of the miracles of creation and of life, and I was happy to be able to include as the third of them my *Hymn to the Creator of Light*, originally written in 1992 as an unaccompanied double-choir motet in memory of the composer Herbert Howells on the occasion of the dedication of his new memorial window in Gloucester Cathedral. I had always felt slightly wistful that this piece was somewhat of an orphan on its own, and here was an opportunity to give it a home as part of a larger work. I added a discreet orchestral accompaniment to enrich the texture and to make it more consistent with the other five movements.

I gratefully acknowledge the generosity of David and Miranda Lind who provided funds for the commissioning of *The Gift of Life*. The score is inscribed ‘in honour of Terry Price and in memory of Alice Marie Lind, commissioned by David and Miranda Lind’.

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**O all ye works of the Lord**

*O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.*

*O ye angels of the Lord, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.*

*O ye heavens, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.*

*O ye waters that be above the firmament, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.*

*O ye sun and moon, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.*

*O ye stars of heaven, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.*

*O ye showers and dew, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.*

*O ye winds of God, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.*

*O ye fire and heat, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.*

*O ye winter and summer, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.*

*O ye dews and frosts, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.*

*O ye frosts and cold, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.*

*O ye ice and snow, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.*

*O ye nights and days, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.*
O ye light and darkness, ye lightnings and clouds: praise him, and magnify him for ever.
O let the earth bless the Lord: yea, let it praise him, and magnify him for ever.
O ye mountains and hills, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.
O ye green things upon the earth, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.
O ye wells, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.
O ye seas and floods, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.
O ye whales, and all that move in the waters, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.
O all ye fowls of the air, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.
O all ye beasts and cattle, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.
O ye children of men, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.
O let Israel bless the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.
O ye priests of the Lord, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.
O ye servants of the Lord, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.
O ye spirits and souls of the righteous, ye holy and humble men of heart, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.
O Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

(Canticle of the Three Holy Children, from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer)

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
(Gloria in excelsis Deo)
Praise him, all creatures here below,
Praise him above, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

(The tree of life)
The tree of life my soul hath seen,
Laden with fruit, and always green;
The trees of nature fruitless be
Compared with Christ the apple tree.
This beauty doth all things excel;
By faith I know, but ne’er can tell
The glory which I now can see
In Jesus Christ the apple tree.
For happiness I long have sought,
And pleasure dearly I have bought;
I missed for all, but now I see
’Tis found in Christ the apple tree.
I’m wearied with my former toil,
Here I shall sit and rest awhile;
Under the shadow I will be
Of Jesus Christ the apple tree.

(Hymn to the Creator of Light)
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,
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 showed 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 c’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 (poet) (adapted)

2 O Lord, how manifold are thy works
O Lord, how manifold are thy works: in wisdom hast thou made them all;
the earth is full of thy riches.
Thou cover’st it with the deep like as with a garment: the waters stand in the hills.
He sendeth the springs into the rivers: which run among the hills.
All beasts of the field drink thereof; and the wild asses quench their thirst.
Beside them shall the fowls of the air have their habitation: and sing among the branches.
He bringeth forth grass for the cattle: and green herb for the service of men.
The trees of the Lord also are full of sap: even the cedars of Libanus which he hath planted;
Wherein the birds make their nests: and the fir-trees are a dwelling for the stork.
The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats: and so are the stony rocks for the conies.
The lions roaring after their prey: do seek their meat from God.
The sun ariseth, and they get them away together: and lay them down in their dens.
Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour until the evening.
O Lord, how manifold are thy works: in wisdom hast thou made them all;
the earth is full of thy riches.

The glorious Majesty of the Lord shall endure for ever:
the Lord shall rejoice in his works.

(from Psalm 104)

For all the gifts of God’s creation fashioned by his mighty hand:
Earth and heaven, and all things living springing up at his command;
To God on high be endless glory, praise and honour to his Name,
Who was, and is, and ever shall be, through eternity the same.

How rich and fair his works of nature, bird and beast and tree and flower;
All that lives, and has its being under God’s almighty power!
To him who reigns in endless glory, praise and honour to his Name,
Who was, and is, and ever shall be, through eternity the same.

