

A black and white photograph of a couple embracing. The man is on the left, shirtless, with his back to the camera. The woman is on the right, also shirtless, with her face partially visible as she leans into the man's shoulder. Her hands are resting on his shoulders. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the contours of their bodies against a dark background.

song
of songs

Laudibus
Mike Brewer

Song of Songs

Laudibus

Mike Brewer *conductor*

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|--------|----|---|---------|
| 1 | Set me as a seal upon thine heart
William Walton (1902–1983) | [3.32] | 10 | Descendi in hortum meum
Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525-1594) | [2.42] |
| 2 | Surge, amica mea
Guillaume Bouzignac (1592–1641) | [2.00] | 11 | Vadem et circuibo civitatem
Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611) | [9.58] |
| | Rise up, my love*
Howard Skempton (b. 1947) | | | Le cantique des cantiques
Jean Yves Daniel-Lesur (1908-2002) | |
| 3 | Rise up, my love | [4.24] | 12 | Dialogue | [3.11] |
| 4 | How fair is thy love | [2.13] | 13 | La Voix du Bien-aimé | [4.07] |
| 5 | My beloved is gone down | [1.22] | 14 | Le Songe | [1.50] |
| 6 | How fair and how pleasant | [2.39] | 15 | Le Roi Salomon | [1.26] |
| 7 | I am the Rose of Sharon*
Gabriel Jackson (b. 1962) | [6.13] | 16 | Le Jardin clos | [4.29] |
| 8 | Dilectus meus mihi
Francis Grier (b. 1955) | [7.20] | 17 | La Sulamite | [3.18] |
| 9 | Quam pulcra es
John Dunstaple (c. 1390-1453) | [1.49] | 18 | Epithalame | [3.14] |
| | | | | Total playing time: | [65.50] |

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Dr Raymond Parks

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Song of Songs

While the *Song of Songs*, or *The Song of Solomon*, is firmly established as a constituent book of the Jewish Bible and of the Christian Old Testament, it stands apart from its surroundings as one of the supreme love poems of world literature. Many attempts have been made over the centuries to interpret it as an allegory of the soul's relationship with God, or Christ, and in the Roman Catholic tradition its descriptions of female beauty have been co-opted into the veneration of the Virgin Mary. But there seems no convincing reason not to take it at face value, as a celebration of erotic love in the form of a dialogue between a bridegroom, presumably King Solomon, and his bride, perhaps a Pharaoh's daughter, with a 'chorus' of the bride's companions. (The *New English Bible*, following two manuscript sources, indicates these characters throughout the text). The poem is remarkable for the way in which it invokes all the senses, and in particular smell: the fragrance of wine, blossom, fruits and spices hangs over it from first to last. But the sense of sound is restricted to a fleeting mention of birdsong; even 'the voice of my beloved' is not described. So it is hardly surprising that many composers over the centuries have added the dimension of music to the text. This disc contains settings of parts of the *Song of Songs*, in Latin, French and the English of the King James Bible, all for unaccompanied voices, and spanning some five and a half centuries.

The earliest setting is by **John Dunstaple** – the first great English composer, or at least the first who can be clearly identified from surviving works and references. An astronomer and mathematician as well as a musician in various royal and ducal households, he was praised on the European mainland as one of the instigators of the influential 'contenance Angloise' or 'English attitude' – a term apparently indicating fullness and sweetness of harmony. This sweetness is especially appropriate to the sensual text of *Quam pulcra est*, a processional antiphon to the Blessed Virgin Mary written some time before about 1430. The texture of three parts moving together, with only momentary divergences from parallel harmony, both puts the emphasis on the harmonic aspect of the work and ensures that the words are clearly heard.

In the humanistic climate of the Renaissance, the *Song of Songs* was highly valued as an expression of personal emotion, and many composers chose to make settings of parts of it. Foremost among them was **Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina**, the leading figure in church music in Rome in the second half of the sixteenth century, whose large output of masses and motets has always been considered the acme of Renaissance polyphony. His fourth book of motets, published in 1584, is subtitled 'ex Canticis canticorum', and consists of a cycle of twenty-nine five-part

Song of Songs

settings of texts from the *Song of Songs*. In the dedication of the volume to Pope Gregory XXIII, Palestrina described it as making amends for his earlier publication of madrigals on poems of profane love; but at the same time he explained that its subject, ‘the divine love of Christ and his spouse the soul’, had demanded of him ‘a kind of music somewhat livelier than I have been accustomed to use in ecclesiastical melodies’. And indeed his approach to the texts is essentially that of the secular madrigal. For example, in No. 24 of the collection, *Descendi in hortum meum*, ‘I went down into my garden’ is set to a string of descending scales in all the parts in turn, and ‘whether the vine flourished’ to a luxuriantly extended figure gradually spreading through the whole texture.

