



Stanford
Choral Music

Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum

Carleton Ettherington • Benjamin Nicholas

Stanford Choral Music

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)

Evening Service in G, Op. 81

- | | | |
|---|---|--------|
| 1 | Magnificat
Salim Jaffar <i>treble</i> | [4:40] |
| 2 | Nunc Dimittis
Christopher Monk <i>bass</i> | [4:32] |
| 3 | The Lord is my Shepherd | [9:40] |

Bible Songs and Six Hymns, Op. 113

- | | | |
|---|--|--------|
| 4 | No. 1a: A Song of Freedom
Christopher Borrett <i>bass</i> | [3:59] |
| 5 | No. 1b: Let us, with a gladsome mind | [1:47] |
| 6 | No. 2a: A Song of Trust
Nicholas Scott <i>tenor</i> | [6:25] |
| 7 | No. 2b: Purest and highest | [2:44] |
| 8 | No. 3a: A Song of Hope
Christopher Borrett <i>bass</i> | [6:56] |

Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum of Dean Close Preparatory School
Carleton Etherington *Organ*
Benjamin Nicholas *Director*

9 No. 3b: In Thee is gladness	[2:35]
10 No. 4a: A Song of Peace Laurence Kilsby <i>treble</i>	[4:35]
11 No. 4b: Pray that Jerusalem	[2:31]
12 No. 5a: A Song of Battle Nicholas Scott <i>tenor</i>	[3:14]
13 No. 5b: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty	[2:12]
14 No. 6a: A Song of Wisdom Laurence Kilsby <i>treble</i>	[5:02]
15 No. 6b: O for a closer walk with God	[3:32]
16 Crossing the Bar Benoit André <i>treble</i>	[4:06]
17 For lo, I raise up, Op. 145 Benoit André <i>treble</i>	[8:58]
Total playing time	[77:28]

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Notes on the music

In 1886 **Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)** produced two anthems: the immensely beautiful *Blessed are the dead* (also known in its revised version as *I heard a voice from heaven*), written for the memorial service of his colleague Henry Bradshaw in King's College Chapel on 15 February 1886, and better known, a setting of Psalm 23 *The Lord is my shepherd*, highly thought of by Bairstow and described by Howells as 'one of the supremely lovely anthems of all our history'. Completed in May 1886, *The Lord is my shepherd* is one of Stanford's finest and most original examples of musical prose. His technique of overlapping irregular phraseology, gleaned from Brahms, gives the overall musical fabric a seamless, symphonic quality. This is impressively essayed in the pastoral sonata scheme of the first section and in the more contrapuntal finale ('But thy loving kindness') where the organ and choir play a symbiotic role. Stanford's tonal thinking is equally imaginative. After firmly establishing F major in the much larger first part, the choral recitative provides both tonal and textural contrast with a shift to D minor ('Thou shalt prepare a table'). A continuation of this tonal area, modally altered to D major, accompanies the beginning of the finale; but this is in fact only preparation for a return to F major, a move which both heightens the sense of tonal return and at the same time enhances the textual meaning ('And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever'). Stanford's coda, which elusively recalls the opening material, is also deliciously romantic with its yearning appoggiaturas.

Stanford completed his setting of Tennyson's *Sunset and evening star* (better known as *Crossing the Bar*) in April 1890 after the poet had published his verses in *Demeter and Other Poems* the previous year. It was published in 1893 as a solo song but is here adapted for voice and organ. Regarded as one of Tennyson's finest poems, *Crossing the Bar* dwells on the profoundest of subjects – death and the hereafter – and Stanford's lyrical response is one of noble solemnity.

