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NAXOS

ENGLISH CHORAL MUSIC

2 CDs featuring music by Howells, Elgar,
Stanford, Finzi, Tavener and others

Choir of St John's College, Cambridge ♦ Christopher Robinson



CD 1**Sir Charles Villiers Stanford** (1852-1924)**1** Magnificat in G, Op. 81 4:13**2** Nunc Dimittis in G, Op. 81 4:18

Soloist: Oliver Lepage-Dean (treble)

Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)**3** Justorum Animae from Three Latin Motets 3:24**Sir Edward Elgar** (1857-1934)**4** Ave verum corpus, Op. 2, No. 1 2:39**Sir Edward Elgar** (1857-1934)**5** Give unto the Lord (Psalm XXIX), Op. 74 7:50**Ralph Vaughan Williams** (1872-1958)**6** The Call 2:05

Soloist: Oliver Lepage-Dean (treble)

Herbert Howells (1892-1983)**7** Magnificat, St Paul's 6:33**8** Nunc Dimittis, St Paul's 4:59**Herbert Howells** (1892-1983)**9** Paean for Organ 6:03

Organist: Iain Farrington

Herbert Howells (1892-1983)**10** Take him, earth, for cherishing 7:44**Peter Hurford** (b. 1930)**11** Litany to the Holy Spirit 2:26

Soloist: Oliver Lepage-Dean (treble)

Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)**12** Welcome Sweet and Sacred Feast, Op. 27, No. 3 7:31**Edmund Rubbra** (1901-1986)

Tenebrae Motets - Third Nocturn, Op. 72

13 I. Eram quasi agnus innocens 2:50**14** II. Una hora non potuistis 2:02**15** III. Seniores populi 2:22**Edmund Rubbra** (1901-1986)**16** Magnificat in A flat 4:18**Gerald Finzi** (1901-1956)**17** God is gone up, Op. 27, No. 2 4:24

CD 2**Sir William Walton (1902-1983)**

1 Set me as a seal upon thine heart 3:34
Soloists: Oliver Lepage-Dean (treble);
Edward Lyon (tenor)

Sir William Walton (1902-1983)

2 Coronation Te Deum 9:50
(arr. Simon Preston and Mark Blatchly)

Sir William Walton (1902-1983)

3 Gloria from Missa Brevis 3:24
Soloists: Oliver Lepage-Dean (treble);
Geoffrey Silver (tenor)

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

4 A Hymn to the Virgin 3:06
Soloists: William Goldring (treble); Christopher de la
Hoyde (alto); Simon Wall (tenor); Reuben Thomas (bass)

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

5 Jubilate Deo 2:38

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

6 Hymn to St Cecilia, Op. 27 10:20
Soloists: Benedict Giles, Ben Harrison (trebles);
Richard Moore (alto); Jonathan Bungard (tenor);
Reuben Thomas (bass)

Lennox Berkeley (1903-1989)

7 The Lord is my Shepherd, Op. 91, No. 1 4:21
Soloist: Benjamin Durrant (treble)

Lennox Berkeley (1903-1989)

8 Crux Fidelis, Op. 43, No. 2 6:53
Soloist: Allan Clayton (tenor)

Lennox Berkeley (1903-1989)

9 Look up, Sweet Babe, Op. 43, No. 2 4:34
Soloists: James Geidt (treble)

Kenneth Leighton (1929-1988)

10 Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis 5:03
11 Collegium Magdalenae Oxoniense 3:13

Kenneth Leighton (1929-1988)

12 An Easter Sequence - Sortie 4:11
Soloist: Crispian Steele-Perkins (trumpet)

Sir John Tavener (b. 1944)

13 The Lamb 3:47

Sir John Tavener (b. 1944)

14 The Lord's Prayer 3:30

Sir John Tavener (b. 1944)

15 Song for Athene 5:43

Howells (8.554659)

Recorded: 13th-15th March 1999

Producer: Andrew Walton

Engineer: Eleanor Thomason

Booklet notes: Andrew Burn

Publishers: Novello, OUP, Stainer & Bell, CPP-Belwin

Britten (8.554791)

Recorded: 13th-15th July 1999

Producer: Andrew Walton

Engineer: Eleanor Thomason

Booklet notes: Barry Holden

Publishers: OUP and Boosey & Hawkes

Rubbra (8.555255)

Recorded: 24th-26th March 2000

Producer: Andrew Walton

Engineer: Eleanor Thomason

Booklet notes: Andrew Carwood

Tavener (8.555256)

Recorded: 11th –13th July 2000

Producer: Andrew Walton

Engineer: Tony Faulkner

Booklet notes: Ivan Moody

Publisher: Chester Music Ltd.

Finzi (8.555792)

Recorded: 17th-19th March 2001

Producer: Andrew Walton

Engineer: Eleanor Thomason

Booklet notes: Andrew Burn

Publishers: Boosey & Hawkes

Walton (8.555793)

Recorded: 10th-12th July 2001

Producer: Andrew Walton

Engineer: Tony Faulkner

Booklet notes: Barry Holden

Publisher: OUP

An Evening Hymn (8.557129)

Recorded: January/February 2002

Producer & Engineer: John Rutter

Booklet Notes: George Guest

Leighton (8.555795)

Recorded: 9th-11th July 2002

Producer: Andrew Walton

Engineer: Eleanor Thomason

Booklet notes: Andrew Burn

Publishers: Novello, OUP

Stanford (8.555794)

Recorded: 12th-13th July 2002

Producer: Andrew Walton

Engineer: Eleanor Thomason

Booklet notes: Andrew Burn

Publishers: Stainer and Bell

Berkeley (8.557277)

Recorded: 20th, 21st, 22nd March 2003

Producer: Andrew Walton

Engineer: Eleanor Thomason

Booklet notes: Andrew Burn

Publishers: Chester Music Ltd.

Elgar (8.557288)

Recorded: 8th-10th July 2003

Producer: Andrew Walton

Engineer: Eleanor Thomason

Booklet notes: Keith Anderson

Publishers: Novello and Company Ltd.

English Choral Music

CD 1: Stanford, Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Howells, Hurford, Finzi and Rubbra

The music on this CD stretches from Stanford, often viewed as the father of English choral music, through to pupils of his including Vaughan Williams and Howells. The most famous of all modern English composers, Edward Elgar, also finds echoes in the passionate lyricism of Finzi, with the distinctive, muscular voice of Rubbra perhaps the biggest surprise of all.