The greatest Spanish contemporary of Palestrina was **Tomás Luis de Victoria**. He was trained in Rome, thus coming under Palestrina’s influence, and he remained in the city, holding various appointments as both musician and priest, until recalled to the service of the Spanish royal family in 1585. His surviving output consists entirely of church music; among the many motets are several settings of texts from the *Song of Songs*. *Vadam et circuibo civitatem* first appeared in Victoria’s first volume of motets, published in Venice in 1572, and was reprinted in 1589 in a collection published in Rome. It is a large-scale work for six voices and in two distinct sections, on a text compiled from several chapters of the book.

There is some madrigalian text-painting: the bride searches for her beloved through the city streets in an increasingly dense maze of ascending and descending scale figures; ‘that I am sick of love’ extends itself in downward-curling phrases to end the first part; and there are suitable downward scales for ‘quo declinavit’ (the equivalent of ‘whither ... turned aside’ in the English Bible), and upward phrases for the beloved climbing into the palm tree. But the work sustains interest chiefly through its variety of textures, with the upper voices sometimes pitted against the lower, as at the start, but with many other contrasting groupings, and with some magnificently resonant passages for the full choir.

A later and lesser-known figure among Renaissance church composers is **Guillaume Bouzignac**, whose career can be traced to church and cathedral posts in various French cities – probably including Tours, where a manuscript in the municipal library preserves most of the surviving works attributed to him. Those works include many motets designated in the most recent *New Grove Dictionary* as ‘paraliturgical’ – that is, based on non-liturgical (and sometimes non-Biblical) texts, and imported into a service as a kind of preaching in music. *Surge, amica mea*, one of a number of settings among those motets of texts from the *Song of Songs*, is for six voices, possibly with the support of an organ continuo (though if so the part is now lost). It sets off a single

part, alternately first soprano and first tenor, against the other five moving in harmony, before ending in more unified four- and six-part textures.

The sensuality of the *Songs of Songs* is allied to the sensuality of a significant strand of French music and to that of the French language – though ultimately to a devotional purpose – in the remarkable *Le Cantique des cantiques* by **Daniel-Lesur**. Like many other French composers of the twentieth century, Daniel-Lesur (the single professional name adopted by Daniel Jean Yves Lesur) can most readily be ‘placed’ through an affiliation: in 1936, he was a co-founder with Olivier Messiaen, André Jolivet and Yves Baudrier of the Jeune France group, which asserted human as opposed to abstract values in composition. In his youth a pupil of Charles Tournemire, he taught for many years at the Schola Cantorum, the institution upholding the tradition of French religious music; he also worked for French radio and held several influential government posts. Daniel-Lesur composed *Le Cantique des cantiques* in 1952 in response to a commission from French radio. It is a setting in seven movements of excerpts chosen from throughout the *Song of Songs*: these excerpts are arranged (with one small exception) in their original sequence; even the refrain ‘Daughters of Jerusalem’, which ends the first, third and sixth movements, is used where it occurs as a refrain in the Biblical text. The work is dedicated ‘to Marcel Couraud and

his Vocal Ensemble’, and it is laid out for the twelve solo voices of that pioneering group (which had also premiered another, very different celebration of love, Messiaen’s *Cinq rechants*). ‘Tutti’ and ‘solo’ markings allow the work to be performed by larger choirs. But in either configuration the twelve-part scoring ensures richness of harmony and detail, and a remarkable variety of vocal ‘orchestration’. In particular, from the opening quintuple-time ‘Dialogue’, male and female voices are frequently used to suggest the identity of the speaker, bride or bridegroom. When this happens, the other voices often add an additional element, as if evoking the fragrances in the air of the original poem. This extra element may be wordless singing or humming, or the percussive syllables which accompany the dance of ‘The Shulamite’, or exclamations of Christian and Jewish worship: ‘Alleluia’, ‘Shéma’. But in two movements it aligns the work more closely with the Christian allegorical interpretation of the *Song of Songs*. In ‘The Dream’, the bride’s description of her search for her beloved is accompanied not only by cries of ‘Yahvé’, or ‘Jahweh’, the Hebrew name of God, but also by fragments of Christian prayer in Latin. And in the final ‘Epithalamium’ or wedding hymn, the setting of the text beginning ‘Set me as a seal upon thine heart’ is counterpointed by a setting in the manner of a mediaeval carol of the Latin antiphon *Veni sponsa Christi*, ‘Come, bride of Christ’, which gathers in all the voices for its final ‘Alleluia’.

