

TREASURES OF ENGLISH CHURCH MUSIC

❧ *46 anthems and motets* ❧



sung by

The Cambridge Singers
directed by John Rutter

2 CD

Collegium
RECORDS



Treasures of English Church Music

The Cambridge Singers
directed by John Rutter

Total playing time: 141' 38"

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

Disc 1

Music of the Latin rite

- 1 **Ave Maria** (4' 25") Robert Parsons (*d.* 1570)
- 2 **Loquebantur variis linguis** (3' 53") Thomas Tallis (*c.* 1505–1585)
- 3 **Miserere mei** (3' 46") William Byrd (1543–1623)
- 4 **Haec dies** (2' 23") William Byrd
- 5 **Ave verum corpus** (3' 39") William Byrd

Music of the Reformation

- 6 **If ye love me** (2' 08") Thomas Tallis
- 7 **Hide not thou thy face** (1' 15") Richard Farrant (*c.* 1525–1580)
- 8 **Lord, for thy tender mercy's sake** (1' 53") Richard Farrant
- 9 **O clap your hands** (4' 36") Orlando Gibbons (1583–1625)
- 10 **Bow thine ear** (4' 08") William Byrd
- 11 **Hosanna to the Son of David** (2' 33") Orlando Gibbons

Music of the Restoration

- 12 **Lord, how long wilt thou be angry** (4' 08") Henry Purcell (1659–95)
- 13 **Thou knowest, Lord** (2' 05") Henry Purcell
- 14 **Hear my prayer, O Lord** (2' 28") Henry Purcell

The Anglican revival and the twentieth century

- [15] **Beati quorum via** (3' 21") Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924)
- [16] **This joyful Eastertide** (2' 17") Dutch carol, arranged by Charles Wood (1866–1926)
- [17] **Sing lullaby** (3' 06") Herbert Howells (1892–1983)
- [18] **A spotless Rose** (2' 45") Herbert Howells
- [19] **What cheer?** (1' 18") William Walton (1902–83)
- [20] **O taste and see** (1' 16") Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)
Soprano solo: Mary Seers
- [21] **A hymn to the Virgin** (3' 05") Benjamin Britten (1913–76)
- [22] **Jesus Christ the apple tree** (2' 31") Elizabeth Poston (1905–87)
- [23] **Faire is the heaven** (5' 05") William Harris (1883–1973)

Disc 2

Anthems and Introits

- [1] **Rejoice in the Lord** (2' 45") Anon., 16th century
- [2] **Remember not, Lord, our offences** (2' 25") Henry Purcell
- [3] **Come, let's rejoice** (1' 38") John Amner (1579–1641)
- [4] **When David heard** (5' 02") Thomas Tomkins (1572–1656)
- [5] **I sat down under his shadow** (1' 42") Edward Bairstow (1874–1946)
- [6] **These are they that follow the Lamb** (1' 35") John Goss (1800–80)

Latin motets

- [7] **Christe Jesu, pastor bone** (3' 30") John Taverner (c. 1490–1545)
- [8] **O beatum et sacrosanctum diem** (2' 16") Peter Philips (1561–1628)
- [9] **Nunc dimittis** (3' 00") Herbert Howells
Soprano solo: Karen Kerslake

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- [10] **O vos omnes** (5' 25") Ralph Vaughan Williams
Alto solo: Frances Jellard
- [11] **Factum est silentium** (3' 00") Richard Dering (c. 1580–1630)
- [12] **Iustorum animae** (3' 30") Charles Villiers Stanford

Settings of hymns and other poetry

- [13] **Hail, gladdening Light** (3' 42") Charles Wood
- [14] **A Hymn to the Mother of God** (2' 42") John Tavener (*b.* 1944)
- [15] **Hymn for the Dormition of the Mother of God** (3' 30") John Tavener
- [16] **They are at rest** (2' 55") Edward Elgar (1857–1934)
- [17] **A litany** (3' 04") William Walton
- [18] **Nolo mortem peccatoris** (2' 55") Thomas Morley (1557/8–1602)
- [19] **O nata lux** (1' 40") Thomas Tallis
- [20] **Loving Shepherd of thy sheep** (3' 18") John Rutter (*b.* 1945)
Soprano solo: Caroline Ashton

Prayer settings

- [21] **The Lord's Prayer** (1' 10") Robert Stone (1516–1613)
- [22] **In manus tuas** (4' 02") John Sheppard (c. 1515–1559/60)
- [23] **Bring us, O Lord God** (4' 05") William Harris

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Treasures of English Church Music

These two CDs of English *a cappella* church music were recorded in the inspiring setting of the Lady Chapel of Ely Cathedral. Disc 1 provides an historical survey of four hundred years of music, disc 2 offers a more mixed programme in which different styles mingle together, allowing some illuminating affinities to emerge.

Scholars would nowadays agree that the purity of the *a cappella* ideal does not withstand too much scrutiny. Until the last century, the term referred to composition in the renaissance vocal style, with no implications as to accompaniment, which was a matter of tradition and function. A renaissance motet could be sung totally unaccompanied (as was all music in the Pope's Sistine Chapel in Rome), have an organ accompaniment, or be sung with each part doubled by instruments, most commonly cornetts and sackbuts in a liturgical context, but with more flexible scorings elsewhere. In England, it is not clear whether the pre-Reformation tradition of organ and voices performing mostly in alternation changed immediately after the Reformation to the use of the organ as an accompanying instrument, or whether that practice grew up in the early seventeenth century. There is no doubt, however, that the idea of *a cappella* music being necessarily unaccompanied was a nineteenth-century misconception; but ever since the Victorian revival of early music, when renaissance polyphony became accepted as a sort of late-flowering of the gothic spirit, a large amount of extremely beautiful music has been written thus, the fruitful consequence of an historical misunderstanding.

The *a cappella* ideal was not just a negative concept of absence of accompaniment. More significant features were the importance of the individual voice parts, the approach to scoring in purely vocal terms and, often, the revival of renaissance modality. There has been a long tradition of instruction books from which composers learned old-style contrapuntal techniques: the most famous was Fux's *Gradus ad Parnassum*, which Haydn and Beethoven studied. But the theorists tended to over-emphasise the polyphonic aspect of renaissance music, and when composers studied the music itself, they discovered not just skilful and expressive imitation but a fluid homophony that used a variety of well-blended vocal textures. They also found a different harmonic basis from that of the major-minor, tonic-dominant based tonality that dominated music from the seventeenth until well into the twentieth century. Some tried to imitate this, not very successfully (scholars are still trying to understand how modality was understood in the sixteenth century) but often creatively.