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924) was one of the seminal figures of the British musical renaissance in the late nineteenth century. Born in Dublin, he demonstrated talents as a composer from his teens and won an organ scholarship to Queens' College, Cambridge, in 1870. As professor of composition at the Royal College of Music from 1883 to 1924, he taught two generations of British composers including Vaughan Williams, Holst, Ireland, Moeran and Howells, and was knighted in 1902.

It is for this and his contribution to Anglican church music, however, that Stanford is principally remembered. This included major settings of the canticles as well as anthems, hymns and organ works. His settings of the Services swept away the moribund approach of earlier Victorian composers and established new expressive means through applying Brahmsian procedures in cyclical unity, thematic transformation and symphonic structure. The rôle of the accompanying organ is also heightened to superb effect. These tenets, subsequently enriched and developed with maturity, mark all the Services that followed, not least the G major *Magnificat* and *Nunc dimittis* (CD1, Tracks 1 and 2) heard here, with its delightful arpeggiated organ accompaniment and soaring treble solo line, sung here by Oliver Lepage-Dean, possibly one of the most distinguished trebles of the past decade.

The unaccompanied *Three Latin Motets* have justly remained among the most enduring of Stanford's sacred works. Although published in 1905, they were

composed earlier in 1887-8. The words of the first of these motets, *Iustorum animae* (CD1, Track 3) derive from the third chapter of the Book of Wisdom. The calm of the first section is contrasted by a more animated middle part with the voices entering in imitation before the calm returns.

A full CD of Stanford's Choral Music, sung by the Choir of St John's College under Christopher Robinson, is available on Naxos 8.555794.

The sacred choral music of **Edward Elgar** (1857-1934) shares the same innate qualities so admired today in his orchestral music: an unerring sense for musical development and drama allied to a glorious ear for melody.

The *Ave Verum* (CD1, Track 4) was published in 1902 as Elgar was developing his reputation. Simple yet immensely accomplished, its endearing melody and harmonies have graced wedding services and church services across both the Anglican and Catholic Churches for over 100 years now, as strong a testament as any.

The setting of *Give unto the Lord* (CD2, Track 5) was written in 1914 for the Sons of Clergy Festival at St Paul's Cathedral. It is dedicated to Sir George Martin, who had succeeded Stainer as organist at St Paul's in 1888. The powerful opening is apt for the occasion, mounting in triumph at the words "The God of glory thundereth". The cedars are dramatically broken, the wilderness shaken and the forests stripped bare, before the meditative tranquillity of the Temple and the following return to the majesty of the opening. The psalm ends with the serenity of the blessing of peace.

A full CD of Elgar's Choral Music, sung by the Choir of St John's College under Christopher Robinson, is available on Naxos 8.557288.

A pupil of Stanford, **Herbert Howells** (1892 – 1983) is widely regarded as among the most gifted English composers of the generation to succeed Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Holst and Delius. His strong sense of place and unique sound-world set him apart, while his contribution to the renaissance of English choral music during the course of his long life is probably unparalleled.

The son of a local organist, Howells was born in 1892 in deepest Gloucestershire, the beauty of which marked his musical personality as indelibly as the Malvern Hills did with Elgar. Despite a Welsh name and, indeed, an ethnically Celtic background, he always regarded his spiritual home as being very much on the English side of the Welsh border.

His musical ambitions burgeoned at London's Royal College of Music, where he was widely regarded as the most naturally gifted student of his generation and where he soon outgrew the disciplined tutelage of Stanford and Parry. Later, Howells himself became one of the College's most distinguished teachers for a remarkable 59 years.

In late 1941 Howells was appointed as Acting Organist at St John's College, Cambridge and eighteen months later, spurred on by a sense of mission to revitalise English choral music, he composed his famous morning and evening Canticles for King's College, Cambridge, the *Collegium Regale* service. Its immediate success marked a watershed for cathedral choral music, described in a letter from the Dean of King's College, Cambridge as "a wholly new chapter in church music....so much more than music-making; it is experiencing deep things in the only medium that can do it."

Over the next forty years Howells was to write no less than twenty settings of the Canticles for cathedrals in both England and the United States. Of these settings, the *Magnificat* and *Nunc dimittis* for London's St Paul's Cathedral are among the best-known and most highly-regarded. The sheer visceral excitement of the *St Paul's Service*, (CD1, Tracks 7 & 8) is perhaps unrivalled in its vast harmonic climaxes. The works have, in Howells'

own words, "a tonal opulence commensurate with a vast church," while the "harmonic and tonality changes are deployed in a more leisured, more spacious way." The effect is utterly mesmerising, whether heard in the vast acoustic of St Paul's, or as they are heard here, in the more immediate sound world of St John's Chapel, which Howells must have known so well.

To add to his gifts as a teacher, orator and composer, Howells was an organist of immense distinction, capable as great organists are of extended and sophisticated improvisation. His *Paeon* (CD1, Track 9) repays repeated listening and shows to startling effect his determination to use the brilliance of the twentieth century organ to full measure.

In 1963 Howells heard with shock, along with the rest of the world, of the death of President John F. Kennedy. It says much about his standing that he was immediately commissioned to write a motet to be sung at the memorial service in Washington Cathedral. Ever concerned to find precisely the right text for this monumental occasion, he triumphed using Helen Waddell's translation from Prudentius's Hymnus circa exsequias defuncti. The result, *Take him, earth, for cherishing* (CD1, Track 10), is quite simply one of the finest English choral motets of the twentieth century. In a work which had to speak with dignity of the world's loss, it achieves the integration of text and music at the highest level. Perhaps for Howells the work brought again to the surface some of the same feelings of loss which he himself had suffered in his life.

Appropriately, perhaps, this was the motet at Howells' own memorial service twenty years later in 1983 in Westminster Abbey. Here the composer took his place of rest in the north aisle alongside others who had helped forge a character and identity in England's compositional life such as Vaughan Williams, Elgar, Stanford and Walton. During the course of his long life, he had been a distinguished teacher, examiner, scholar, broadcaster and critic, widely admired and respected. Today his most audible legacy is a corpus of work whose individuality and calibre mark Howells out as perhaps the single greatest contributor to the re-birth of

sacred choral music in Britain, a fact borne out by a visit to almost any Anglican cathedral.

A full CD of Howells's Choral Music, sung by the Choir of St John's College under Christopher Robinson, is available on Naxos 8.554659.

Peter Hurford (born 1930) was Organ Scholar of Jesus College Cambridge and is a distinguished organ recitalist. His great love of the music of J.S. Bach can be seen in this simple but moving setting of Robert Herrick's *Litany to the Holy Spirit* (CD1, Track 11), a piece that has become widely popular through the world. The *Five Mystical Songs* of **Ralph Vaughan Williams** (1872 – 1958) have proved to be an enduring part of his large contribution to choral music and include this setting of George Herbert's *The Call* (CD1, Track 6).