In October 1902, within months of the *Te Deum's* performance, Stanford had completed his Morning, Communion and *Evening Service* in G, Op. 81, his fourth major setting. Dedicated to another of his Royal College of Music colleagues, Sir George C. Martin, organist of St Paul's Cathedral, the Service in G looks back to the symphonic and cyclic paradigm of the Services in B flat and A Opp. 10 and 12, though Stanford's structural approach here is broader and tonally more wide-ranging than its predecessors. The entire Service contains much fine music, but it is the evening canticles that have enjoyed enduring approbation, owing principally to the lyrical exuberance of the soloistic writing. In fact, beyond the seamless developmental process so characteristic of Stanford's mature church music, it is the adoption of a *Lieder*-orientated style – to match the 'songs' of Mary and Symeon – that is the miracle of these two enchanting movements. In the Magnificat, Stanford's

organ accompaniment immediately recalls the imagery of Schubert's *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, but it is Mary, with her exultant song at the Annunciation (rather than Gretchen's one of romantic longing), who is placed at the spinning wheel. Throughout the movement (in effect a deliciously gentle scherzo) the form is punctuated by the treble's joyous top G ('My soul doth magnify the Lord'; 'For He that is mighty'; 'and hath exalted'; 'As he promised to our forefathers, Abraham') while a secondary motive ('and my spirit hath rejoiced'), itself related to the opening phrase, is deployed as a concluding idea to both the first and last paragraphs ('and holy is His Name'; 'For ever'). In addition to the admixture of phraseological and lyrical sophistication, Stanford brings an effortless sense of control to the tonal structure. The deft manner in which the music hovers on the dominant of E ('And his mercy is on them'), avoids the platitudes of the cadence ('He hath filled the hungry with good things') and strays yet further to the Neapolitan ('His servant Israel') only to recover to the tonic with consummate ease, demonstrates just how skilfully he had adapted those elements of Brahmsian instrumental technique for liturgical use. The Nunc Dimittis, taken by a solo bass, is composed around the seminal phrase 'depart in peace' heard at the opening on the organ. This motive is developed in the central section in combination with a new idea ('to be a light') before returning as the core of the choir's hushed unison recapitulation ('Lord,

now lettest Thou Thy servant'). The Gloria begins by reworking corresponding material from the Magnificat (itself drawn from the opening of the *Te Deum*), but any sense of a more muscular conclusion is dissipated by a return to tranquillity, first in the succession of wilting, valedictory phrases ('world without end') and secondly in the final 'Amen' which recalls the central motive of the Nunc Dimittis one last time.

Just as Stanford wished to bring the idiom of song to the evening canticles, so did he also experiment with the notion of song as a sacred genre. In moving one step beyond Dvořák's *Biblical Songs*, Op. 99 for voice and piano (published in 1895), Stanford's six *Bible Songs*, Op. 113 (first performed by his fellow Irishman and future biographer, Harry Plunket Greene), for voice and organ, are designed principally for the church rather than the concert room. The more ambitious solo 'verses' in S. S. Wesley's anthems (one thinks particularly of 'Thou, O Lord God, art a thing that I long for' from *Let us lift up our heart*) spring to mind as a precedent and it was repertoire both knew well and greatly admired, but the more elaborate conception of the organ part (which has more in common with his orchestral songs) together with the scale of gesture and tonal organisation tends to suggest the idea of a miniature cantata rather than a song. As if to reinforce this cantata-like impression, Stanford composed a set of *Six*

Hymns (sometimes known as short anthems, published by Stainer & Bell in 1910) which could be individually appended to each song. Based on well-known hymns of the day (in a manner often deployed by others such as Charles Wood and Basil Harwood), their intention, in an almost Lutheran, not to say Bachian manner, was to comment theologically on the scriptural meditation of the preceding song whose theme is made explicit in the title. The general texture of the organ accompaniment is also derived from the material of the song which can be heard clearly in the interludes between verses. 'A Song of Freedom', a setting of Psalm 126, tells of the Jews' return out of captivity, praying for and prophesying future prosperity. From the psalm's six-verse structure Stanford constructs two strophes which end with the same refrain, 'Whereof we rejoice'. The song is concluded with the first two verses of John Milton's 'Let us, with a gladsome mind' to the anonymous tune *Monkland*, a hymn that affirms the faithfulness of God in its two-line refrain 'For his mercies aye endure, ever faithful, ever sure.' Psalm 121 ('I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills'), which talks of the security of the godly who put their trust in God's protection, forms the basis of 'A Song of Trust'. Constructed in two distinct sections, the first part of the song, in 9/8, evokes a pastoral atmosphere; the second ('The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil') is marked *Quasi arioso*, is hymn-like in its simple phraseology and is used as the accompaniment for 'Purest and highest'. For this short anthem