Some of the music here was written for the Catholic liturgy, most of it for the Church of England. A few pieces may have been intended for home performance, whether as part of general music-making or for informal devotions, and many other pieces have been sung by small choirs for their own enjoyment rather than for any religious purpose. Some of the modern works, in fact, were conceived as part-songs with sacred texts rather than as church music. A feature of all of them, whether in Latin or English, is the importance of the words. The richness and variety of the texts to be found among the pieces on these two discs is extraordinary, reaching from the serene confidence of the Canticum of Simeon to the visionary yearning of John Donne's *Bring us, O Lord God*, so unforgettably set to music by William Harris.

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 corridor. Built of stone with large elaborate windows, 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 vandalised 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* 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 its music certainly continues, to magical effect, long after the last note has been sung.

The performers

The Cambridge Singers are a mixed choir of around 28 voices, many of whom are former members of the choir of Clare College, others being drawn from former members of King's, St John's and other Cambridge collegiate choirs. Established in 1981 by their director John Rutter, their recordings range from English part-songs (a *Hi-Fi News* Record of the Month) to the Fauré Requiem in its 1893 version (winner of a *Gramophone* magazine award).

Treasures of English Church Music

Disc 1

Music of the Latin rite

- 1 **Ave Maria** (Robert Parsons, *d.* 1570)
(SAATB)

Little is known about the life of Robert Parsons and not many of his compositions survive. Like most of the eminent musicians of his time, he was a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, the organization of 32 men singers and 12 boy choristers whose job it was to provide music at the chapel services in the various royal palaces in and around London whenever the sovereign was present. Some of Parsons' Latin music may have been written during the reign of Queen Mary (1553-8) when England had temporarily returned to Catholicism. But Latin music was still sung after Elizabeth I restored English services in 1559. Latin was still a living language among the educated, and indeed, a Latin version of the Prayer Book was published; so Latin motets could have been sung as anthems at court, in university chapels or for private music-making. *Ave Maria* is probably his best-known work, a motet of appropriately feminine loveliness and radiance. An interesting feature of its structure is that the soprano part of the opening section, which as it were represents the voice of the angel Gabriel, makes a series of six entries, each one beginning one note higher than the one before. The effect is of rising excitement and ecstasy.

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum: benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui. Amen.

(*Antiphon at Feasts of the Virgin Mary: from Luke 1, v. 28*)

(*Hail, Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. Amen.*)

- 2 **Loquebantur variis linguis** (Thomas Tallis, *c.* 1505–1585)
(SSAATBB)

Tallis began his long and distinguished career as organist of the Benedictine Priory at Dover, in the

Disc 1

county of Kent where he is believed to have been born. In about 1538 he moved to Waltham Abbey near London, where he was a member of the choir and possibly organist. This post was short-lived: in 1540 the abbey, in common with all England's monastic establishments, was dissolved by order of Henry VIII, and Tallis was forced to seek another job. He moved first to Canterbury to join the cathedral choir there, then in about 1543 to London, where he became a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal; he remained associated with the royal household till his death, serving under Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary Tudor, and finally Elizabeth I. Tallis wrote some keyboard and consort music, but most of his surviving output is of church music; before the Reformation he wrote Latin pieces, often long and elaborate, but after the Reformation he successfully adapted to the setting of words in a simpler and more succinct style. *Loquebantur variis linguis* is one of the most glorious of his pre-Reformation motets, built, like so much of the church music up to this time, around a Gregorian chant, which in this case is sometimes heard on its own, sometimes woven into the fabric of the polyphony. The music seems to reflect the incandescent excitement of its Pentecost text.

Loquebantur variis linguis apostoli magnalia Dei; alleluia.

Repleti sunt omnes Spiritu Sancto, et coeperunt loqui: alleluia.

Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto: alleluia.

(*Antiphon at Second Vespers for Whit Sunday*)

(*The apostles spoke in tongues of the greatness of God: alleluia.*)

They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak: alleluia.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: alleluia.)

- 3 **Miserere mei** (William Byrd, 1543–1623)
(SSATB)

Byrd towers above all other English composers of his time; in fact he ranks as one of the greatest English composers of all time. Reputedly a pupil of Tallis, his first appointment, in 1563, was as organist and Master of the Choristers at Lincoln Cathedral. In 1570 he moved to London to become a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal. He quickly gained royal favour and in 1575 was granted, in partnership with Tallis, a monopoly in music printing which enabled both composers to publish their own work. In 1593 he acquired a country house in Essex and progressively withdrew from London life; after the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603 he is unlikely to have been much involved with the Chapel Royal. Throughout his life he composed prolifically: several volumes of Latin and English church

music, three Masses, besides many songs, keyboard pieces and other instrumental music. Despite the Reformation, Byrd never inwardly forsook the Catholic faith, and perhaps the most remarkable aspect of his career is the freedom with which he continued to write and publish Latin church music long after the liturgy for which it was intended had been outlawed by the Act of Uniformity, which imposed the 1549 Book of Common Prayer; possibly the personal favour of Queen Elizabeth saved him from the harsh penalties meted out to recusants at that time. No one knows why Byrd's Latin church music was published: was it a symbol of defiance, or was it meant for the use of Catholics on the continent, or indeed in England, where secret masses were celebrated by groups of recusants in their homes? Most likely it was a musical and religious testament which its composer perhaps hoped would one day adorn Catholic worship if it should ever return in England. *Miserere mei*, one of the most eloquent and deeply-felt of all the Latin motets, was published in 1591. The text is set to music in an inspired combination of block harmony and expressive polyphony; the final section of the piece, to the words 'dele iniquitatem meam' rises to a passionate climax which subsides, magically, to a calm final cadence.

Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam:
et secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum, dele iniquitatem meam.

(*Psalm 51, v. 1*)

(*Have mercy on me, O God, after thy great goodness:
according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences.*)

4 **Haec dies** (William Byrd)
(SSATTB)

This, one of Byrd's most popular motets, first appeared in 1591 in the third of his published collections of *Cantiones Sacrae*. As befits its Easter text, it is a bubbly, joyful piece, with some witty rhythmic surprises; born somewhat later, Byrd could have written marvellous jazz.