Edmund Rubbra (1901 – 1986) holds a distinguished place in the history of English music. His works combine lyrical beauty and intellectual vigour, with harmonic inventiveness deployed to draw out strong thematic ideas.

Rubbra's deeply-felt spirituality and religious beliefs proved an inexhaustible wellspring in his composition, inspiring a corpus of sacred music which is at once bold and revelatory. His reception into the Roman Catholic Church in 1948 was to prove both inevitable for him, and also influential for the further development of his music.

Rubbra was born to working-class parents in Northampton where his father was employed in a boot factory and young Edmund ran errands to supplement the family income long before he left school at the age of fourteen to work as a railway clerk. His mother fostered his musical talents and he eventually studied under Gustav Holst at Reading University, after which he won an open scholarship to the Royal College of Music in 1921. A distinguished teacher, he eventually served as professor of music at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London (1961 – 74) and was also

awarded a fellowship at Worcester College Oxford in 1963.

The *Nine Tenebrae Responsories* are settings of the texts used during Matins on Maundy Thursday. Matins consists of three Nocturns, each with three psalms and antiphons and three readings with three responsories: hence nine responsories in total. There is a similar scheme for Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Rubbra composed the three sets over the course of 10 years, completing the last set (heard here – CD1, Tracks 13 - 15) in 1961. It seems then that Rubbra did not initially conceive these pieces for complete liturgical performance but there is a unity of purpose and approach and all textual repetitions as dictated by the liturgical rubrics have been observed.

Only when the colour of the words is married to the music is the genius of these pieces released. Moments reminiscent of the late twentieth-century minimalists give an extra sense of timelessness but this is only one technique in a set bristling with integrity, variety and emotional power.

The *Magnificat in A flat major* (CD1, Track 16) was composed in 1948 and compares with Howells's famous Collegium Regale settings of the 1940s which so changed the course of English choral music. Rubbra's setting is bold and muscular, underlined by the daring use of the diminished fifth and a tempo both urgent and majestic. Throughout there is sensitivity to just accentuation and word stress, and a magnificent Gloria follows: the organ accompaniment has a certain notoriety for its original and highly effective use of simultaneous duplets and triplets weaving in contrary motion before drawing back to a climactic and unison finish.

A full CD of Rubbra's Choral Music, sung by the Choir of St John's College under Christopher Robinson, is available on Naxos 8.555255.

The music of **Gerald Finzi** (1901-1956) is rooted in the tradition of Elgar and his lifelong friend Vaughan Williams. It was his response to words, however, that

gave his music its particular individuality, resulting in music that seems inevitably to mirror the essence of the poet's thought. As in Finzi's favourite poet, Thomas Hardy, a sense of urgency can be felt in the music reflecting his keen awareness of life's frailty. A further preoccupation was his belief that adult experience tarnishes the innocent wonder of childhood. Both these concerns may be traced to Finzi's own early experience when the deaths of his father, three brothers and his teacher Farrar made an indelible impression on him. As a young man he was introspective: literature provided companionship, and in authors like Robert Bridges, Thomas Traherne, Wordsworth and Hardy he found like minds.

Indefatigable that nothing good should be lost, Finzi's energetic mind went far beyond his compositions. He was an ardent champion of neglected composers like Ivor Gurney, and with the fine amateur string orchestra he founded, the Newbury String Players, he revived works by forgotten eighteenth century composers such as John Stanley and Richard Mudge. He also collected a library of English poetry and literature of over three thousand volumes including many rare editions. Not least, in his orchard, he rescued several traditional English apple varieties from extinction.

Welcome sweet and sacred feast (CD1, Track 12) was a BBC commission from its Religious Broadcasting Department. Finzi was drawn to a seventeenth century author, and set here *The Holy Communion* by Henry Vaughan (1622-1695). The first performance was in a BBC Evensong broadcast from St Michael's Cornhill on 11th October 1953. It begins with a short organ introduction, which, almost at the end of the work, returns transformed into one of Finzi's most lyrical and memorable phrases at the words *O rose of Sharon! O the lily of the valley!*

God is Gone Up (CD1, Track 17) was commissioned for the St Cecilia's Day Service of 22nd November 1951, when it was performed at St Sepulchre's, Holborn Viaduct, with John Dykes Bower conducting choristers from the Chapels Royal, St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey and Canterbury Cathedral. It has an exultant air, with its fanfare-like opening mirroring the words "The Lord with sounding trumpets' melodies", and make a fitting climax.

A full CD of Finzi's Choral Music, sung by the Choir of St John's College under Christopher Robinson, is available on Naxos 8.555792.

CD 2: Walton, Britten, Berkeley, Leighton and Tavener

The music on this CD stretches from Benjamin Britten's very first choral composition to Lennox Berkeley (sometime protégé of Britten) and Tavener (erstwhile pupil to Berkeley), one of whose works here dates from as recently as 1999. In between feature vibrant works by a complete original, Kenneth Leighton, and William Walton – as near as this group came to an establishment figure with his *Coronation Te Deum* of 1952.

William Walton (1902 - 1983) spanned a compositional divide in 20th Century British composition. Before the Second World War, as audiences looked forward from the era of Elgar and Holst, he was regarded as the great new hope of British music, with his jazzy rhythms, his bravura orchestration and astringent harmonies. After the war, the rise of European modernism made Walton look like a conservative force and he consequently fell from critical favour. Thankfully, history tends to be a less partisan judge of composers than contemporary music criticism, and his reputation is now much restored.

In the sphere of Walton's sacred choral music, the facts speak plainly. Working over a span of some sixty years, he created a relatively small corpus which includes some of the finest works in the Anglican canon, writing anthems and canticles which are still performed and admired in churches and cathedrals throughout the English-speaking world.

William Walton as musician and composer first sprang to life through the music of the Anglican Church. His father was the choirmaster at the local church in Oldham, where William served an early apprenticeship as a young chorister. His voice and musicianship proved sufficient to secure him admission to the choir at Christ Church, Oxford.

Choristership at Christ Church, Oxford revealed Walton's promise as a musician and was followed by an unusually early entrance to the college as an undergraduate at the age of just 16. Given this

background, there can be little surprise that choral music became a natural first mode of expression for the developing composer in his teens and that he returned to the genre at intervals throughout his long career.

The 1938 anthem *Set me as a Seal* (CD2, Track 1) shows another side to Walton. This perfectly-honed jewel was the kind of piece he might have laboured to perfect over weeks and months, for all its 2 minute duration. The resulting anthem is a still moment of peace and invocation.