Song of Songs

The *Song of Songs* has attracted many British composers in the centuries since Dunstaple, and in particular in the twentieth century. The most comprehensive treatment is Granville Bantock's setting of the entire text as a full-length dramatic cantata; the most allusive Vaughan Williams's *Flos Campi*, for viola, chorus and orchestra, in which the chorus is wordless and the Biblical references are to be found in the title and movement headings. Of the smaller works recorded here, the earliest is by **William Walton**, who began his musical career as a choirboy at Christ Church, Oxford, and in adult life wrote not only large-scale works for choir but also some exquisite miniatures. His wedding anthem *Set me as a seal upon thine heart* was written for the marriage of Ivor Guest (the son of Walton's lover Alice, Lady Wimborne) and Mabel Fox-Strangways at the church of St Mary Abbott in Kensington in November 1938. It uses a shortened version of the same text that Daniel-Lesur set in the 'Epithalamium' of his *Cantique des cantiques*, in the English of the King James Bible. Solo phrases for tenor and soprano punctuate passages which apply Walton's characteristically tangy harmonies to the medium of four-part choir.

Among contemporary British composers, **Howard Skempton** stands out for the unforced, carefully considered simplicity of his writing, mostly in numerous short pieces for piano and for his own instrument, the accordion. *Rise up, my love*, the second of

two settings he has made of English texts from the *Songs of Songs*, was composed in July 2002 in response to a commission from the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, and first performed by the choir under its conductor Paul Hillier in Tallinn in September 2002. Its four short movements set four notably sensuous passages from the poem, all in changing metres responsive to the stresses of the texts: the first for mixed voices with flowing harmonic movement, the second for basses in their low register below a single sustained note in the tenors, the third for sopranos and altos in four-part close harmony, and the last again for mixed voices in slow-moving chords.

An increasingly prominent figure in the younger generation of British composers, **Gabriel Jackson** was born in Bermuda, and sang as a chorister at Canterbury Cathedral before studying with John Lambert at the Royal College of Music in London. His extensive list of commissions in Britain and abroad includes several for vocal groups and choirs. Jackson composed *I am the Rose of Sharon* in May and June 2001 for the male-voice quintet Opus Anglicanum, which gave the first performance in Wells Cathedral that July; he also made a transposed version for five-part mixed voices, with two alto lines. The luxuriant nature of the text, and the original scoring for soloists, encourages the inclusion of floridly ornamented single lines, standing out against a

slow-moving major-key background, but twice giving way to a simple chordal refrain.

Somewhat more outside the musical mainstream is **Francis Grier**, who broke off a career as an Oxford organist and lecturer to study music, theology, and meditation in India, and since returning to England has divided his time between composition and psychodynamic counselling. He describes *Dilectus meus mihi*, which he wrote to be performed at the 1987 Edington Festival of Music within the Liturgy, as a response to the 'lyrical simplicity and ecstatic rapture' of the text. Its deployment of solo voices, semi-chorus and full eight-part choir in ever-changing textures, ranging in density from unsupported single lines to rich harmonies, recalls the vocal 'orchestration' of Daniel-Lesur's *Cantique des cantiques*. And Grier's choice of Latin for the text aligns his work with the centuries-old, and apparently inexhaustible, tradition of musical enhancement of the riches of the *Song of Songs*.

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Anthony Burton spent fifteen years on the production staff of BBC Radio 3, before leaving in 1989 to become a freelance writer and broadcaster on a wide range of music.

Texts and translations

1 **Set me as a seal upon thine heart**

William Walton (1902-1983)

Set me as a seal upon thine heart,
As a seal upon thine arm:
For love is strong as death.
Many waters cannot quench love,
Neither can the floods drown it.