Haec dies quam fecit Dominus; exultemus et laetemur in ea. Alleluia.
(*Vesper Antiphon for Easter Day: Psalm 118, v. 24*)

(*This is the day which the Lord has made: let us rejoice and be glad in it. Alleluia.*)

5 **Ave verum Corpus** (William Byrd)
(SATB)

One of the most familiar and treasured examples of Byrd's church music, *Ave verum corpus* was included in the *Gradualia* of 1605, a published collection of music for the Latin Mass. The personal conclusion (*Miserere mei*) is the version of the text printed in Primers of private devotions.

Ave verum corpus, natum de Maria Virgine:
Vere passum, immolatum in cruce pro homine:
Cuius latus perforatum unda fluxit sanguine:
Esto nobis praegustatum in mortis examine.
O dulcis, O pie, O Jesu Fili Mariae,
Miserere mei. Amen.

(*Pope Innocent VI, d. 1342: Sequence hymn for the Feast of Corpus Christi.*)

(*All hail, O true Body, of the blessed Virgin born,
Which in anguish to redeem us did'st suffer upon the cross;
From whose side, when pierced by spear, there came forth both water and blood:
Be to us at our last hour the source of consolation.
O loving, O holy, O Jesu, thou Son of Mary,
O have mercy on me. Amen.*)

Music of the Reformation

6 **If ye love me** (Thomas Tallis)
(SATB; originally AATB)

After the Reformation a much simpler style was needed for setting English texts in a way that enabled the words to be easily heard; this is one of the best-loved examples. Chordal, hymn-like passages alternate with sections of simple polyphonic imitation that never obscure the clarity of the words; Tallis adheres fairly strictly to the principle laid down by Archbishop Cranmer that composers should set one syllable per note, and fashions a perfect expressive gem.

If ye love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth.
(*John 14, vv. 15–17*)

7 **Hide not thou thy face** (Richard Farrant, c.1525–1580)
(SATB)

Farrant was a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, later becoming Master of the Choristers at St George's Chapel, Windsor, where he organized the choristers into an acting company that presented musical plays for the entertainment of the court. Not many other details about his life are known and very little of his music survives, but *Hide not thou thy face* and the rather similar *Call to remembrance* were among the most popular anthems of their day and have lost none of their appeal. Farrant's interest in acting is reflected in his word-setting, which is especially direct, declamatory and expressive; the composer seems to shake a fist at heaven.

Hide not thou thy face from us, O Lord, and cast not off thy servants in thy displeasure; for we confess our sins unto thee, and hide not our unrighteousness.
For thy mercy's sake deliver us from all our sins.

(from *Psalms* 27, v. 10)

8 **Lord, for thy tender mercy's sake** (Richard Farrant)
(SATB)

There is some doubt whether this favourite little piece was written by Farrant or by another minor Elizabethan composer, John Hilton (*d.* 1608). Like Farrant, Hilton was a cathedral musician who had an interest in the theatre, producing 'boy plays' enacted by young choristers.

Lord, for thy tender mercy's sake, lay not our sins to our charge, but forgive that is past, and give us grace to amend our sinful lives: to decline from sin and incline to virtue, that we may walk in a perfect heart before thee now and evermore.
Amen.

(*John Bull, Christian Prayers and Holy Meditations, 1568*)

9 **O clap your hands** (Orlando Gibbons, 1583–1625)
(double choir SATB:SATB)

Orlando Gibbons is acknowledged as one of the foremost composers of his period; he wrote some forty anthems, a variety of other church music, a book of madrigals, and a large quantity of keyboard and instrumental consort music. He was born in Oxford of a musical family, and sang as a boy in the choir of King's College, Cambridge, where later, in 1599, he became a student. In about 1603 he moved to London to become a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal. By the time of his death he was senior organist there, and also organist of Westminster Abbey. *O clap your hands* is one of the largest and most festive of Gibbons' anthems, making vivid use of its eight-voice double choir layout. It was first performed in 1622 at a ceremony in Oxford when Gibbons and his friend William Heyther received Doctorates of Music; one source states that Gibbons wrote the piece as a qualifying exercise for the degree. The music certainly offers convincing evidence of Gibbons' impressive compositional skill, and it contains examples of such 'learned devices' as canon which would no doubt have gratified the examiners.

O clap your hands together, all ye people: O sing unto God with the voice of melody.
For the Lord is high and to be feared; he is the great King of all the earth.
He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.
He shall choose out an heritage for us, even the worship of Jacob, whom he loved.
God is gone up with a merry noise, and the Lord with the sound of the trumpet.
O sing praises, sing praises unto our God; O sing praises, sing praises unto the Lord
our King.
For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with the understanding.
God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon his holy seat.
For God, which is highly exalted, doth defend the earth, as it were with a shield.
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.

(from *Psalms* 47)

10 **Bow thine ear, O Lord** (William Byrd)
(SATBB)

This piece first appeared in Byrd's 1589 collection of *Cantiones Sacrae* to a Latin text, but it was later fitted to the present English translation, probably not by Byrd himself, however. The music shows

Byrd's mature style at its most poignantly expressive; his choice of text is believed to be an oblique reference to the plight of the English Catholics and their outlawed faith.

Bow thine ear, O Lord, and hear us: let thine anger cease from us.
Sion is wasted and brought low, Jerusalem desolate and void.

(*Psalm 86, v. 1; Psalm 85, v. 4; Isaiah 64, v. 10*)

11 Hosanna to the Son of David (Orlando Gibbons)
(SSAATTB)

Like *O clap your hands*, this is a vivid and resplendent anthem for double choir (though with a single bass part, used to especially telling effect near the end); it could well have been written to grace a royal or other ceremonial occasion. The multiplicity of its printed and manuscript sources is indicative of its widespread popularity in the seventeenth century.

Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord.
Blessed be the King of Israel. Blessed be the King(dom) that cometh in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest places. Hosanna in the highest heavens.