In 1952 Walton, in mid-career and at the very heart of musical life in Britain, was commissioned to write a choral paean to celebrate the start of Queen Elizabeth II's reign. The *Coronation Te Deum* (CD2, Track 2) is performed here in the frequently-heard arrangement by Simon Preston with organ reduction by Mark Blatchly. The original featured orchestra, organ and large choruses of voices split into groups for antiphonal effect. Even in its more modest form, the work retains its innate sense of grandeur and occasion, and a festive feeling it shares with works such as *Belshazzar's Feast*.

Like so many choral composers, Walton often wrote his best material with a sense of place in mind. The *Missa Brevis* was written in 1966 for the Friends of the new Coventry Cathedral. At seven minutes duration, this is indeed a "short Mass", but highly effective in liturgical context, with its memorably angular melodies, acerbic harmonies and taut structure. The *Gloria* heard here (CD2, Track 3) shows typical Walton flair. Without parading its innovation, the music has an unforced harmonic and melodic originality. At its razor-sharp best, it is powerful and arresting, fusing words and music in a way which is unrivalled in English choral repertoire.

A full CD of Walton's Choral Music, sung by the Choir of St John's College under Christopher Robinson, is available on Naxos 8.555793.

Benjamin Britten (1903 – 1976) could occasionally be

disparaging about pre-20th century orchestral and operatic composition in the British Isles, but he always made a careful exception where choral music was concerned. Whereas in opera he regarded it as a life's ambition to establish a genre (until his arrival largely missing from his native country since Handel's day), but in the choral sphere he chose instead to work within a tradition, one for which he had the deepest knowledge and respect.

Nonetheless, no tradition touched by Britten's towering musical imagination could fail to be renewed and revitalised, and he left behind a corpus of work which has already embedded itself deeply into the choral and liturgical culture of all Anglophone countries. Choral music, he acknowledged, formed the very bedrock of British musical life in centuries past, from madrigal groups to cathedral choirs, from small professional groups to large amateur choral societies.

A Hymn to the Virgin, (CD2, Track 4) is one of Britten's very earliest works, written in a matter of hours at the age of 17 from his sick bed, during his final term at school. It sets a semi-chorus (or solo quartet) interposing Latin texts again a 14th-century English poem, and shows the fecundity and ease of Britten's talent.

The *Jubilate Deo* (CD2, Track 5) was the first fruit of a proposal from the Duke Of Edinburgh that Britten should write some music for St George's Chapel Windsor. Nothing more of that idea seems to have emerged except this joyous, dancing work, with its pert rhythms, sparkling organ accompaniment and masterly word-setting.

The *Hymn to St Cecilia* (CD2, Track 6) was begun during Britten's stay in the United States in the early 1940s, and completed during his return on the ship "Axel Johnson" in 1942. US customs officials confiscated his half-completed score of the work just before his departure from America. Spurred on by this unexpected loss, Britten re-wrote the first section entirely from memory, and used the opportunity of escaping from the drab company on board to complete the rest.

The words are a setting in three parts by the poet

W.H. Auden (who regarded Britten as his protégé), with each part rounded off by an exaltation to St Cecilia. Auden deliberately conflates his subject – the patron saint of music – with composers and music in general, as well as with Britten himself, whose birthday fell on St Cecilia's Day. Auden offers music its own self portrait, as naïve, incapable of taking a moral standpoint, simply playing and wanting to be loved: "I cannot grow, I have no shadow to run away from, I only play". As the work continues Auden widens his field of reference to the innocence of composers as a species, including Britten himself: "O dear white children... Playing among the ruined languages". While war rampages through Europe, he seems to say, composers such as you merrily deploy the musical building-blocks of those civilisations without political engagement to protect their future – a bizarre and untenable position to Auden as a writer and artist.

Britten's scintillating setting leaves little doubt he understood and endorsed Auden's view of music and musicians, coming to terms with his own pacifism and lack of direct political engagement. Each section has its own unusual thematic and harmonic developments, and the work sparkles with typical ingenuity, setting technical hurdles for choral singers. Moreover, the quietly passionate unison chorusses of "Blessed Cecilia..." between each section create a strong unifying effect, allowing the work to function at a simple, hymnic level.

As music, it also functions as a hymn or paean to the art's patron saint: it speaks warmly to musicians who have always delighted in its themes, revelled in its harmonies and relished its technical challenges without perhaps grasping the subtleties of Auden's texts. Perhaps there is a deep irony in this, or perhaps it is the work's deepest truth. Music is music, pure and simple – in itself it is deeply hard to politicise. Therein lies its joy and its universality.

A full CD of Britten's Choral Works sung by the Choir of St John's College under Christopher Robinson is available on Naxos 8.554791.

Although 10 years his junior, Britten acted as an important mentor to **Lennox Berkeley** (1903 – 1989) during his years of development in the 1930s before his reputation was wholly established. Charm, wit and masterly craftsmanship are the watchwords usually associated with Lennox Berkeley, but for all its elegance, Berkeley's compositional voice is marked by an inner conviction borne of a strong personal faith and membership of the Roman Catholic Church which he joined in 1928. His legacy is a significant body of sacred choral music familiar across the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches.

The motet *Crux Fidelis* (CD2, Track 8) for tenor solo and unaccompanied choir was first performed in 1955 by Britten's long-term partner Peter Pears and the Purcell Singers. In this Good Friday hymn the choir vividly describes the agonies Christ endured; there is anguished dissonance at the mention of the crown of thorns, whilst the tenor solo (sung here by Allan Clayton) in the central section brings a personal response to the meaning of the Passion in a soaring, intense vocal line.

The Lord is my Shepherd (CD2, Track 7) was the second of Berkeley's works dedicated to Walter Hussey, the remarkable cleric who as incumbent of St Matthew's Northampton and subsequently as Dean of Chichester, initiated a remarkable series of commissions from composers including Britten and Bernstein (*The Chichester Psalms*). This setting of Psalm 23 was commissioned to mark the 900th anniversary of the foundation of Chichester Cathedral and was first heard in 1975. The instantly memorable melody of the solo treble at the beginning, and the mastery of choral writing in the unaccompanied middle section (evoking the valley of the shadow of death) are quintessential Berkeley: original, beautiful, elegant yet true to the text.

A full CD of Berkeley's Choral Music, sung by the Choir of St John's College under Christopher Robinson, is available on Naxos 8.557277.

Kenneth Leighton (1929 – 1988) was born in the northern English city of Wakefield and started

composing at the age of eight while a chorister at the Cathedral. His distinctive compositional voice is characterized by rich, lush harmonies, subtle dissonance, rhythmic energy and a lilting, angular lyricism. Pithy thematic ideas and syncopated rhythms are allied to a brilliant mastery of counterpoint and a unique sense of melody borne of a lifelong love of hymns, chorale and chant.