Chapter 8, vv. 6 & 7

2 **Surge, amica mea**

Guillaume Bouzignac (b. before 1592; d. after 1641)

Surge, amica mea, columba mea, formosa mea.
Vox dilecti mei.
En dilectus meus, loquitur mihi.

*Arise, my love, my beautiful one, my perfect one.
The voice of my beloved.
Behold my beloved speaks to me.*

Chapter 8, vv. 8 & 11

3 **Rise up, my love**

Howard Skempton (b. 1947)

Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.
For lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;
The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs;
And the vines with the tender grapes give a
good smell.

Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.
O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock,
In the secret places of the stairs,
Let me see thy countenance,
Let me hear thy voice;
For sweet is thy voice,
And they countenance is comely.
Rise up, my love, my fair one.

Chapter 2, vv. 10-14

4 How fair is thy love

How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse,
How much better is thy love than wine!
And the smell of thine ointments than all
spices!

Chapter 4, v. 10

5 My beloved is gone down

My beloved is gone down into his garden, to
the beds of spices,
To feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.
I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine:
He feedeth among the lilies.

Chapter 6, vv. 2-3

6 How fair and how pleasant

How fair and how pleasant art thou,
O love, for delights!
I am my beloved's,
And his desire is toward me.

Chapter 7, vv. 6 & 10

7 I am the Rose of Sharon

Gabriel Jackson (b. 1962)

I am the rose of Sharon,
and the lily of the valley.
As the lily among thorns,
so is my love among the daughters.
As the apple tree among the trees of the
wood,
so is my beloved among the sons.
I sat down under his shadow with great
delight,
and his fruit was sweet to my taste.
I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine:
he feedeth among the lilies.
I am come into my garden,
my sister, my spouse:
I have gathered my myrrh with spice;
I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey;
I have drunk my wine with my milk:
eat, O friends; drink, yea drink abundantly, O
beloved.
I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine:
he feedeth among the lilies.
He brought me to the banqueting house,
and his banner over me is love.

Chapter 2, vv. 1-3; Ch. 6, v. 3; Ch. 5, v. 1; Ch. 2, v. 4

8 **Dilectus meus mihi**

Francis Grier (b. 1955)

Dilectus Meus mihi, et ego illi:
Ego dilecto meo, et dilectus meus mihi.
Ego dormio, et cor meum vigilat.
Vox dilecti mei pulsantis:
Aperi mihi, soror mea,
Amica mea, columba mea,
immaculate mea.
Ad juro vos, filiae Jerusalem,
Si inveneritis dilectum meum,
Ut annuntietis ei quia amore langueo.
Talis est dilectus meus,
Et ipse est amicus me filiae Jerusalem.

Chapter 6, v. 2; Ch. 5, v.2; Ch 5, v. 8–16

*My beloved is mine, and I am his:
I to my beloved, and my beloved to me.
I sleep, and my heart watches: the voice of my
beloved knocking:
Open to me, my sister,
my love, my dove, my undefiled.
I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
if you find my beloved, to tell him that I am
weak with love.
Such is my beloved, and he is my friend, O
daughters of Jerusalem.*

9 **Quam pulcra es**

John Dunstaple (c. 1390-1453)

Quam pulcra es et quam decora,
Carissima in deliciis.
Statura tua assimilate est palme,
Et ubera tua botris.
Caput tuum ut Carmelus,
Collum tuum turris eburnea.
Veni, dilecte mi,
egrediamur in agrum,
Et videamus si flores fructus parturierunt,
Si floruerunt mala Punica.
Ibi dabo tibi ubera mea.
Alleluia.

Chapter 7, vv. 4-7 & 12

*How fair and pleasant you are,
O loved one in delights.
You are stately as a palm tree,
And your breasts are like its clusters.
Your head crowns you like Carmel:
your neck is like an ivory tower.
Come, my beloved,
let us go forth into the fields,
and see whether the grape blossoms have
opened
and the pomegranates are in bloom
There I will give you my love.
Alleluia.*

10 **Descendi in hortum meum**

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525-1594)

Descendi in hortum meum,
Ut viderem poma convallium,
Et inspicerem si florisset vinea,
Et germinassent mala punica.