(*based on Matthew 21, v. 9, Mark 11, v. 10*)

Music of the Restoration

12 Lord, how long wilt thou be angry (Henry Purcell, 1659–95)
(SSATB)

Purcell, the greatest English composer of the Baroque period, divided his career between the church and the theatre. As a boy he was a Chapel Royal chorister, and at the age of only 20 was appointed organist of Westminster Abbey. In 1682 he was additionally given the post of organist to the Chapel Royal, for which much of his large output of church music was written. The demand for Anglican church music declined during the reign of the Catholic James II and did not revive under his successor, the Protestant William II, so in his later years Purcell's activity was concentrated more and more on the theatre. He had an intense and (for his time) unusual interest in music of the past, and several pieces written around 1680 show its influence. *Lord, how long wilt thou be angry*, despite its boldness of dissonance and chromaticism, is written in recognizably the same language as the music of

Byrd and Gibbons. Purcell's ability to bring a text vividly to life remained a constant factor in his style and is one of the most remarkable facets of his genius.

Lord, how long wilt thou be angry: shall thy jealousy burn like fire for ever?
O remember not our old sins, but have mercy upon us, and that soon: for we are
come to great misery.

Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy Name; O deliver us, and be
merciful unto our sins, for thy Name's sake.

So we, that are thy people, and the sheep of thy pasture, shall give thee thanks for ever:
and will always be shewing forth thy praise from one generation to another.

(*Psalm 79, vv. 5, 8, 9, 13*)

13 Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts (Henry Purcell)
(SATB)

This brief but eloquent anthem, written for the funeral of Queen Mary in 1695, shows Purcell's style at its simplest and most moving. The music, almost all note-against-note without contrapuntal elaboration, unfolds with dignity and pathos.

Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts: shut not thy merciful ears unto our
prayer; but spare us, Lord most holy, O God most mighty, O holy and most merciful
Saviour, thou most worthy Judge eternal, suffer us not, at our last hour, for any pains
of death, to fall from thee. Amen.

(*from the Burial Service, Book of Common Prayer, 1662*)

14 Hear my prayer, O Lord (Henry Purcell)
(SSAATTBB)

Hear my prayer, O Lord comes in Purcell's autograph manuscript a few pages after *Lord, how long wilt thou be angry*; frustratingly, it breaks off after what seems to be the first section of a longer work and is followed by blank pages. Great concentration and intensity are apparent from the very opening, not only in the emotional expression of the text but in the contrapuntal intricacy of the music: Purcell handles eight-voice writing with impressive skill.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my crying come unto thee.

(*Psalm 102, v. 1*)

The Anglican revival and the twentieth century

15 **Beati quorum via** (Charles Villiers Stanford, 1852–1924) (SSATBB)

Stanford, born in Dublin, spent most of his life teaching and conducting at Cambridge University. He studied in Germany, rapidly gaining a reputation in many branches of composition on his return to England; he was appointed Professor of Music at Cambridge at the early age of 35, and held the post till his death. His relatively small output of church music has a valued place in the Anglican repertory, thanks to its tunefulness, superior craftsmanship and convincing sense of structure. *Beati quorum via* was written in 1905 and dedicated 'to Alan Gray [a friend and colleague] and the choir of Trinity College, Cambridge'. The music is gracious and fluent, making imaginative use of a six-voiced texture. The Latin psalm text is primarily a springboard for the music; the piece could be thought of as a miniature symphonic movement for choir.

Beati quorum via integra est: qui ambulant in lege Domini.

(*Psalm 119, v. 1*)

(*Blessed are those that are undefiled in the way: and walk in the law of the Lord.*)

16 **This joyful Eastertide** (Dutch carol, arranged by Charles Wood, 1866–1926) (SATB)

Like Sullivan and Stanford, two other leading figures in the revival of English music which started in the 1880s and gathered strength after 1900, Wood was an Irishman. He taught at Cambridge, becoming Professor of Music on Stanford's death in 1924. As a composer he is remembered chiefly for his beautifully-crafted church music; he also had a gift for choral arranging, of which *This joyful Eastertide* is a simple but well-loved example.

This joyful Eastertide,
Away with sin and sorrow!
My Love, the Crucified,
Hath sprung to life this morrow.

*Had Christ, that once was slain,
Ne'er burst his three-day prison,
Our faith had been in vain:
But now hath Christ arisen.*

My flesh in hope shall rest,
And for a season slumber;
Till trump from east to west
Shall wake the dead in number.

Death's flood hath lost his chill,
Since Jesus crossed the river;
Lover of souls, from ill
My passing soul deliver.

(*G. R. Woodward*)

17 **Sing lullaby** (Herbert Howells, 1892–1983) (SATB)

Herbert Howells is a composer as hard to classify as he is easy to recognize. Despite the influences apparent in his work – Tudor polyphony, the modality of his friend Vaughan Williams, the impressionism of Debussy and Ravel – his style remained individual: subtle and evocatively sensitive, it often has a melancholy flavour strangely akin to the blues. Church music formed an increasingly important part of his work, much of it written for specific cathedral or collegiate choirs. *Sing lullaby*, one of a set of three 'carol-anthems', dates from 1920; the author of the text was a friend of the composer.

Sing lullaby, sing lullaby,
While snow doth gently fall,
Sing lullaby to Jesus
Born in an oxen-stall.

Sing lullaby, sing lullaby
While thickly snow doth fall,
Sing lullaby to Jesus
The Saviour of all.

Sing lullaby to Jesus
Born now in Bethlehem,
The naked blackthorn's growing
To weave his diadem.

(*F. W. Harvey*)

18 **A spotless Rose** (Herbert Howells) (SATB)

This, one of its composer's most familiar and well-loved pieces, was written in 1919 and published as No. 3 of the set of 'carol-anthems'. Although it is a fairly early work it bears Howells's distinctive stamp in its harmonic subtlety, metrical freedom, richness of texture, sensitivity to words, and long-breathed vocal lines. The words are a free translation of the late medieval German carol *Es ist ein' Ros' entsprungen*. Howells does not identify his source, but describes them as 'of XIV century origin'.

A spotless Rose is blowing,
 Sprung from a tender root,
 Of ancient seers' foreshowing,
 Of Jesse promised fruit;
 Its fairest bud unfolds to light
 Amid the cold, cold winter,
 And in the dark midnight.

The Rose which I am singing,
 Whereof Isaiah said,
 Is from its sweet root springing
 In Mary, purest maid;
 For through our God's great love and might,
 The blessed Babe she bare us
 In a cold, cold winter's night.