Choristership made a great impression on him: 'Any natural composer is a product of his background, experience and training ... With my upbringing and my boyhood as a cathedral chorister this is perhaps why I respond emotionally to Christian subjects and texts ... church music is undoubtedly a channel of communication for me ... early experiences are of immense and fundamental importance in musical as in all other kinds of development and I therefore speak as one who comes from inside the church'.

Characteristics of his music are its lyricism, rhythmic energy, virtuoso writing, and a penchant for instrumental colour.

Leighton's first setting of the *Magnificat* and *Nunc dimittis* (CD2, Tracks 10 and 11) is subtitled *Collegium Magdalenae Oxoniense* being composed for the choir of Magdalen College in 1959 and dedicated to its choirmaster Bernard Rose. In both canticles the organ part is elaborate, providing a buoyant texture that underpins the words. The *Magnificat* is bright and joyous with its sections bound together by the two-bar organ call to attention at the opening. Its Gloria ends fervently with the words 'world without end' as an exultant descending phrase punched out by the voices. In the *Nunc dimittis* the organ part becomes more and more elaborate until it reaches its full glory in the triumphant Gloria.

An Easter Sequence was commissioned by the Berkshire Boy Choristers of the United States for their service in St Severin, Paris, on Low Sunday 1969. For his texts Leighton used the Propers for the Sundays after Easter, the Antiphon at First Vespers on Ascension Day and Psalm 23. It is scored for two-part boys' or female voices, organ and trumpet. The music is vigorous, built around fanfare-like figures for trumpet and voices as if

heralding the risen Lord. The “Sortie” (CD2, Track 12) is the final part of the work and sees the voices and trumpets unite for a flowing melody of affirmative strength.

A full CD of Leighton’s Choral Music, featuring Crispian Steele-Perkins on trumpet and sung by the Choir of St John’s College under Christopher Robinson, is available on Naxos 8.555795.

Taught by Lennox Berkeley among others, **John Tavener** (born 1944) has over a span of 35 years shown an originality of concept and an intensely personal idiom, making his voice entirely separate from those of his contemporaries. The contemplative side of his nature has led him in more spiritual directions and his commitment to the Russian Orthodox Church which he joined in 1977 is evident throughout much of his work.

Tavener, in aiming to write music suitable to convey the theology and the spirituality of the Orthodox Church, creates music of what is sometimes called “dynamic stasis”. Long phrases of eastern chant, harmonic transparency and the stillness of his work runs counter to what the composer sees as the more “active” spirit of western sacred music: nevertheless, Tavener’s western background inevitably plays its part and the unique sound of the fusion of these two is characteristic of all his choral music.

The Lamb (CD2, Track 13), a delicate yet sacred lullaby to the poem by William Blake, was written in

1985. It sprang to prominence through its inclusion in the annual Service of Nine Lessons and Carols broadcast from King’s College Cambridge on Christmas Eve and has a strong hold among church choirs across the spectrum.

A very recent work, *The Lord’s Prayer* (CD2, Track 14), is the youngest on this compilation, dating from 1999, and deploys bare musical material to striking effect. Dedicated to the baby daughter of Tavener’s publisher at Chester Music, the work’s harmonic ebb and flow give it a childlike simplicity, waves of gentle dissonance.

Song for Athene (CD2, Track 15) has become one of Tavener’s best known pieces since it was sung at the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales. The work takes as its text a mixture of Shakespeare (specifically Hamlet) and the Orthodox funeral service. The work, originally written in 1993, is typical of Tavener’s rich choral sound, its peals of “Alleluia” increasing gradually in volume and impinging further on the listener’s consciousness. In both these works, the choral writing carries resonances of renaissance polyphony and of the English cathedral tradition but transmutes them into something quite different, and quite recognisably by Tavener.

A full CD of Tavener’s Choral Music, sung by the Choir of St John’s College under Christopher Robinson, is available on Naxos 8.555256.

The Choir of St John's College, Cambridge

St John's College was founded in 1511 and is one of the Colleges of the University of Cambridge. The College Choir, which has a world-wide reputation for its unique sound and for the quality of its music-making, has had as its main duty since the 1670s the singing of the daily services in the College chapel during the University Term. The Services follow the Church of England cathedral tradition with Evensong six times a week and a Sung Eucharist on Sunday mornings.

The all-male Choir consists of fourteen Choral Students and sixteen Choristers. The Choristers are appointed at voice trials, which take place regularly, and are educated at St John's College School, which is situated at the edge of the College grounds. The School now educates some 440 boys and girls up to the age of thirteen. There is intense competition for places, not only for the financial rewards in terms of scholarships, but also for the unique musical training which the Choristers receive. The ages of the Choristers range from nine to thirteen years and they are encouraged to play a full part in the life of the School as well as the Choir. There are also four Probationers who begin their training at the age of eight and join the choir as vacancies arise. The alto, tenor and bass parts are taken by Choral Students who are admitted as undergraduates to the College to study a variety of subjects. Choral Students very often become professional singers and many have been awarded scholarships by the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music. Apart from its liturgical commitments, the Choir gives a number of concerts each year both in the United Kingdom and overseas. Recent tours have taken the Choir to Australia, South Africa, Canada, the United States, Holland, Belgium, Sweden and Japan.

The repertoire of the Choir stretches from the fifteenth century to the present day. Many highly acclaimed recordings have been made and these are available world-wide. The Advent Carol Service, the Lent Meditation, and Evensong on Ash Wednesday (when Allegri's *Miserere* is sung) are broadcast annually on BBC Radio 3. The choir has recently completed an extensive survey of English Choral Music on the Naxos label (please see page 4 for complete list). The series, including discs of Howells (Winner of the Cannes Classical Award 2001), Britten (nominated for a *Gramophone* Award 2000), Tavener (nominated for a Classical Brit Award and a *Gramophone* Award 2001), Rubbra (nominated for a *Gramophone* Award 2001) and Walton (nominated for a *Gramophone* Award 2002), has sold 100,000 copies to date. Many composers have written for the Choir, including Tippett, Howells, and Langlais; more recently works have been commissioned from Francis Grier, Andrew Gant, John Tavener and Judith Bingham.