Chapter 6, v. 10

*I went down into my garden
to see the fruits of the valley,
and to see if the vineyard had flourished
and the pomegranate budded.*

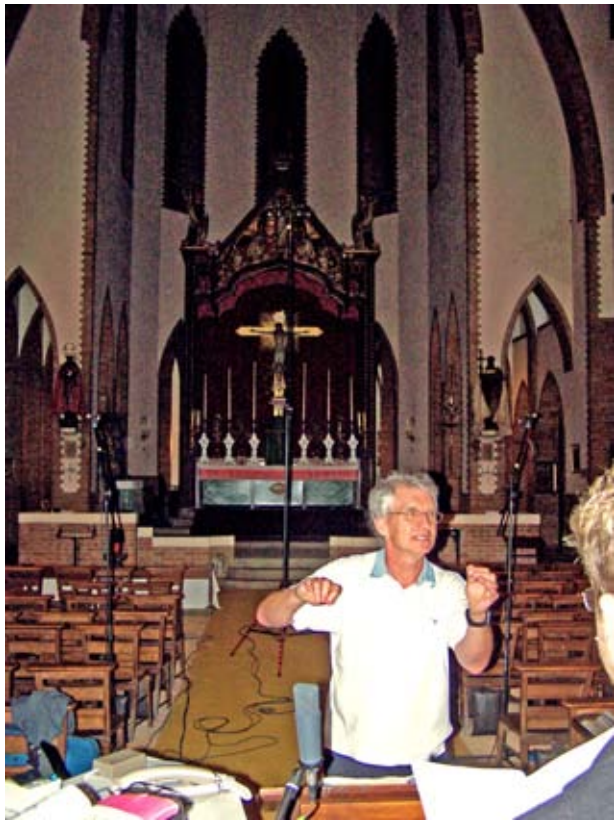
11 **Vadem et circuibo civitatem**

Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611)

Vadam et circuibo civitatem per vicos et plateas.
Quaeram quem diligit anima mea:
Quaesivi illum, et non inveni.
Adiuro vos filiae Hierusalem,
Si inveneritis dilectum meum,
Ut annuntietis ei quia amore langueo.
Qualis est dilectus tuus quia sic adiurasti nos?
Dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus,
Electus ex milibus: talis est dilectus meus,
Et est amicus meus, Filiae Hierusalem.
Quo abiit dilectus tuus,
O pulcherima mulierium?
Quo declinavit et quaeremus eum tecum?
Ascendit in palmam, et apprehendit fructus eius.

Chapter 3, v. 2; Ch. 5, vv. 8-10 & 16-17; Ch. 7, v. 8

*I will rise and go about the city:
in the alleys and in the broad streets
I will seek him whom my soul loves;
I sought him, but I found him not.
I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
if you find my beloved, to tell him that I am
weak with love.
What is your beloved, that you so charge us?
My beloved is white and ruddy,
the choicest among thousands.
Such is my beloved, and such is my love,
O daughters of Jerusalem.
Where has your beloved gone, O loveliest of
women? Where has he turned to?
And we shall seek him with you.
He has climbed into the palm tree, and taken
its fruit.*



Le cantique des cantiques

Jean Yves Daniel-Lesur (1908-2002)

12 Dialogue

Alleluia, alleluia.

A ma cavale attelée au char de Pharaon,
je te compare, Alleluia,

Mon Bien aimé est à moi comme un bouquet
de myrrhe qui repose entre mes seins.

Alleluia, alleluia.

*I would compare you, my dearest,
to a chariot-horse of Pharaoh, Alleluia.*

*My beloved is for me a sachet of
myrrh lying between my breasts.*

Alleluia

Que tu es belle ma bien aimée, que tu es belle.
Tes yeux sont des colombes.

Que tu es beau mon Bien aimé,
que tu es beau.

Alleluia

*How beautiful you are, my dearest, how
beautiful, your eyes are like doves!*

*How beautiful you are, my love,
and how handsome!*

Comme le lis entre les chardons,
telle est ma bien aimée entre les jeunes filles.

Comme le pommier parmi les arbres du verger,
tel est mon Bien aimé parmi les jeunes homes.

A lily among thorns

is my dearest among the maidens.

*Like an apple tree among the trees of the
forest, so is my beloved among young men*

J'ai desiré son ombrage et m'y suis
assise et son fruit est doux à ma bouche.

Il m'a menée au cellier du vin
et la bannière qu'il dresse sur moi c'est l'amour.