the words were taken from Robert Bridges' translation of the Latin hymn 'Amor patris et filii' in his *Yattendon Hymn-Book* (No. 28); the tune is Orlando Gibbons' *Song 22* on which Stanford also based his Prelude No. 2 of the second set of *Six Short Preludes and Postludes*, Op. 105, completed in February 1908. The greatest sense of drama is reserved for 'A Song of Hope', an appropriately dark setting of Psalm 130 ('Out of the deep have I called'), where the psalmist in distress places his hope in God and urges Israel to do the same. Perhaps aware of its greater emotionalism, Stanford orchestrated the song for strings and organ, though this arrangement remains unpublished. From these darker strains emerges the comforting strains of 'In Thee is gladness, amid all sadness', the words of Ludwig M. Lindemann (trans. Winkworth) and the tune by G. G. da Caravaggio (1591). The Messianic text of Isaiah 11: 1-11 ('There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse' – made famous as the fourth lesson of the Christmas service of Nine Lessons and Carols) is used for 'A Song of Peace', a sonata conception in which Stanford appropriately incorporates the hymn-tune *Veni Emmanuel* as the second-group idea. The same material subsequently permeates 'Pray that Jerusalem may have peace and felicity', the melody taken from Playford's *Psalms* (1671) and the words from the *Scottish Psalter*. The opening thematic idea for 'A Song of Battle' recalls similar thematic material from the Finale of the Fifth Symphony

and the Prelude No. 6 of the *Six Short Preludes and Postludes*, Op. 105. Stanford's organisation of Psalm 124 is, like 'A Song of Freedom', in two strophes with a coda ('Our soul is escaped even as a bird') in the tonic major, and it is this latter material in the major mode that underpins 'Praise to the Lord, the Almighty', the tune from *Praxis pietatis melica* (1668) and the words from Neander's hymn (trans. Winkworth). The text of 'A Song of Wisdom' is taken from the book of Ecclesiasticus (chapter 24), the most extensive portion of Israelite wisdom literature in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Bible. Here, as a conclusion to the six songs (if they are to be construed as a group), is a poetical oration on the virtue of wisdom and the Lord as its bountiful source. Stanford's textual adaptation gives a freedom to his through-composed musical design: an opening paragraph is framed in E flat major ('I came forth from the mouth of the Most High'), after which a more tonally dissolute section ('And I took root in a people that was glorified' – vv. 12-17) leads to the climax of a top B flat ('Come unto me, ye that are desirous' – v. 19). In the third section the growth of the stream to a river, and the river to a sea, aptly mirrored in the imagery of the organ accompaniment, is likened to the limitless bounds of wisdom. The last eleven bars recapitulate the first two lines of text, though this time the mood is one of triumphant acclamation. The last of the *Six Hymns*, 'O for a closer walk with God', taken from the *Scottish Psalter* with words by William

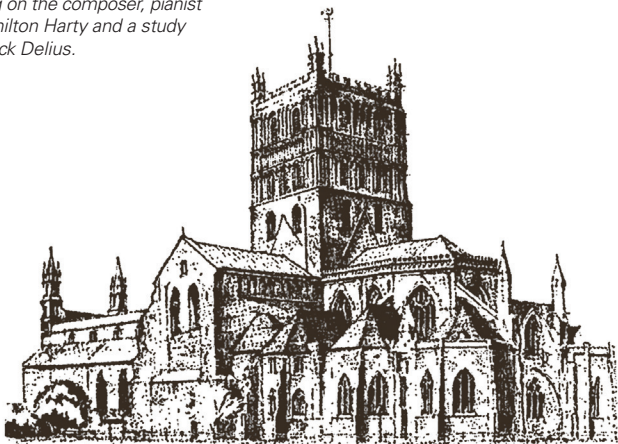
Cowper, is the most original of the six. Using three verses (1, 3 and 5) from the original five, Stanford constructs a fantasia around the melody in which the diversification of harmony, phrase-length, register and counterpoint becomes increasingly intricate. This is especially delectable in the last verse whose phrase 'Calm and serene my frame' must be one of Stanford's most enchanting phrases.