Amen.

(John Rutter)

3 The gift of each day
The gift of each day rising out of darkness:
the promise of light and the birth of new life,
the dawn of new hope and a new beginning,
if we turn to the light;

The gift of each day stirring all around us:
the sights of the earth, and sea, and sky,
Forever fresh as the day we first saw them,
forever new as creation’s first day.

Domine, gratias agimus tibi;
Lord God, we give you thanks, blessing, and praise.
Behold creation, so filled with miracles,
Benedictus es, benedictus es, Domine.
The gift of each day has been freely granted:
the gift of creation in glory revealed.
We thank you, Lord, for all its blessings,
we thank you, Lord, for the gift of each day,
your good gift of each day,
we thank you, Lord, for the gift of each day.

Believe in life
Believe in life as a stream ever flowing;
Believe in life as a tree ever growing:
The tree of life, with its branches high in the sky
and its roots so deep in the earth.

Every step that you take could start a journey,
All the strangers you meet could turn to friends.
If you open your eyes new worlds will arise
if you just believe in your life,
believe in your hopes, believe in your dreams.

The stream rolls onward; all things must pass.
Our earthly days are short, all flesh as grass,
But through all ages long since time began,
There stands the tree of life, God’s sign to man.

Give the king thy judgements, O God
15 June 2015 marked the 800th anniversary of the signing of Magna Carta. The meadow by the River Thames at Runnymede was the scene of a colourful commemoration of this landmark event in the history of justice and freedom; HM The Queen, Prince Philip, Prince William, the Prime Minister, the Archbishop of Canterbury and numerous dignitaries were present. Music formed a part of the ceremony, and I was honoured to be invited to contribute an anthem for choir and orchestra to welcome the Queen and Prince Philip as they arrived. The prevailing mood of the piece is festive, but as a prayerful moment before the closing pages I incorporated Orlando Gibbons’s lovely hymn-tune Song I, to new words expressing the theme of the occasion.

Give the king thy judgements, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king’s son.
He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgement.
The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.
He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy,
and shall break in pieces the oppressor.
They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.

Truth, justice, honour be our statutes:
Laws for our people long decreed;
Deep in our hearts forever planted,
As sons and daughters raised up and freed.

(from the collection of Joshua Smith, New Hampshire, 1784)
We kneel before no tyrant’s throne, nor fear oppression’s sword,
With one chartered heritage, one people, one Lord.

John Rutter

Lord, for our nation we thy people pray,
That truth and justice ever shall prevail;
And we, who walk in freedom day by day
Must never rest, nor let our courage fail.
Let peace and concord rule throughout our land,
Till, at the last, before thy throne we stand.

Words: John Rutter  Music: Orlando Gibbons

Let the people praise thee, O God: yea, let all the people praise thee.

(Psalm 67, v. 3)

Glory and honour, praise and blessing, now and for evermore. Amen.

A flower remembered

The 2011 earthquake and tsunami followed by a nuclear accident at Fukushima in Japan was a terrible event which can never be forgotten. In particular, its victims deserve to be remembered, and every year on the anniversary of the disaster a concert is held in Japan honouring their memory. Harmony for Japan, the choral organization responsible for this concert and for many related humanitarian and charitable activities, asked me to write a piece for inclusion in the 2013 commemoration. My text for A flower remembered was freely inspired by the Japanese haiku tradition, but the music is fully western and my own.

A flower remembered can never wither:
For ever blooming as bright as day,
Its fragrance lingering,
Like music softly playing,
A gentle voice that’s saying,
‘I’ll never fade away.’

I hear the echoes of many voices;
Sometimes they’re distant, sometimes so clear;
Through all the sounds of life they seem to whisper,
‘Will you remember?’

The birds fly homeward across my valley
Toward the mountains all white with snow;
The birds are gone now,
The mountain snows have melted,
But still I see their beauty,
These scenes of long ago.
The birds still fly in other valleys;
The snows have turned to flowing streams;
All things must pass, but memories are lasting:
We will remember.