(14th century, adapted)

19 What cheer? (William Walton, 1902–83)
 (SATB)

Sir William Walton began his musical life as a chorister at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. His first published composition, *A litany* (Disc 2, track 17), was a short anthem written at the age of 16, and from time to time he returned to church music, though the bulk of his output is orchestral. His handful of church pieces are all of high quality. *What cheer?*, a carol written in 1960, represents the exuberant, rhythmic side of his musical personality.

*What cheer? What cheer? Good cheer! Good cheer!
 Be merry and glad this good New Year!*

'Lift up your hearts, and be glad
 In Christ's birth,' the angel bade.
 'Say each to other, if any be sad:
 What cheer?'

I tell you all with heart so free:
 Right welcome, welcome ye be to me;
 Be glad and merry, for charity!
 What cheer?

Now the King of heav'n his birth hath take,
 Joy and mirth we ought to make;
 Say each to other, for his sake:
 'What cheer?'

(from *Richard Hill's Commonplace Book*,
 early 16th century)

20 O taste and see (Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872–1958)
 (SATB with soprano solo)

Vaughan Williams was never directly associated with any cathedral or collegiate choir, but his prolific

output includes a fair amount of church music. *O taste and see*, one of the last of his sacred pieces, was written for the 1953 coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. The music is of distilled simplicity, with a pentatonic flavour that reminds us of the composer's lifelong interest in folk-song.

O taste and see how gracious the Lord is: blest is the man that trusteth in him.

(*Psalms 34, v. 8*)

21 A hymn to the Virgin (Benjamin Britten, 1913–76)
 (double choir SATB:SATB)

Church music forms only a small part of Benjamin Britten's large output, but it is a valuable part nevertheless: such works as the *Ceremony of Carols* (1942), the *Festival Te Deum* (1944) and the *Missa Brevis* (1959) bear the stamp of his unflinching professionalism, originality, and imaginativeness in the handling of words. *A hymn to the Virgin* (written in 1930 when he was 17 and revised four years later) is among his earliest published compositions. The text, like many other medieval carol texts, is macaronic, that is, it is partly in Latin and partly in the vernacular. Britten seizes on this feature and lays the music out for two choirs, a larger one singing the English lines and a smaller semi-chorus the Latin. The two choirs sing strictly in alternation until the last verse, where they combine to sonorous effect.

Of one that is so fair and bright
Velut maris stella (like a star of the sea)
 Brighter than the day is light,
Parens et puella: (mother and maiden)
 I cry to thee, thou see to me,
 Lady, pray thy Son for me,
Tam pia, (thou holy one)
 That I may come to thee.
Maria! (Mary)

All this world was forlorn
Eva peccatrice, (through Eve the sinner)
 Till our Lord was y-born
De te genetrice. (of thee, the mother)

With *ave* it went away
 Darkest night, and comes the day
Salutis: (of salvation)
 The well springeth out of thee
Virtutis. (of virtue)

Lady, flower of everything
Rosa sine spina (rose without a thorn)
 Thou bare Jesu, heaven's King,
Gratia divina: (by divine grace)
 Of all thou bear'st the prize,
 Lady, queen of paradise
Electa: (chosen one)
 Maid mild, mother *es*
Effecta. (you are proved)

(Anon., c. 1300)

[22] **Jesus Christ the apple tree** (Elizabeth Poston, 1905–87)
 (SATB)

Elizabeth Poston's life in music embraced composition, broadcasting, and the editing and arranging of folk-songs and carols. *Jesus Christ the apple tree*, an original setting of a striking and visionary early American text, first appeared in 1967 in *The Cambridge Hymnal* and gained immediate popularity. The music, almost primitively simple and recalling a curious mixture of Satie, Poulenc and the American shape-note tunes, is of haunting beauty.

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.

His 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 of all; but now I see
 'Tis found in Christ the apple tree.

I'm weary with my former toil,
 Here I will sit and rest awhile:
 Under the shadow I will be,
 Of Jesus Christ the apple tree.

This fruit doth make my soul to thrive,
 It keeps my dying faith alive;
 Which makes my soul in haste to be
 With Jesus Christ the apple tree.

(Anon., collection of Joshua Smith,
 New Hampshire, 1784)

[23] **Faire is the heaven** (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; while there he gave piano lessons to the young Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret. His published compositions are few, all of them church or organ music. *Faire is the heaven*, written in 1925, is counted his finest work; it remains a cornerstone of the Anglican repertory, beloved by every choir that has ever sung it. It is a spaciouly conceived and richly romantic setting for double choir of a fine and little-known text – Harris's inspired choice of texts is characteristic of him – and it seems to evoke with infinite nostalgia the vanished Edwardian England of Harris's own youth: a world where the sun always shone, mellow and golden, through the cathedral windows, where life was secure, leisured and elegant (for the fortunate few) and, above all, where there was no inkling of the cataclysmic World War to come.

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 Gods owne person, without rest or end.

These then in faire each other farre excelling,
 As to the Highest they approach more neare,
 Yet is that Highest farre beyond all telling,
 Fairer than all the rest which there appeare,
 Though all their beauties joynd together were;
 How then can mortalle tongue hope to expresse
 The image of such endlesse perfectnesse?

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

Disc 2

Anthems and Introits

- 1 **Rejoice in the Lord** (Anon., 16th century)
(SATB)

This lively piece, formerly ascribed to the mid-sixteenth-century composer John Redford, typifies the concise, syllabic style of the first English anthems; its text is from the ‘Great Bible’ of 1540.

Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, rejoice. Let your softness be known unto all men: the Lord is e’en at hand. Be careful for nothing: but in all prayer and supplication, let your petitions be manifest unto God with giving of thanks. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesu. Amen.

(*Philippians 4, vv. 4–7*)

- 2 **Remember not, Lord, our offences** (Henry Purcell)
(SSATB)

Remember not, Lord, our offences comes from the same autograph manuscript in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, as *Lord, how long wilt thou be angry* and *Hear my prayer*, a compilation not only of Purcell’s own anthems but of music by earlier composers whom he admired, including Gibbons’ *Hosanna to the Son of David*. He began the collection in 1677 and used it for about five years, adding his own compositions to those he had studied.

Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers; neither take thou vengeance of our sins, but spare us, good Lord, spare thy people whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood, and be not angry with us for ever. Spare us, good Lord.