For lo, I raise up, Op. 145, Stanford's most dramatic anthem, was composed in 1914. Through the analogy of Habakkuk's prophetic writings, Stanford sought to express his own sense of horror at the war, of its needless destruction and of future deliverance. This is powerfully evident in the first part of the anthem, set in F minor, in which the restless choral lines are tossed about relentlessly by the turbulent (quasi-orchestral) organ accompaniment. Yet, although initially Habakkuk's text (from chapters 1 and 2) is infused with a sense of desolation, its conclusion is concerned with hope and the fulfilment of God's purpose. In the certainty that all enemies shall be vanquished with the establishment of God's order, Habakkuk's message is one of consolation, a sentiment that is affirmed in Stanford's climactic cadential phrase 'We shall not die'. Building on this declaration of spiritual confidence, the momentum increases, quickened by a sense of divine destiny ('The vision is yet for the appointed time') and an impassioned

acclamation of faith ('For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord') which is tempered only by the sudden and compelling stillness of the coda ('But the Lord is in his holy temple'). Here the memories of violence and dread are dissolved in a vision of peace and wonder.

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Jeremy Dibble is a scholar of British music of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with a particular interest in the work of Parry, Stanford, Stainer and Sullivan. His major study of the life and music of Stanford was published in 2002. He is presently working on the composer, pianist and conductor, Sir Hamilton Harty and a study of the music of Frederick Delius.



Texts

Evening Service in G, Op. 81

1 Magnificat

My soul doth magnify the Lord
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For He hath regarded the lowliness of
His hand-maiden.

For behold from henceforth all generations
shall call me blessed.
For He that is mighty hath magnified me: and
holy is His Name.

And His mercy is on them that fear Him,
throughout all generations.

He hath shewed strength with His arm,
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination
of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat,
and hath exalted the humble and meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich He hath sent empty away,
He remembering His mercy, hath holpen his
servant Israel.

As He promised to our forefathers,
Abraham and his seed for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to
the Holy Ghost;

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever
shall be, world without end.

Amen.

Luke 1: 46-55

2 Nunc Dimittis

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.

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart
in peace.

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.

Luke 2: 29-32

3 The Lord is my Shepherd

The Lord is my Shepherd, therefore can I
lack nothing,
He shall feed me in a green pasture,
and shall lead me forth beside the waters
of comfort.

He shall convert my soul, and shall bring me
forth in the paths of righteousness, for His
Name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death, I will fear no evil:
for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff
comfort me.

Thou shalt prepare a table before me
against them that trouble me:
Thou anointest my head with oil,
and my cup shall be full.

But Thy loving-kindness and Thy mercy
shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.
For Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff
comfort me.

Psalm 23

Bible Songs and Six Hymns, Op. 113

4 No. 1a: A Song of Freedom

When the Lord turned again the captivity of
Sion, then were we like those that dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and
our tongues with joy.
Then said they among the heathen,
the Lord hath done great things for them.
Yea, the Lord hath done great things for us
already, whereof, we rejoice.

Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the rivers
in the south.

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.
He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing
precious seed, shall doubtless come again
with joy, and bring his sheaves with him.
The Lord hath done great things for us.
Whereof we rejoice.

Psalm 126

5 No. 1b: Let us, with a gladsome mind

Let us, with a gladsome mind,
Praise the Lord, for He is kind;
For His mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.

Let us blaze His Name abroad,
For of gods He is the God.
For His mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.

John Milton (1608-1674)

6 No. 2a: A Song of Trust

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from
whence cometh my help.
My help cometh even from the Lord who
hath made heav'n and earth.
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved,
and He that keepeth thee will not sleep.
Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither
slumber nor sleep.