The Quest

In June 2014 John Hughes, the gifted young clergyman who served as Dean of Chapel at Jesus College, Cambridge, was killed in a car accident. The sense of shock and loss felt by his family and friends was shared by his college, by Cambridge generally, and throughout the Anglican Church, where he had been very possibly destined for high office. At such times, it is my hope and belief that music can play a part in healing and consolation, a feeling shared by Mark Williams, the Director of Music at Jesus College, who invited me to write The Quest.

The piece is dedicated to the memory of John Hughes, and was first performed by the combined choirs of Jesus College at a memorial Evensong in their college chapel on 27 June 2015.
It was not the easiest of pieces to write. After much searching I found George MacDonald’s poem which seemed to express what we all felt, and I instantly knew that I wanted to juxtapose it with the *In paradisum* section of the age-old Burial Service. Oddly, once the texts were chosen, the music seemed to flow naturally from them, and the poignant voice of a solo oboe sprang into my head. I respectfully offer the piece to John’s family, friends and colleagues with the hope that they may find consolation in it.

I missed him when the sun began to bend;  
I found him not when I had lost his rim;  
With many tears I went in search of him,  
Climbing high mountains which did still ascend,  
And gave me echoes when I called my friend;  
Through cities vast and charnel-houses grim,  
And high cathedrals where the light was dim,  
Through books and arts and works without an end,  
But found him not—the friend whom I had lost.  
And yet I found him—as I found the lark,  
A sound in fields I heard but could not mark;  
I found him nearest when I missed him most;  
I found him in my heart, a life in frost,  
A light I knew not till my soul was dark.  

(George MacDonald, 1824–1905)

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.  

(from the Burial Service, Liber Usualis)

Pageantry and ceremonial have always played a role in the life of a nation, and I was fortunate as a young musician to have known and briefly worked with William Walton, the acknowledged master of music for such occasions. I never imagined that one day I would be invited to contribute a setting of Psalm 150 to an event for which Walton himself would surely have written something if he had still been with us – the Golden Jubilee Service for HM The Queen, held in St Paul’s Cathedral on 4 June 2002. Seizing the opportunity to make full use of this unique building, I asked for three choristers to be placed high in the dome, from which position they sang as a trio at key points in the music. The magical effect of hearing three treble voices singing in Christopher Wren’s dome is not easy to replicate anywhere else, but thanks to modern audio technology I think we have come close.

O praise God in his holiness: praise him in the firmament of his power.  
Praise him in his noble acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.  

*Laudate Dominum in sanctis eius: laudate eum in firmamento virtutis eius.*  
Praise him in the sound of the trumpet: praise him upon the lute and harp.  
*Laudate Dominum, laudate, laudate.*  
Praise him in the cymbals and dances: praise him upon the strings and pipe.  
Praise him upon the well-tuned cymbals: praise him upon the loud cymbals.  
Let every thing that hath breath: praise the Lord.  

*Alleluia, amen.*  

(Psalm 150, BCP version, Latin verses from the Vulgate)

I wrote this Advent carol in 2013 at the invitation of Graham Ross, Director of Music at Clare College, Cambridge. Regrettably, the season of Advent is often swallowed up by premature Christmas celebrations, and for the occasion of Clare’s annual Advent Carol Service I wanted to write a piece which would look forward to Christmas – and to the Second Coming, a significant Advent theme – rather than greet its arrival. The idea for the
text came from an inscription of words by the Venerable Bede on the wall of Durham Cathedral: *Christus est stella matutina*, which, translated into English, is the first line of my carol.

Christ is the morning star,  
The light of God that shines from afar;  
The Son of God in human form revealed,  
The wound of Adam’s sin for ever healed.

For God, who formed mankind of clay  
Will bring forth our salvation that day  
When he, who made all things since time began,  
Will send his Son, to live on earth as man.

And when he comes, a child on earth,  
The sun and stars will shine at his birth,  
To light a world that long in darkness lay:  
The light of God, the gift of Christmas Day.

Christ is the morning star.

And when he comes again as King,  
Then heav’n and all creation shall sing;  
With saints in glory seated round his throne  
We’ll see his face, and know as we are known.

Christ is the morning star.  