*To sit in his shadow is my delight,
and his fruit is sweet to my taste.*

*He has taken me into the wine-garden
and given me loving glances.*

Filles de Jérusalem! N'éveillez pas la bien
aimée avant l'heure de son bon plaisir.

*I charge you, maidens of Jerusalem,
do not rouse or awaken until love is ready.*

13 La Voix du Bien-aimé

Shéma shéma shéma

J'entends mon Bien aimé: voici qu'il arrive
sautant sur les manatganes,
bondissant sur les collines.

Mon Bien aimé est semblable à une gazelle,
à un jeune faon.

Mon Bien aimé élève la voix:

Il me dit – Lève toi la mienne amie.

Hâte toi ma colombe et viens
car déjà l'hiver est passé.

La pluie s'en est allée et retirée.

Sur notre terre les fleurs sont apparues;

La voix de la tourterelle est ouïe en notre terre;
la voix de la tourterelle s'est fait entendre.

Le figuier a produit ses figues.

Les vignes floissantes exhalent leur parfum.

Montre moi ton visage ma colombe cache
que ta voix sonne en mes oreilles

Car douce est ta voix et beau ton visage.

Mon Bien aimé est à moi, et moi à lui,
il pait son troupeau parmi les lis.

Avant que poigne le jour et que s'abaissent
les ombres Reviens!

Sois semblable mon Bien aimé à une gazelle
au jeune faon sur les montagnes de l'alliance.

Shéma shéma shéma

*Hark! My beloved! Here he comes,
bounding over the mountains,
leaping over the hills.*

*My beloved is like a gazelle
or a young stag.*

My beloved spoke, saying to me:

'Rise up, my darling;

my fair one, come away.

For see, the winter is past!

The rains are over and gone;

the flowers appear in the countryside;

*the turtle-dove's cooing is heard in our land;
the green figs ripen on the fig trees*

*and the vine blossoms give forth their
fragrance.*

*My dove, that hides in holes in the cliffs
let me see your face and hear your voice;*

for your voice is sweet, your face is lovely.

*My beloved is mine and I am his;
he grazes his flock among the lilies.*

*While the day is cool and the shadows are
dispersing, turn, my beloved, and show
yourself a gazelle or a young stag on the hills
where aromatic spices grow.*

14 **Le Songe**

Misesere mei
Dona nobis pacem
Da pacem Domine
Miserere mei Deus
Deus Meus
Angeli Domini
Domine Deus Agnus Dei
Spera in Deo Domine
Miserere Deus Meus
Libera nos a malo
Exaudi nos Domine
Dona nobis pacem
Yahvé!
Sur ma couche la nuit j'ai cherché celui que
mon cœur aime.
Je l'ai cherché mais ne l'ai pas trouvé.
Je me lèverai donc et parcourai la ville
dans les rues et sur les places,
je chercherai celui que mon cœur aime.
Je l'ai cherché mais ne l'ai pas trouvé.
Les gardes m'ont rencontrée
ceux qui font la ronde dans la ville.
Avez-vous vu Celui que mon cœur aime.
Filles de Jerusalem,
N'éveillez pas la bien aimée avant l'heure de
son bon plaisir.

*Have mercy upon me.
Grant us peace.
The peace of God.
Have mercy upon me God.
My God,
Guardian Lord,
Lamb of God
Trust in the Lord.
Our Lord have mercy upon us.
Deliver us from evil.
Hear us O Lord.
Grant us peace.
Yahvé!
Night after night on my bed I have sought my
true love;
I have sought him, but I have not found him.
I said 'I will rise and go the round of the city
through the streets and squares,
seeking my true love.'
I sought him, but could not find him.
The watchmen came upon me, as they made
their rounds of the city,
'Have you seen my true love' I asked them
I charge you, maidens of Jerusalem,
do not rouse or awaken love
until it is ready.*

15 Le Roi Solomon

Qu'est-ce là qui monte du désert? Comme
une colonne de fumée? vapeur d'aromates
de myrrhe? vapeur d'encens de tous
parfums exotiques?

Soixante homes vaillants guerriers, vétérans
des combats le glaive au côté le plus forts
d'Israël l'environnent le roi Salomon.

S'est fait un trône en cèdre du Liban, le
dossier d'or, le siege de pourpre.

Venez filles de Sion contempler Salomon
portent le diadème don't le couronna sa
mère au jour de ses noces de la joie
de son cœur.