The Lord Himself is thy keeper;
the Lord is thy defence upon thy right hand;
So that the sun shall not burn thee by day,
neither the moon, by night.

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
from whence cometh my help.
My help cometh even from the Lord who
hath made heav'n and earth.
The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil,
yea, it is even He that shall preserve thy soul.
The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy
coming in from this time forth, for evermore.

Psalm 121

7 No. 2b: Purest and highest

Purest and highest, wisest and most just,
There is no truth save only in Thy trust,
Thou dost the mind from earthly dreams recall,
And bring thro' Christ to Him for whom are all.

Eternal Glory, all men Thee adore,
Who art and shalt be worship'd evermore.
Us whom Though madest, comfort with Thy might,
And lead us to enjoy Thy heav'nly light.
Robert Bridges (1844-1930)

8 No. 3a: A Song of Hope

Out of the deep have I called unto Thee, O Lord.
Lord, hear my voice. O, let Thine ears consider
well the voice of my complaint:
If Thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is
done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it?

For there is mercy with Thee, therefore shalt
Thou be feared.
I look for the Lord; my soul doth wait for Him;
in His word is my trust.

My soul looketh for the Lord more than
watchmen look for the morning.
Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord
there is mercy,
and with Him is plenteous redemption;
And He shall redeem Israel from all his sins;
For with the Lord there is mercy, and His word
is my trust.
Lord hear my voice.
Psalms 130

9 No. 3b: In Thee is gladness

In Thee is gladness,
Amid all sadness,
Jesus, Sunshine of my heart!
By Thee are given
The gifts of heaven,
Thou the true Redeemer art!

Our souls Thou wakest,
Our bonds Thou breakest,
Who trusts Thee surely,
Hath built securely,
He stands for ever:
Hallelujah!

Our hearts are pining,
To see Thy shining,
Dying or living
To Thee are cleaving,
Nought can us sever.
Hallelujah!

*Johann Lindemann; transcribed by
Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878)*

10 No. 4a: A Song of Peace

There shall come forth a rod out of the stem
of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of
his roots;
And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge, and of fear of the Lord:
And He shall not judge after the sight of His
eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His
ears: And with righteousness shall He judge

the poor, and reprove with equity the meek of the earth; and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked.

And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His veins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea, and in that day there shall be a root of Jesse which shall stand for an ensign unto the people and His rest shall be glorious.

Isaiah 11:1-6, 9-10

11 No. 4b: Pray that Jerusalem

Pray that Jerusalem may have peace and felicity:
Let them that love thee and thy peace
Have still prosperity.

Therefore I wish that peace may still
Within thy walls remain,
And ever may thy palaces
Prosperity retain.
Now for my friend's and brethren's sakes,
Peace be in thee, I'll say,
And for the house of God our Lord
I'll seek thy good always.
Scottish Psalter, 1650

12 No. 5a: A Song of Battle

If the Lord himself had not been on our side,
now may Israel say:

If the Lord himself had not been on our side,
when men rose up against us;
Then they had swallowed us up alive,
when their wrath was kindled against us.
Then the waters overwhelmed us,
the stream had gone over our soul:
Then the proud waters had gone even over
our soul.

Blessed be the Lord,
who hath not given us as a prey unto their teeth.
Our soul is escaped even as a bird from the
snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and
we are delivered.

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who
made heav'n and earth.

Psalm 124

13 No. 5b: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of
creation;
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health
and salvation;
All ye who hear,
Now to His temple draw near;
Join me in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord! who doth prosper thy
work and defend thee;
Surely His goodness and mercy here daily
attend thee;
Ponder anew

What the Almighty can do,
If with His love He befriended thee.

Joachim Neander; transcribed by Catherine Winkworth

14 No. 6a: A Song of Wisdom

I came forth from the mouth of the Most High,
and cover'd the earth as a mist:
I dwelt in high places, and my throne is in the
pillar of the cloud.

Alone I compassed the circuit of heav'n
and walk'd in the depth of the abyss.