(John Rutter)

### All bells in paradise

Unlike other Cambridge collegiate choirs, which are on vacation in mid-December, King’s College Choir does sing at Christmas, and many carols have been composed for its renowned Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols held each Christmas Eve. *All bells in paradise* was written for the 2012 Festival, at the invitation of Stephen Cleobury, Director of Music at King’s. For this, the third carol I have written for them, I turned to a carol text more or less contemporary with King’s Chapel itself, *All bells in paradise I heard them ring* – this provided the first line of what was otherwise my own new text.

Deep in the cold of winter,  
Darkness and silence were everywhere;  
Softly and clearly, there came through the stillness  
A wonderful sound to hear:

*All bells in paradise I heard them ring,*  
*Sounding in majesty the news that they bring,*  
*All bells in paradise I heard them ring,*  
*Welcoming our Saviour,*  
*Born on earth a heavenly King.*  
*All bells in paradise I heard them ring:*  
*‘Glory to God on high’ the angel voices sing.*

Lost in awe and wonder,  
Doubting, I asked what this sign might be:  
Christ our Messiah revealed in a stable,  
A marvellous sight to see.  
*All bells, &c.*

He comes down in peace, a child in humility,  
The keys to his kingdom belong to the poor;
Before him shall kneel the kings with their treasures, 
Gold, incense and myrrh. 

_Rejoice and sing_! (John Rutter)

While I was a student at Cambridge I got to know Sir David Willcocks, Director of King’s College Choir from 1958 to ’74. It was thanks to him that my first compositions were published – he served as editorial adviser to Oxford University Press and spotted my work early on, later inviting me to be his co-editor for the second and subsequent volumes of the _Carols for Choirs_ series. He has been a staunch champion of my music ever since, and a mentor and inspiration to me and many other musicians over the years. In celebration of his 95th birthday in 2014 I was delighted to be asked by OUP to compose a new carol in his honour.

_Writing_ Rejoice and sing _I recalled the many happy Christmas concerts he conducted with the Bach Choir in London’s Royal Albert Hall, thinking also of his fondness for quirky rhythms – hence the lop-sided 7/8 which runs through much of the music._

_Rejoice and sing! glad news I bring;_  
On Christmas Day in the morning:  
I saw three ships come sailing in,  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;  
I saw three ships come sailing in  
On Christmas Day in the morning.

_Rejoice and sing Nowell, nowell!_  
Earth’s day of gladness is dawning,  
For Christ is born in Bethlehem  
On Christmas Day in the morning.

And what was in those ships all three,  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day?  
And what was in those ships all three,  
On Christmas Day in the morning?  

_Our Saviour Christ and his lady,_  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;  
_Our Saviour Christ and his lady,_  
On Christmas Day in the morning.  
_Rejoice and sing, &c._

Pray, whither sailed those ships all three,  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day?  
Pray, whither sailed those ships all three,  
On Christmas Day in the morning?  

_O, they sailed in to Bethlehem,_  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;  
_O, they sailed in to Bethlehem,_  
On Christmas Day in the morning.  
_Rejoice and sing, &c._

Then let us all rejoice amain,  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;  
Then let us all rejoice amain,  
On Christmas Day in the morning.  
_Rejoice and sing, &c._  

_Incorporating a traditional English carol text._

Contact details:  
www.facebook.com/johnruttermusic 
http://twitter.com/johnmrutter 
www.youtube.com/johnrutter 
www.collegium.co.uk  
www.johnrutter.com

And all the bells on earth shall ring,  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;  
And all the bells on earth shall ring,  
On Christmas Day in the morning.

And all the angel host shall sing,  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;  
And all the angel host shall sing,  
On Christmas Day in the morning.

And all the souls on earth shall sing,  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;  
And all the souls on earth shall sing,  
On Christmas Day in the morning.
Recording produced by Thomas Hewitt Jones
Sound engineer: Mike Hatch, assisted by Chris Kalkov, for Floating Earth, Ltd

Recorded 15 and 16 July 2015 in Fairfield Hall, Croydon
Cover image: ‘Adam and Eve’ design by Charles Francis Annesley Voysey (1857–1941)
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Design: Nick Morris, for Wallis Agency
Layout: Nick Findell