(*from the Litany, 1662 Book of Common Prayer*)

- 3 **Come, let’s rejoice** (John Amner, 1579–1641)
(SATB)

Amner was organist and choirmaster at Ely Cathedral from 1610 until his death, and a fairly prolific

composer of church music. *Come, let’s rejoice* comes from his only published collection, *Sacred Hymnes of 3, 4, 5 and 6 parts* (1615). With its appealing lightness of texture and dance-like rhythms, it resembles the madrigals of the time, and may in fact have been intended for home rather than church performance.

Come, let’s rejoice unto the Lord our God, let us make joy to God our Saviour. Let us approach to his presence in confession, and in psalms let us make joy to him. Alleluia.

(*Paraphrase of Psalm 95, vv. 1, 2*)

- 4 **When David heard** (Thomas Tomkins, 1572–1656)
(SAATB)

Tomkins was the last of the ‘Tudor’ school of English composers, most of his output in fact dating from the Jacobean era. Believed to have been a pupil of William Byrd, he was organist and choirmaster of Worcester Cathedral from 1596 (with some interruptions) until its organ was dismantled and choral services discontinued in 1646. Also active in London, he was made a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal (i.e. choir member) and later its organist. *When David heard* was published both in his *Songs of 3. 4. 5. & 6. Parts* (1622) and in the posthumous compilation of his church music *Musica Deo Sacra* published by his son in 1668; the two editions are at different pitches, which perhaps tells us something about the relationship between written and performing pitch. Several composers set this text, probably as an expression of the grief at the death of James I’s eldest son, Prince Henry, in 1612.

When David heard that Absalon was slain he went up into his chamber over the gate, and wept: and thus he said: O my son, Absalon my son, would God I had died for thee.

(*2 Samuel 18, v. 33*)

- 5 **I sat down under his shadow** (Edward Bairstow, 1874–1946)
(SATB)

Sir Edward Bairstow, organist of York Minster from 1913 until his death, typifies the English organist-composer of the earlier part of the twentieth century: conservative, craftsmanlike, often imaginative, gifted with a real feeling for choral sonority and word setting. *I sat down under his shadow*, which appeared in 1925, was one of the earliest publications of the then newly-established

music department of the Oxford University Press. Its mystic, slightly oriental flavour suggests connections with Bairstow's exact contemporary, Holst.

I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.
He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

(*Song of Solomon 2, vv. 3, 4*)

6 **These are they which follow the lamb** (John Goss, 1800–80)
(SATB)

Goss and his younger contemporary Stainer were the two most prominent Victorian composers of church music. Goss was organist of St Paul's Cathedral from 1838 until his death, and most of his church music dates from his time there. *These are they which follow the Lamb*, written in 1859, gives the lie to the belief that all Victorian church music is sentimental or vulgar: it is simple, chaste, and almost completely diatonic.

These are they which follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

(*Revelation 14, vv. 4, 5*)

Latin motets

7 **Christe Jesu, pastor bone** (John Taverner, c. 1490–1545)
(SATBarB)

Taverner and Sheppard represent the final, glorious flowering of English pre-Reformation church music. Significant phases of both their careers were spent in Oxford, Sheppard at Magdalen College, Taverner as choirmaster for the magnificent new Cardinal College (now Christ Church) set up by Henry VIII's chief minister Cardinal Wolsey. Taverner's choir was large for the time, numbering up to forty voices, and his compositions reflect the splendour of this establishment (which was, however, short-lived: the college was opened in 1526, but its funds were withdrawn on Wolsey's fall from office in 1529 and the choir declined thereafter). The statutes specified the daily singing of certain votive antiphons after Compline (the final service of the day), and *Christe Jesu, pastor bone* is one of these; its text survives only in the Elizabethan adaptation given here, but it is known to have been originally in honour of St William of York.

Christe Jesu, pastor bone, mediator et patrone, mundi nobis in agone confer opem et depone vitae sordes, et coronae celestis da gloriam. Et Elizabetham nostram Angliae reginae serva, et ecclesiam piorum tuere custos horum, et utrisque concedatur aeternae vitae praemium.

(*adapted from the Antiphon of St William of York*)

(*O Christ Jesus, our good shepherd, mediator and guardian in the midst of our earthly toil, grant us grace and wash away the stains of life, and grant us the glory of a heavenly crown. Preserve Elizabeth our Queen of England, guard the church of thy faithful people, and may the reward of eternal life be granted to them.*)

8 **O beatam et sacrosanctum diem** (Peter Philips, 1561–1628)
(SSATB)

Peter Philips, together with Richard Dering, stands apart from the illustrious group of English composers active at the end of the sixteenth and start of the seventeenth centuries, by reason of exile. After childhood and youth in London as a choirboy at St Paul's Cathedral, Philips (who was firmly Catholic) fled to the continent in 1582. After various European travels, he settled in Antwerp, where he enjoyed a successful career as composer and teacher, later moving to Brussels where he was chapel organist to the Archduke Albert. Philips's musical contacts being more with his continental contemporaries than with his compatriots, it is not surprising that his motets (most of which were published in his lifetime) are generally more Italian than English in style. *O beatum et sacrosanctum diem*, from his *Cantiones Sacrae* of 1612, is a joyful Christmas motet – one which seems, incidentally, to have furnished the model for Sweelinck's better-known *Hodie Christus natus est*.

O beatum et sacrosanctum diem, in qua Dominus noster de Virgine Maria pro nobis nasci dignatus est. Gaudeat itaque universus orbis, et cantemus illi in sono tubae, cithara, psalterio et organo. Congratulemur cum multitudine angelorum exercitus semper suas laudes cantantibus, Noë, Noë.

(*Office antiphon for Christmas Day*)

(*O blessed and most holy day, on which our Lord deigned to be born for us of the Virgin Mary. Therefore let the whole world rejoice, and let us sing to him with the sound of the trumpet, strings,*

harp and organ. Let us rejoice with the multitude of the heavenly host, ever singing his praises.)