In the waves of the sea and in all the earth and
in ev'ry people and nation,

I got a possession; with all these I sought rest.
And I took root in a people that was glorified,
in the portion of the Lord's own inheritance.

I was exalted like a cedar in Libanus and as a
cypress on the mountains of Hermon:

I was exalted like a palm tree on the sea shore,
and as a fair olive tree in the plain
and my branches are branches of glory and grace,
and my flow'rs are the fruit of glory and riches.
Come unto me, ye that are desirous of me,
and be ye fill'd with my fruits.

And I came out as a stream from a river,

I said I will water my garden,
and will water abundantly my garden bed,

And lo, my stream became a river,
and my river became a sea,

For my thoughts are fill'd from the sea
and my counsels from the great deep

I came forth from the mouth of the Most
High, and my throne is in the pillar of the cloud.

Ecclesiasticus 24:2-7, 12-14, 16-17, 19, 31.

15 No. 6b: O for a closer walk with God

O for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heav'nly frame;
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb!

Return, O holy Dove, return!
Sweet messenger of rest;
I hate the sins that made Thee mourn,
And drove Thee from my breast.

So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame:
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb.

William Cowper (1731-1800)

16 **Crossing the Bar**

Sunset and evening star,
and one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
when I put out to sea,
un such a tide as moving seems asleep,
too full for sound and foam,
when that which drew from out
the boundless deep turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
and after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
when I embark;
for tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
the flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
when I have cross'd the bar.
Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

17 For lo, I raise up, Op. 145

For lo I raise up that bitter and hasty nation,
which march thro' the breadth of the earth,
to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs.

They are terrible and dreadful,
their judgment and their dignity proceed from
themselves.

Their horses also are swifter than leopards,
and are more fierce than the evening wolves.
And their horsemen spread themselves,
yea, their horsemen come from far.

They fly as an eagle that hasteth to devour,
they come all of them for violence;
their faces are set as the east-wind,
and they gather captives as the sand.

Yea, he scoffeth at kings,
and princes are a derision unto him.

For he heapeth up dust and taketh it.

Then shall he sweep by as a wind that shall
pass over, and be guilty,

Even he, whose might is his God.

Art not Thou from everlasting,

O Lord, my God, mine Holy One?

We shall not die.

O Lord, Thou hast ordained him for judgment,
and Thou, O Rock hast established him
for correction.

I will stand upon my watch and set me upon
the tower, and look forth to see what he will
say to me, and what I shall answer
concerning my complaint.

And the Lord answered me and said:
The vision is yet for the appointed time,
and it hasteth toward the end, and shall not lie,
tho' it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come.

For the earth shall be filled
with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord,
as the waters cover the sea.

But the Lord is in His holy temple:
let all the earth keep silence before Him.

Habukkuk 1:6-12; 2:1-3, 14, 20

Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum of Dean Close Preparatory School

Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum is the choir of men and boys which sings the weekday Evensongs in Tewkesbury Abbey. The choristers are all educated at Dean Close Preparatory School, Cheltenham, which is a member of The Choir Schools' Association.

Over the last few years, the choir has been involved in a number of collaborations – Bach's *Mass in B minor* with the Orchestra of St John, Mahler's *Third Symphony* and Britten's *War Requiem* with Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* and Britten's *Spring Symphony* with Cheltenham Bach Choir and Honegger's *Cantate de Noel* with the BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales. Since 2000, the choir has undertaken twelve foreign tours, including three lengthy visits to the USA, six visits to France and trips to Italy and Germany. In December of 2008,

the choristers represented Great Britain in a concert of music by Berlioz with the Slovak Philharmony which was the closing event of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The choir has broadcast regularly from the Abbey, and in September 2006 broadcast Choral Evensong from St Michael's Church, Tenbury Wells, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the foundation of St Michael's College.

The choir has also been active in commissioning new works and in Christmas 2007 gave the first performance of Bob Chilcott's *The night he was born*. In September 2008 the choristers joined with James O'Donnell and the choristers of Westminster Abbey to give the first performance of Gabriel Jackson's *The Land of Spices* in Westminster Abbey as part of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference.