Chapter 3, vv. 6-11

*Who is this coming up from the wilderness like
a column of smoke from the burning of myrrh
and frankincense?*

*Look! It is Solomon carried in his state litter,
escorted by sixty of Israel's picked warriors,
each with his sword ready at his side.*

*The palanquin which King Solomon had made
for himself was of wood from Lebanon;
its headrest of gold; its seat was of purple.*

*Come out, maidens of Jerusalem;
you maidens of Zion, welcome King Solomon,
wearing the crown which his mother placed on
his head on his wedding day, his day of joy.*

16 **Le Jardin Clos**

Que tu es belle ma bien aimé, que tu es belle.
Tex yeux sont des colombes,
tes cheveux comme un troupeau de chèvres
ondulant sur les pentes du Galaad.
Tes dents comme un troupeau de
brebistondues qui remontent du bain;
chacune a sa jumelle.
Tes joues moitiés de grenades à travers ton voile.
Tes deux seins sont comme deux bichelots
gémeaux de la biche qui paissent parmi les lis.
Tu me fais perdre le sens par un seul de tes
regards, ma sœur ma fiancée
Viens du Liban et tu seras couronnée
du chef d'Amana!
Elle est un jardin bien clos ma sœur, ma
fiancée, un jardin bien clos une source scellée.
Que mon Bien aimé entre dans son jardin et
qu'il en goûte les fruits délicieux.

Chapter 4

*How beautiful you are, my dearest, how
beautiful! Your eyes are doves behind your veil,
your hair like a flock of goats streaming down
Mount Gilead.
Your teeth are like a flock of ewes newly shorn,
freshly come up from the dipping; all of them
have twins.
Your parted lips behind your veil are like a
pomegranate cut open. Your two breasts are
like two fawns, twin fawns of a gazelle grazing
among the lilies. You have stolen my heart, my
sister, with just one of your eyes.
Come with me from Lebanon. Hurry down
from the summit of Amana.
My sister, my bride, is a garden close-locked, a
fountain sealed.
That my beloved may come to his garden
And enjoy the choice fruit.*

17 La Sulamite

Pourquoi regardez vous la Sulamite?
Dansant comme en un double cœur?
Que tes pieds sont beaux dans
tes sandals fille de prince.
La courbe de tes flancs est
comme une collier.
Ton chef de dresse semblable au Carmel,
tes cheveux sont comme la pourpre.
Un roi est pris à ses boucles,
mon amour mes délices.
Dans son élan tu ressembles au palmier.
Tes seins en sont les grappes.
J'ai dit je monterai un palmier
j'en saisirai les regimes.
Je suis à mon Bien aimé et son désir tend vers moi.
Viens mons Bien aimé sortons
dans la campagne.
Nous passerons la nuit dans les villages, dès
le matin nous irons dans les vignes.
Là je te ferai le don de mes amours.
Filles de Jérusalem, n'éveillez pas la bien
aimée avant l'heure de son bon plaisir.

Chapter 7

*How you love to gaze on the Shulammitte,
As she moves between the lines of dancers!
How beautiful are your sandaled feet, O
Prince's daughter!
The curves of your thighs are like ornaments
You carry your head like Carmel;
Your flowing locks are lustrous black.
How beautiful, how entrancing you are,
My loved one, daughter of delights!
You are stately as a palm tree,
And your breasts are like clusters of fruit.
I said, 'Let me climb up into the palm to grasp
its fronds'.
I am my beloved's, his longing is all for me.
Come, my beloved, let us go out into the fields,
Let us pass through the villages and go early
into the vineyards.
There I shall give you my love,
I charge you, maidens of Jerusalem:
Do not rouse or awaken love until it is ready.*

18 Epithalame

Veni sponsa Christi accipe coronam.
Quam tibi Dominus praeparavit in aeternum.
Pose moi comme un sceau sur ton cœur,
comme un sceau sur ton bras car l'amour est
fort comme la mort.
La jalousie est dure comme
l'enfer une flamme de Yahvé!
L'amour ses traits sont de feu une
flamme de Yahvé!
Les grandes eaux n'ont pu éteindre l'amour les
fleuves ne le submergeront pas!
Alleluia!