9 **Nunc dimittis** (Herbert Howells)
(double choir SATB:SATB)

This canticle setting (intended for use in the Catholic evening office of Compline) was written for the choir of Westminster Cathedral. The organist, R.R. Terry, who had been introduced to the work of the young Howells by Stanford, invited Howells and three other composers to write settings of the Nunc dimittis for double choir, all to be performed during Holy Week 1914. Howells' setting was not published at the time and, after Terry's retirement in 1924, was forgotten until after the composer's death, when a manuscript came to light, leading to publication in 1989. The music is altogether remarkable. Richly laid out for double choir, it was perfectly calculated for the very reverberant acoustic of the (in 1914) almost brand-new cathedral. Its modal, slightly neo-Tudor idiom might suggest the influence of Vaughan Williams's *Mass in G minor* (also for unaccompanied double choir and written for Westminster Cathedral); but the Mass was not written until eight years later.

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.

(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. 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.)

10 **O vos omnes** (Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872–1958)
(SSAATTBB with alto solo)

This deeply-felt and impressive piece was also written for the choir of Westminster Cathedral, in 1922; it could be regarded as a pre-echo of the Mass in G minor of a few months later. R.R. Terry, who was

a pioneer in reviving Tudor church music, was also active in promoting the involvement of leading English composers in church music, and may well have encouraged Vaughan Williams (and Howells a few years earlier) to look back at the Tudor legacy in their own writing for his choir. *O vos omnes* certainly has a melodic contour influenced by Tudor polyphony, though its harmonies, made up chiefly of unrelated triads that follow the tune around, are more suggestive of Debussy. Overall, the music's sense of rhapsody and freedom recalls Vaughan Williams's own *Tallis Fantasia* of 1910. With great imagination and effectiveness, the composer uses only the upper voices of the choir, punctuated by eloquent alto solos, for the main part of the motet, reserving the men's voices for the cries of 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem' near the end.

O vos omnes, qui transitis per viam, attendite, et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus: quoniam vindemiavit me, ut locutus est Dominus in die irae furoris sui. De excelso misit ignem in ossibus meis, et erudit me: expandit rete pedibus meis, convertit me retrorsum: posuit me desolatum, tota die moerore confectam. Vigilavit jugum iniquitatum mearum: in manu eius convolutae sunt, et impositae collo meo: infirma est virtus mea: dedit me Dominus in manu, de qua non potero surgere. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

(from the Office of Tenebrae for Maundy Thursday: Lamentations of Jeremiah 1, vv. 12–14)

(Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, where the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.

From above hath he sent fire into my bones, and it prevailed against them: he hath spread a net for my feet, he hath turned me back: he hath made me desolate and faint all the day.

The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand: they are ureatbed, and come up upon my neck: he hath made my strength to fall, the Lord hath delivered me into their hands, from whom I am not able to rise up.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord thy God.)

11 **Factum est silentium** (Richard Dering, c. 1580–1630)
(SSATTB)

Dering was, like Philips, an English Catholic musician who went into exile in the Spanish Netherlands

(or, according to another account, converted to Catholicism while visiting Rome in 1612). By 1617 he was organist to the convent of English nuns in Brussels, and in the same year published his first collection of *Cantiones Sacrae*; the publisher was the noted Phalèse of Antwerp who also published music by Philips. *Factum est silentium* comes from a second collection which appeared in 1618; its declamatory, dramatic style shows clearly the influence of the new Italian Baroque style which Dering's compatriots in England were perhaps slower to embrace.

Factum est silentium in coelo. Dum committeret bellum draco cum Michaele
Archangelo. Audita est vox milia milium, dicentium: salus, honor et virtus, omnipotentis
Deo. Alleluia.

(*Antiphon at Lauds on Michaelmas Day*)

(*There was silence in heaven. Then the dragon fought with the Archangel Michael. A voice was heard of thousands upon thousands, saying: salvation, honour and strength to the omnipotent God. Alleluia.*)

[12] Justorum animae (Charles Villiers Stanford, 1852–1924)
(SATB)

This, together with *Beati quorum via* (disc 1, track 15) and the less familiar *Coelos ascendit hodie* make up a set of three motets (op. 38) which Stanford wrote in 1905.

Justorum animae in manu Dei sunt, et non tanget illos tormentum malitiae.
Visi sunt oculis insipientium mori, illi autem sunt in pace.

(*Wisdom 3, vv. 1-3*)

(*The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them.
In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, but they are in peace.*)

Settings of hymns and other poetry

[13] Hail, gladdening Light (Charles Wood)
(double choir SATB:SATB)

This sonorous double-choir anthem, one of Wood's finest, was published in 1919. Its rich choral

texture shows an affinity with the two Harris anthems on this recording, though Wood's style is not as luxuriantly chromatic as Harris's; archaic influences, mainly of the church music of the post-Reformation period, held his natural romanticism in check, leading a touch of austere dignity to this piece, as to much of his choral music.

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

Worthiest are 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.

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.

(*3rd century, Greek; tr. John Keble*)

[14] A hymn to the Mother of God (John Tavener, *b.* 1944)
(double choir SATB:SATB)

John Tavener stands out among composers of his generation as an individual and compelling voice. Most of his works, large and small, involve voices and are religious in inspiration; he draws particular nourishment from the musical and liturgical traditions of the Greek Orthodox Church. *Two Hymns to the Mother of God* were written in 1985 in memory of the composer's mother, and were first performed by the Choir of Winchester Cathedral. The first of the two hymns uses the medium of double choir to unusual and striking effect: the second choir (placed on the right in this recording) follows the first choir in strict canon at three beats' distance).

In You, O Woman full of Grace, the angelic choirs, and the human race, all creation
rejoices. O sanctified Temple, mystical Paradise, and glory of Virgins. In You,
O Woman full of Grace, all creation rejoices. All praise be to You.

(*from the Liturgy of St Basil*)

[15] Hymn for the Dormition of the Mother of God (John Tavener)
(SATB)

This hymn, marked 'solemn, quiet and tender, with a broad, flowing line', takes the form of a threefold repetition of a gentle, chant-like melody which is heard first over a sustained G major chord,

then in simple three-part harmony, then finally in rich parallel chords for the full choir.

O ye apostles, assembled here from the ends of the earth, bury my body in Gethsemane:
and Thou my Son and God, receive my spirit.