Trebles: Benoit André, Ramsay Clifford-Holmes, Patrick Coniam, George Eldridge, Douglas Haycock, Rowan Ireland, Salim Jaffar, Ethan Kent, Laurence Kilsby, Dominic McClaran, Joe Morford, Louis Morford, Hugo Till, Charles Waddington

Altos: Derek Acock, Ian Harrold, Jeremy Kenyon, Guy Lewis, Ben Sawyer

Tenors: James Atherton, Thomas Dyer, Christopher Hand, George Howarth

Basses: Christopher Borrett, Nicholas Chubb, Michael Collins, Christopher Monk

Organ Scholar: Alexander Hodgkinson



Benjamin Nicholas



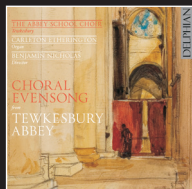
Benjamin Nicholas is Director of Choral Music at the Dean Close Schools, in which capacity he directs the boys and men of Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum in the weekday services in Tewkesbury Abbey. His work with the Schola (previously The Abbey School Choir) has included twelve foreign tours, broadcasts and recordings on the Delphian, Guild, Priory, Regent and Signum labels.

He has been Organ Scholar at Chichester Cathedral, Lincoln College, Oxford and St Paul's Cathedral. During his time in London he was also Director of Music of St Luke's Church, Chelsea. Since October 2008 he has also held an appointment at Merton College, Oxford where, with Peter Phillips, he has been instrumental in establishing the new choral foundation. He has recently directed the Choir of Merton College in concerts in France and the UK and in a series of podcasts. Benjamin has conducted numerous premieres including works by Bob Chilcott, Howard Goodall, Gabriel Jackson, Howard Skempton and Philip Wilby.

Carleton Etherington

Carleton Etherington is Organist and Director of Music of Tewkesbury Abbey, in which capacity he directs the Abbey Choir and accompanies the Schola Cantorum. He is also conductor of Pershore and Cirencester Choral Societies and a member of the music staff at the Dean Close Schools. Educated at Chetham's School of Music, Manchester and The Royal Academy of Music, London, he is a former winner of the Paisley International Organ Competition and a former Royal College of Organists Performer of the Year. As a recitalist, he has performed at most of the major British venues and has toured abroad in the USA, Australia and Europe. He has broadcast many times on BBC Radio and has several recordings to his credit, both as a soloist and accompanist, all of which have been warmly received by the critics. His first solo recording for Delphian (DCD34089), featuring the Milton and Grove organs at Tewkesbury, is due for release in early 2011.

Also available on Delphian

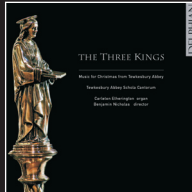


Choral Evensong from Tewkesbury Abbey

The Abbey School Choir, Tewkesbury
Carleton Etherington *organ*, Benjamin Nicholas *conductor*
(DCD34019)

For thirty-two years the Abbey School Choir sang daily evensong in Tewkesbury Abbey. In this recording swansong, the choir offers a treasurable memento of a uniquely English Office; complete with lessons and prayers, this sumptuous tapestry of Anglican jewels also includes the first recording of Gabriel Jackson's refulgent new setting of the Evening Canticles. Reborn as Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum, the choir was immediately signed by Delphian and has embarked on a series of much-lauded recordings.

'... full-blooded singing of Tewkesbury's boy choristers and smart engineering. The choir's men are on top form too ... compelling energy. Terrific choral listening.'
– Classic FM Magazine, April 2009

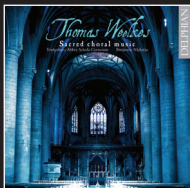


The Three Kings: Music for Christmas from Tewkesbury Abbey

Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum
Carleton Etherington *organ*, Benjamin Nicholas *conductor*
(DCD34047)

In the vast, echoing space of their medieval home the boys and men of Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum celebrate the awe and mystery of Christmas, ushering in the birth of the Christ-child with a sequence of carols from the last two centuries that combines familiar names with offerings from some of today's foremost composers.