Christopher Robinson

Christopher Robinson has been Organist and Director of Music at St John's College, Cambridge since October 1991. His expertise as a choral and orchestral conductor was already well known following similar appointments at Worcester Cathedral (1963-74) and St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle (1975-91). He was conductor of the City of Birmingham Choir from 1964 to 2002 and conducted the Oxford Bach Choir from 1977 to 1997. Christopher Robinson was elected an honorary member of the Royal Academy of Music in 1980 and was President of the Royal College of Organists from 1982 to 1984. He holds honorary degrees from Birmingham University and the University of Central England. In 1992 the Queen honoured him with the appointment of Commander of the Royal Victorian Order in recognition of his work at Windsor Castle. In 2002 he was awarded a Lambeth doctorate.



The Choir of St John's College, Cambridge, 2003

CD 1

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 showed 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 vv. 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.
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, vv. 29-32)

3 Justorum Animae

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

The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God, and
there shall no torment of malice touch them. In the
eyes of fools they seem to die, but they are in peace.

[4] Ave verum corpus

Ave verum corpus, natum
ex Maria Virgine,
vere passum, immolatum
in cruce pro homine.

Cujus latus perforatum
vere fluxit sanguine;
esto nobis praegustatum,
mortis in examine.

O clemens, O pie,
O dulcis Jesus,
Fili Mariae.

Hail true body

Hail true body, born
of the Virgin Mary,
that truly suffered, sacrificed
on the cross for man.

Whose pierced side
truly flowed with blood;
be for us a foretaste
in the trial of death.

O clement, O merciful,
O sweet Jesus,
Son of Mary.

[6] The Call

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:
Such a Way, as gives us breath:
Such a Truth, as ends all strife:
Such a Life, as killeth death.

Come, My Light, my Feast, my Strength:
Such a Light, as shows a feast:
Such a Feast, as mends in length:
Such a Strength, as makes his guest.

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart:
Such a Joy, as none can move:
Such a Love, as none can part:
Such a Heart, as joys in love.

[5] Give unto the Lord

Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty,
give unto the Lord glory and strength.
Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name;
worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.
The voice of the Lord is upon the waters:
the God of glory thundereth: it is the Lord
that ruleth the sea.
The voice of the Lord is mighty in operation:
the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.
The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars:
yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.

Yea, the voice of the Lord divideth
the flames of fire.
Yea, the voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness,
and strippeth the forests bare.
In His temple doth everyone speak of His glory.
Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.
The Lord sitteth above the water-flood:
and the Lord remaineth a King for ever.
The Lord shall give strength unto His people:
the Lord shall give the blessing of peace.

(Psalm XXIX)

George Herbert

[7] & [8] Magnificat and Nunc dimittis

See tracks [\[1\]](#) & [\[2\]](#)

[10] Take Him, Earth, For Cherishing

Take him, earth, for cherishing.
To thy tender breast receive him.
Body of a man I bring thee
Noble even in its ruin.

Once was this a spirit's dwelling,
By the breath of God created.
High the heart that here was beating.
Christ the prince of all its living.

Guard him well, the dead I give thee.
Not unmindful of his creature
Shall he ask it: he who made it
Symbol of his mystery.

Comes the hour God hath appointed
To fulfil the hope of men.
Then must thou, in very fashion
What I give return again.

Not though ancient time decaying
Wear away those bones to sand.
Ashes that a man might measure
In the hollow of his hand.

Not though wandering winds and idle
Drifting through the empty sky,
Scatter dust to nerve and sinew,
Is it given to man to die.

Once again the shining road
Leads to ample paradise:
Open are the woods again
That the serpent lost for men.

Take, O take him, mighty leader,
Take again thy servant's soul.
Grave his name, and pour the fragment
Balm upon the icy stone.

By the breath of God created.
Christ the prince of all its living.
Take, O take him.
Take him, earth, for cherishing.

*Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 4th Century
(Translated by Helen Waddell)*

[11] Litany to the Holy Spirit

In the hour of my distress,
When temptations me oppress,
And when I my sins confess,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!
When I lie within my bed,
Sick in heart and sick in head,
And with doubts discomforted,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the house doth sigh and weep,
And the world is drown'd with sleep,
Yet mine eyes the watch do keep,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

Robert Herrick

[12] Welcome sweet and sacred feast, Op. 27, No. 3

Welcome sweet and sacred feast; welcome life!
Dead I was, and deep in trouble;
But grace and blessings came with thee so rife,
That they have quicken'd even dry stubble
Thus souls their bodies animate,
And thus, at first, when things were rude,
Dark, void, and crude
They, by thy Word, their beauty had, and date;
All were by thee,
And still must be;
Nothing that is, or lives,
But hath his quick'nings, and relieves
As thy hand opes, or shuts:
Healings and cuts,
Darkness and day-light, life and death
Are but mere leaves turn'd by thy breath.
But that great darkness at thy death
When the veil broke with thy last breath,
Did make us see
The way to thee.

Was't not enough that thou hadst paid the price
And given us eyes
When we had none, but thou must also take
Us by the hand
And keep us still awake,
When we would sleep,
Or from thee creep,
Who without thee cannot stand?

Was't not enough to lose thy breath
And blood by an accursed death,
But thou must also leave
To us that did bereave
Thee of them both, these seals the means
That should both cleanse
And keep us so,
Who wrought thy woe?
O rose of Sharon! O the lily
Of the valley!
How art thou now, thy flock to keep,
Become both food, and Shepherd to thy sheep.

Henry Vaughan

Tenebrae Motets, Op. 72 - Third Nocturn

13 1

R: Eram quasi agnus innocens: ductus sum ad immolandum, et nesciebam: Consilium fecerunt inimici mei adversum me, dicentes: Venite, mittamus lignum in panem ejus, et eradamus eum de terra viventium.

V: Omnes inimici mei: adversum me cogitabant mala mihi: verbum iniquum mandaverunt adversum me, dicentes: Venite, mittamus lignum in panem ejus, et eradamus eum de terra viventium.

R: I was like an innocent lamb: I was led to the sacrifice and I knew it not; mine enemies conspired against me, saying, Come, let us put wood into his bread, and root him out of the land of the living.

V: All mine enemies contrived mischief against me, they uttered a wicked speech against me, saying, Come let us put wood into his bread, and root him out of the land of the living.

14 2

R: Una hora non potuistis vigilare mecum, qui exhortabamini mori pro me? Vel Judam non videtis, quomodo non dormit, sed festinat tradere me Judæis?

V: Quid dormitis? surgite, et orate, ne intretis in tentationem. Vel Judam non videtis, quomodo non dormit, sed festinat tradere me Judæis?

R: Could ye not watch one hour with me, ye that were ready to die for me? Or see ye not Judas, how he sleepeth not, but maketh haste to betray me to the Jews?

V: Why sleep ye? Arise, and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. Or see ye not Judas, how he sleepeth not, but maketh haste to betray me to the Jews?