Chapter 8, vv. 6 & 7

*Come, the promise of Christ to accept the
crown that God has created for all eternity.
Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal
upon your arm;
for love is strong as death,
passion cruel as the grave.
It blazes up like a blazing fire,
fiercer than any flame.
Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can the floods drown it;
Alleluia!*

Laudibus

Regarded as one of the finest chamber choirs in the world, Laudibus is equally renowned both for its breadth of programming and its dynamic concert performances. Laudibus appeared with The King's Singers in their 25th anniversary concert at the Barbican, and in 1998 won both the sacred and secular sections for both amateur and professional vocal ensembles in the prestigious Tolosa International Choral Competition in Spain. Festival appearances have included Aldeburgh, Bath, Harrogate, Hexham and the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival. Noted for its exceptional performances of uncompromising contemporary music, Laudibus has premiered works by many leading British composers: among them Gavin Bryars, Giles Swayne and Richard Allain. Laudibus has been widely recorded and broadcast. Recent engagements include a Proms appearance with the National Youth Orchestra, the National Holocaust memorial service, and concerts at London's Southbank Centre.

Mike Brewer

Mike Brewer is in demand worldwide for vocal and conducting workshops and guest conducting of choirs. In 2006-7 his tours take

in Mexico, Venezuela, Peru, the USA, Singapore, New Zealand, Australia and the Seychelles. He is Advisor on World Music to the IFCM.

Mike is consultant for over 20 prize-winning UK choirs. He has often served as adjudicator for the finals of Choir of the Year and the National Festival of Music for Youth in the UK and in international competitions.

Since 1983 Mike has been Musical Director of the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain. He also conducts Laudibus, the award-winning chamber choir of NYC graduates, which, like NYC, records on the Delphian Label.

Mike Brewer's books for Faber Music include the best selling *Kickstart Your Choir*, *Warmups*, *Improve Your Sightsinging* (with Paul Harris) and *Finetune Your Choir*. *Hamba Lulu*, his set of African songs is performed worldwide. Newly published by Faber are *Playpiece*, commissioned for the Aberdeen Festival, *Worldsong*, performed in the Schools' Proms 2005, and a second set of African Songs, *Babevuya*.

Mike was a Churchill Fellow for 2002/3. He was appointed OBE in 1995.

Laudibus

Sopranos

Faith Brewer
Felicity Brown
Nicola Corbishley
Anne-Marie Cullum
Joanna Goldsmith
Alison Hill
Quintilla Hughes
Naomi L'Estrange
Katy Leigh
Lisa Swayne

Altos

Kathy Banister
Katie Lee
Martha McLorinan
Beth Mackay
Ruth Nixon
Rachel Shatliff
Kitty Whately

Tenors

David Bond
Robin Firth
Julian Forbes
Christopher Hann
Alexander Jarrett

Mike Jeremiah
Thomas Johnson
Edward Lee

Basses

Thomas Appleton
Alexander Hargreaves
Guy Hayward
Christopher Jay
Bartholomew Lawrence
David Le Prevost

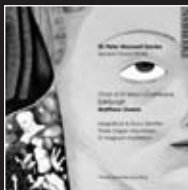


Giles Swayne: Convocation

The National Youth Choir of Great Britain; Laudibus;
Mike Brewer, conductor; Michael Bonaventure, organ;
Stephen Wallace, counter-tenor DCD34033

When a powerful team of new music exponents come together, magic will happen; when the music is by Giles Swayne, a composer whose light shines brilliantly in its own unique direction, the results will entrance. This disc offers a bracing sonic experience - vividly communicative music performed with rare verve, passion, and youthful vibrancy.

'The performances are magical. The National Youth Choir of Britain and Laudibus, both under the direction of veteran choral conductor Mike Brewer, exhibit a precision and exuberance that are further enhanced by a rich, vibrant sound. This is choral singing of the very first rank' – International Record Review, February 2007



Sir Peter Maxwell Davies: Sacred Choral Works

The Choir of St Mary's Cathedral; Matthew Owens, conductor;
Michael Bonaventure, solo organ; Simon Nieminski, organ
accompaniment; RSAMD Ensemble DCD34037

In the 1960s few would have predicted that Sir Peter Maxwell Davies would eventually write a set of Evening Canticles; yet religious texts have always been of fundamental importance to the composer as this disc vividly demonstrates by bringing together sacred masterworks from both ends of his career.

'All the music on this disc represents a very important and vivifying contribution to the Anglican choral repertoire, one that ought to be long-lasting.' – Gramophone, Awards edition 2006