'I doubt whether there are many more admirable choirs outside Westminster, Oxford and Cambridge than the Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum. ... Nicholas's choir give proof yet again of the qualities that place them firmly in the front rank: flair, acumen, versatility and poise'
– Church Times, December 2007



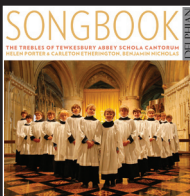
Thomas Weelkes: sacred choral music

Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum
Carleton Etherington *organ*, Benjamin Nicholas *conductor*
(DCD34070)

Born around 1575, Thomas Weelkes is remembered as one of the outstanding English composers of the seventeenth century. This survey of Weelkes' services, verse anthems and sacred madrigals features first recordings of several works in new reconstructions by scholar Peter James. Benjamin Nicholas' Tewkesbury choir delivers telling performances passionately conveying the range, imagination and technical accomplishment of Weelkes' settings.

'I particularly like the deliciously discreet, *Lord, to Thee I make my moan* and the celebratory *All people, clap your hands*. Several verse anthems, notably *Give ear, O Lord*, allow various individual voices to reveal the quality of material at Nicholas's disposal, and in these there is wonderful vitality and clarity.'

– International Record Review, March 2009



The trebles of Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum

Helen Porter *piano*, Carleton Etherington *organ*, Benjamin Nicholas *conductor*
(DCD34097)

Benjamin Nicholas has put together a fascinating programme of music, sacred and secular, for boys' voices. Spanning Purcell to MacMillan, this disc showcases talented soloists, including Laurence Kilsby, the BBC Radio 2 Young Chorister of the Year.



Stanford Choral Music

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)

Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum
Benjamin Nicholas Director
Carleton Eberington Organ

DELPHIAN

Evening Service in G, Op. 81

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------|
| 1 Magnificat | [4:40] |
| 2 Nunc Dimittis | [4:32] |
| 3 The Lord is my Shepherd | [9:40] |

Bible Songs and Six Hymns, Op. 113

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 4 No. 1a: A Song of Freedom | [3:59] |
| 5 No. 1b: Let us, with a gladsome mind | [1:47] |
| 6 No. 2a: A Song of Trust | [6:25] |
| 7 No. 2b: Purest and highest | [2:44] |
| 8 No. 3a: A Song of Hope | [6:56] |
| 9 No. 3b: In Thee is gladness | [2:35] |
| 10 No. 4a: A Song of Peace | [4:35] |
| 11 No. 4b: Pray that Jerusalem | [2:31] |
| 12 No. 5a: A Song of Battle | [3:14] |
| 13 No. 5b: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty | [2:12] |
| 14 No. 6a: A Song of Wisdom | [5:02] |
| 15 No. 6b: O for a closer walk with God | [3:32] |
| 16 Crossing the Bar | [4:06] |
| 17 For lo, I raise up, Op. 145 | [8:58] |
| Total playing time | [77:28] |

For their fourth recording for Delphian, the boys and men of Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum turn their attentions to that doyen of Anglican church music, Charles Villiers Stanford. Alongside familiar gems from the Evensong repertoire, sung with characteristic vigour and freshness, the programme includes the six little-known Bible Songs, each followed by its associated hymn. Amongst the soloists - all members of the choir - are Laurence Kilsby, 2009 BBC Chorister of the Year, making his solo debut on disc.

"Under Benjamin Nicholas, director of the Abbey's Schola Cantorum, the choir has developed a strong style, remarkable for its sense of personal (or corporate) commitment as for the sonority of its tone and the assurance of its delivery. The trebles splendidly vindicate the tradition that places them at the heart of English cathedral music. The men's voices are also powerful and resonant and the total effect is rich and forthright." –Gramophone, April 2009



LC 12979

Recorded on 18-19 October 2009
and 24-25 May 2010 in Tewkesbury Abbey,
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Producer and Engineer: Paul Baxter
24-bit digital editing: Adam Binks
24-bit digital mastering: Paul Baxter
Design: Drew Padrut

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SCHOLA CANTORUM
DCD34087