15 3

R: Seniores populi consilium fecerunt, ut Jesum dolo tenerent, et occiderent: cum gladiis et fustibus exierunt tanquam ad latronem.

V: Collegerunt pontifices et pharisæi concilium: ut Jesum dolo tenerent, et occiderent: cum gladiis et fustibus exierunt tanquam ad latronem

R: Seniores populi consilium fecerunt, ut Jesum dolo tenerent, et occiderent: cum gladiis et fustibus exierunt tanquam ad latronem.

R: The Elders of the people consulted together: How they might by craft apprehend Jesus and slay him: with swords and clubs they went forth as to a thief.

V: The Priests and Pharisees held a council: How they might by craft apprehend Jesus and slay him: with swords and clubs they went forth as to a thief.

R: The Elders of the people consulted together: How they might by craft apprehend Jesus and slay him: with swords and clubs they went forth as to a thief.

16 MagnificatSee track **1****17 God is gone up, Op. 27, No. 2**

God is gone up with a triumphant shout,
 The Lord with sounding trumpets' melodies.
 Sing praise, sing praise, sing praises out,
 Unto our King sing praise seraphic-wise!
 Lift up your heads, ye lasting doors, they sing,
 And let the King of Glory enter in.

Methinks I see Heaven's sparkling courtiers fly,
 In flakes of Glory down him to attend,
 And hear heart-cramping notes of melody
 Surround his chariot as it did ascend;
 Mixing their music, making ev'ry string
 More to enravish as they this tune sing.
 God is gone up etc.

*Edward Taylor***CD 2****1 Set me as a seal**

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.

*(Song of Solomon)***2 Coronation Te Deum**

We praise thee, O God:
 we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.
 All the earth doth worship thee: the Father everlasting.
 To thee all Angels cry aloud:
 the Heavens and all the Powers therein.
 To thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry,
 Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth;
 Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty of thy Glory.
 The glorious company of the Apostles praise thee.
 The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise thee.
 The noble army of Martyrs praise thee.
 The holy Church throughout all the world
 doth acknowledge thee;
 The Father of an infinite Majesty;
 Thine honourable, true and only Son;
 Also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.
 Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ.
 Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.
 When thou tookest upon to deliver man,
 thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.
 When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death,
 thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.
 Thou sittest at the right hand of God,
 in the Glory of the Father.
 We believe that thou shalt come to be our Judge.
 We therefore pray thee, help thy servants,
 whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood.
 Make them to be numbered
 with thy Saints in glory everlasting.
 O Lord, save thy people, and bless thine heritage.
 Govern them, and lift them up for ever.
 Day by day we magnify thee;
 And we worship thy Name, ever world without end.
 Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin.
 O Lord, have mercy upon us,
 O Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us,
 as our trust is in thee.
 O Lord, in thee have I trusted;
 let me never be confounded.

3 Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo,
et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.
Laudamus te, benedicimus te,
adoramus te, glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi propter Magnam gloriam tuam.
Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,
Jesu Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili unigenite Jesu Christe.
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis,
suscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dextram Patris,
miserere nobis.
Quoniam tu solus sanctus,
tu solus Dominus,
tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe.
Cum sancto Spiritu
in gloria Dei Patris, Amen.

Glory be to God on high,
and on earth peace, goodwill towards men.
We praise thee, we bless thee,
we worship thee, we glorify thee,
we give thanks to thee for Thy great glory,
O Lord God, heavenly King,
God the Father Almighty.
O Lord the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ;
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us,
receive our prayer.
Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy upon us.
For thou only art holy;
thou only art the Lord;
thou only, O Christ,
with the Holy Ghost,
art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

4 A Hymn to the Virgin

Of one that is so fair and bright
Velut maris stella,
Brighter than the day is light,
Parens et puella:
I cry to thee, thou see to me,
Lady, pray thy Son for me,
Tam pia,
That I may come to thee, Maria!

All this world was forlorn
Eva peccatrice,
Till our Lord was ybore
De te genetrice.

With ave it went away
Darkest night, and comes the day
Salutis;
The well springeth out of thee.
Virtutis.

Lady flow'r of ev'rything,
Rosa sine spina.
thou bare Jesu, Heaven's King,
Gratia divina:
Of all thou bear'st the prize,
Lady Queen of paradise
Electa:
Maid mild, mother es
Effecta.

Anonymous, c. 1300

5 Jubilate Deo

O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands, serve the Lord with gladness and come before his presence with a song. Be ye sure that the Lord he is God:
It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise;
be thankful unto him, and speak good of his Name. For the Lord is gracious and his truth endureth from generation to generation.
His mercy is everlasting, for the Lord is gracious.
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.

6 Hymn to St Cecilia, Op. 27 (1942)

1

In a garden shady this holy lady
With reverent cadence and subtle psalm,
Like a black swan as death came on
Poured forth her song in perfect calm:
And by ocean's margin this innocent virgin
Constructed an organ to enlarge her prayer,
And notes tremendous from her great engine
Thundered out on the Roman air.

Blonde Aphrodite rose up excited,
Moved to delight by the melody,
White as an orchid she rode quite naked,
In an oyster shell on top of the sea;
At sounds so entrancing the angels dancing
Came out of their trance into time again,
And around the wicked in Hell's abysses
The huge flame flickered and eased their pain.

*Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:*

*Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.*

2

I cannot grow;
I have no shadow
To run away from,
I only play.

I cannot err;
There is no creature
Whom I belong to,
Whom I could wrong.
I am defeat.
When it knows it
Can now do nothing
By suffering.

All you lived through,
Dancing because you
No longer need it
For any deed.

I shall never be Different. Love me.

*Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.*

3

O ear whose creatures cannot wish to fall,
O calm of spaces unafraid of weight,
Where Sorrow is herself, forgetting all
The gaucheness of her adolescent state,
Where hope within the altogether strange
From every outworn image is released,
And Dread born whole and normal like a beast
Into a world of truths that never change:
Restore our fallen day, O re-arrange.

O dear white children casual as birds,
Playing among the ruined languages,
So small beside their large confusing words,
So gay against the greater silences
Of dreadful things you did: O hang the head,
Impetuous child with the tremendous brain,
O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain,
Lost innocence who wished your lover dead,
Weep for the lives your wishes never led.

O cry created as the bow of sin
Is drawn across our trembling violin.

O law drummed out by hearts against the still
Long winter of our intellectual will.

That what has been may never be again.

O flute that throbs with the thanksgiving breath
Of convalescents on the shores of death.

O bless the freedom that you never chose.

O trumpets that unguarded children blow
About the fortress of their inner foe.