(from the Vigil Service of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary)

16 They are at rest (Edward Elgar, 1857–1934)
(SATB)

As a Roman Catholic, Elgar probably felt himself something of an outsider in the musical England of his day, dominated as it was by Anglican composers and organists. Like Parry and Stanford, his two leading contemporaries, he wrote prolifically for choir, but rather little church music either for the Catholic or Anglican liturgies. *They are at rest*, described in the score as an ‘elegy for unaccompanied chorus’, was written for a service in 1910 at the Royal Mausoleum commemorating the anniversary of Queen Victoria’s death. For its text Elgar turned to Cardinal Newman (whose poem *The Dream of Gerontius* had been the basis of Elgar’s great oratorio of 1900). The quiet, reverent dignity of the piece bears witness to the seriousness with which Elgar took the choral medium.

They are at rest, they are at rest;
We may not stir the heav’n of their repose
By rude invoking voice, or prayer address
In waywardness to those
Who in the mountain grots of Eden lie,
And hear the fourfold river as it murmurs by.

And soothing sounds
Blend with the neighb’ring waters as they glide;
Posted along the haunted garden’s bounds,
Angelic forms abide,
Echoing, as words of watch, o’er lawn and grove
The verses of that hymn which Seraphs chant
above.

They are at rest, they are at rest.

(John Henry Newman, 1801–90)

17 A litany (William Walton)
(SATB)

This brief composition, written at Oxford when the composer was only 16, is far more than a precocious trifle. Its craftsmanship is assured, its harmonic language already distinctively Waltonian, its sense of melancholy prophetic of the opening chorus of *Belsbazzar’s Feast*, written more than ten years later.

Drop, drop, slow tears,
And bathe those beauteous feet,
Which brought from heaven
The news and Prince of peace.

Cease not, wet eyes,
His mercies to entreat;
To cry for vengeance
Sin doth never cease.

In your deep floods
Drown all my faults and fears;
Nor let his eye
See sin, but through my tears.

(Phineas Fletcher, 1582–1650)

18 Nolo mortem peccatoris (Thomas Morley, 1557/8–1602)
(SATB)

Morley is associated more with madrigals and related secular forms than with church music, but he did write a handful of sacred pieces. *Nolo mortem peccatoris* appeared in a collection called *Tristitia Remedium* (A remedy for sadness), a manuscript anthology dated 1616 compiled by Stephen Miriell, Rector of the Church of St Stephen Walbrook in London. The text is the refrain and two verses of a long carol in medieval form perhaps dating back to the fifteenth century. Morley provides a through-composed setting.

**Nolo mortem peccatoris*;
Haec sunt verba Salvatoris.

Father, I am thine only Son,
Sent down from heav’n mankind to save.
Father, all things fulfill’d and done
According to thy will I have.
Father, my will now all is this:
Nolo mortem peccatoris.

Father, behold my painful smart,
Taken for man on ev’ry side;
Ev’n from my birth to death most tart,
No kind of pain I have denied,
But suffer’d all, and all for this:
Nolo mortem peccatoris.

(attributed to John Redford, 16th century)

(**I desire not the death of a sinner*;
These are the words of the Saviour.)

19 O nata lux (Thomas Tallis)
(SSATB)

O nata lux, a miniature jewel, would have been proper to the pre-Reformation monastic office of Lauds, but it is known only from its publication in the book of *Cantiones sacrae* that Tallis issued jointly with

Byrd in 1575, by which time its liturgical use was obsolete and indeed illegal. But it is not a liturgical setting, since two verses are joined into one, whereas only alternate verses of hymns were ever set polyphonically, the other verses being sung to plainsong. So it was probably intended for use as an anthem or to be sung for its own sake. Its fine melody (not based on chant), supply rhythm and rich sonority, not to mention the crunchy final cadence, have made it one of the most popular renaissance pieces among modern singers.

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 est 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 for the Feast of the Transfiguration)

[20] Loving Shepherd of thy sheep (John Rutter, *b.* 1945)
(SATB with soprano solo)

This simple setting of a familiar nineteenth-century hymn text was written especially for the present recording.

Loving Shepherd of thy sheep,
Keep thy lamb, in safety keep;
Nothing can thy power withstand,
None can pluck me from thy hand.

Loving Shepherd, ever near,
Teach thy lamb thy voice to hear;
Suffer not my steps to stray
From the straight and narrow way.

I would bless thee every day,
Gladly all thy will obey,
Like thy blessed ones above,
Happy in thy perfect love.

Where thou leadest I would go,
Walking in thy steps below,
Till before my Father's throne,
I shall know as I am known.

(Jane Leeson, 1807–82)

Prayer settings

[21] The Lord's Prayer (Robert Stone, 1516–1613)
(SATB)

The long-lived Stone was a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, known to have sung at the coronation of James I in 1603. His simple setting of the Lord's Prayer, still widely used, first appeared in the collection *Certaine Notes*, published in 1565.

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. Amen.

[22] In manus tuas (John Sheppard, *c.* 1515–1559/60)
(SATB)

The importance and stature of Sheppard has come to be appreciated – and his music widely sung – only comparatively recently. Much of his life is not documented, but he is known to have been 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 period of Catholic revival during the reign of Mary Tudor in the 1550s. *In manus tuas* is among his simplest choral pieces, its polyphonic sections interspersed with plainchant as was typical of the Office music of the time.

In manus tuas Domine, commendo spiritum meum. Redemisti me, Domine, Deus
veritatis.

(Respond from the Office of Compline)

(Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit. Thou hast redeemed me, O God of truth.)

[23] Bring us, O Lord God (William Harris, 1883–1973)
(double choir SATB:SATB)

Bring us, O Lord God, published in 1959, is similar in style and substance to Harris's *Faire is the heaven* (disc 1, track 23), written over thirty years earlier. Both pieces are spacious double-choir anthems in

the rich key of D flat, both have exceptionally fine texts that concern the soul's longing for heaven, and both combine an unmistakably English aura with a perhaps rather un-English intensity of passionate emotion overtly revealed. Yet it would be wrong to regard *Bring us, O Lord God* as a mere repeat of an earlier success; its music seems to spring just as spontaneously out of Donne's magnificent text as *Faire is the heaven* did from Spenser's. Both anthems, may it be asserted, are works of stature and vision, these qualities none the less real for being found in what some music critics dismiss as the provincial backwater of English church music.

Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening into the house and gate of heav'n 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)

Notes by Clifford Bartlett and John Rutter.



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www.johnrutter.com

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Disc 1

Recording produced by Jillian White

Recording engineers: Peter Sidhom and Neil Murray

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