O wear your tribulation like a rose.

*Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire.
Translated daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.*

W.H. Auden

[7] The Lord is my Shepherd, Op. 91 No. 1

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth
me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me 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 they comfort
me.

(Psalm 23)

8 Crux fidelis, Op. 43 No. 1

Crux fidelis, inter omnes
Arbor una nobilis:
Nulla silva talem profert,
fronde, flore, germine.
Dulce lignum, dulces clavos,
dulce pondus sustinet.

Felle potus ecce languet,
Spina, clavi, lancea,
Mite corpus perforatur,
Sanguis unda profluit,
Terra, pontus, astra mundus
Quo lavantur flumine.

Flecte ramos, arbour alta,
Tensa axa viscera,
Et rigor lentescat illa
Quem dedit nativitas:
Et superni membra Regis
Tende miti stipite

Sola digna tu fuisti
Ferre mundi victimam:
Atque portum praepearare
Arca mundi naufrago,
Quam sacer cruor perunxit
Fusus agni corpore

Crux fidelis, inter omnes
Arbor una nobilis:
Nulla silva talem profert,
fronde, flore, germine.

from the Mass of the Presanctified

Faithful cross, above all other,
Tree all peerless and divine;
No forest bears such a flower,
such a leaf.
Sweet is the wood and sweet are the nails,
Laden with the sweetest weight.

See him assuage his thirst with gall.
Thorns, nails, and a spear
pierce his soft flesh.
His blood flows as water
to wash over all the earth,
The sea, the sky, the whole universe.

Towering tree, bend your branches
To bear the load of his flesh.
Surrender from your
natural tension,
And relax to bear the sweet limbs
Of the most high God and King.

You are a most worthy source
To comfort and bear
a harsh victim of the world.
Ark, which saved the universe;
Tree, anointed with the sacred blood
Of the Lamb's body slain on a spindle.

Faithful cross, above all other,
Tree all peerless and divine;
No forest bears such a flower,
such a leaf.

Translated by Kate Johnson

9 Look up, sweet babe, Op. 43 No. 2

Look up sweet babe, look up and see
For love of thee, tho' far from home,
The East is come to seek herself in thy sweet eyes.
To thee thou day of night, thou East of West
Lo we at last have found the way.
To thee the world's great universal East
The general and indiff'rent day.

Richard Crashaw

10 & 11 Magnificat and Nunc dimittis

See tracks 1 & 2

12 An Easter Sequence - Sortie

God is ascended,
God is ascended in Jubilee
and the Lord in the sound of the trumpet,
Alleluia!
Rejoice to God our helper:
Sing aloud to the God of Jacob.

13 The Lamb

Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee;
He is called by thy name, For he calls himself a Lamb.

He is meek, and he is mild,
He became a little child.
I, a child, and thou a lamb, We are called by his name.
Little Lamb, God bless thee!
Little Lamb, God bless thee!

William Blake

14 The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in Heaven
Hallowed be Thy name
Thy kingdom come
Thy will be done
On earth as it is in Heaven
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil
Amen

15 Song for Athene

Alleluia. May flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.
Alleluia. Remember me O Lord,
when you come into your kingdom.
Alleluia. Give rest O Lord to your hand-maid,
who has fallen asleep.
Alleluia. The Choir of Saints have found the well-
spring
of life, and door of paradise.
Alleluia. Life: a shadow and a dream.
Alleluia. Weeping at the grave creates the song:
Alleluia.
Alleluia. Come, enjoy rewards and crowns
I have prepared for you.



DDD

8.557557-58

Total
Playing Time
2:29:51



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The rich sounds of the highly acclaimed Choir of St John's College, Cambridge conducted by Christopher Robinson can be sampled in this extensive collection, which explores the legacy of modern English choral music. CD 1 presents music from Stanford, often viewed as the father of English choral music, through to works by his pupils Vaughan Williams and Howells. Other featured composers include Elgar, the most famous of all modern English composers, whose music also finds echoes in the passionate lyricism of Finzi. The music on CD 2 stretches from Benjamin Britten's very first choral composition to Lennox Berkeley (sometime protégé of Britten) and Tavener (erstwhile pupil of Berkeley). In between feature vibrant works by Kenneth Leighton and William Walton.

ENGLISH CHORAL MUSIC

CD 1

- | | | |
|-------|---|------|
| 1 | Stanford: Magnificat in G | 4:13 |
| 2 | Stanford: Nunc Dimittis in G | 4:18 |
| 3 | Stanford: Justorum Animae | 3:24 |
| 4 | Elgar: Ave Verum | 2:39 |
| 5 | Elgar: Give unto the Lord | 7:50 |
| 6 | Vaughan Williams: The Call | 2:05 |
| 7 | Howells: Magnificat, St Paul's | 6:33 |
| 8 | Howells: Nunc Dimittis, St Paul's | 4:59 |
| 9 | Howells: Paean for Organ | 6:03 |
| 10 | Howells:
Take him, earth, for cherishing | 7:44 |
| 11 | Hurford: Litany to the Holy Spirit | 2:26 |
| 12 | Finzi:
Welcome Sweet and Sacred Feast | 7:31 |
| 13-15 | Rubbra:
Tenebrae Motets - Third Nocturn | 7:15 |
| 16 | Rubbra: Magnificat in A flat | 4:18 |
| 17 | Finzi: God is gone up | 4:24 |

CD 2

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| 1 | Walton:
Set me as a seal upon thine heart | 3:34 |
| 2 | Walton: Coronation Te Deum | 9:50 |
| 3 | Walton: Gloria from Missa Brevis | 3:24 |
| 4 | Britten: A Hymn to the Virgin | 7:06 |
| 5 | Britten: Jubilate Deo | 2:38 |
| 6 | Britten: Hymn to St Cecilia | 10:20 |
| 7 | Berkeley: The Lord is my Shepherd | 4:21 |
| 8 | Berkeley: Crux Fidelis | 6:53 |
| 9 | Berkeley:
Look up, Sweet Babe | 4:34 |
| 10 | Leighton:
Magnificat Coll Magdalenea | 5:03 |
| 11 | Leighton: Nunc Dimittis | 3:13 |
| 12 | Leighton: An Easter Sequence - Sortie | 4:11 |
| 13 | Tavener: The Lamb | 3:47 |
| 14 | Tavener: The Lord's Prayer | 3:30 |
| 15 | Tavener: Song for Athene | 5:43 |

Choir of St John's College, Cambridge • Christopher Robinson

A full track list and recording details can be found in the booklet
Series Producer: Andrew Walton • Series Engineer: Eleanor Thomason
Executive Producer: Barry Holden

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