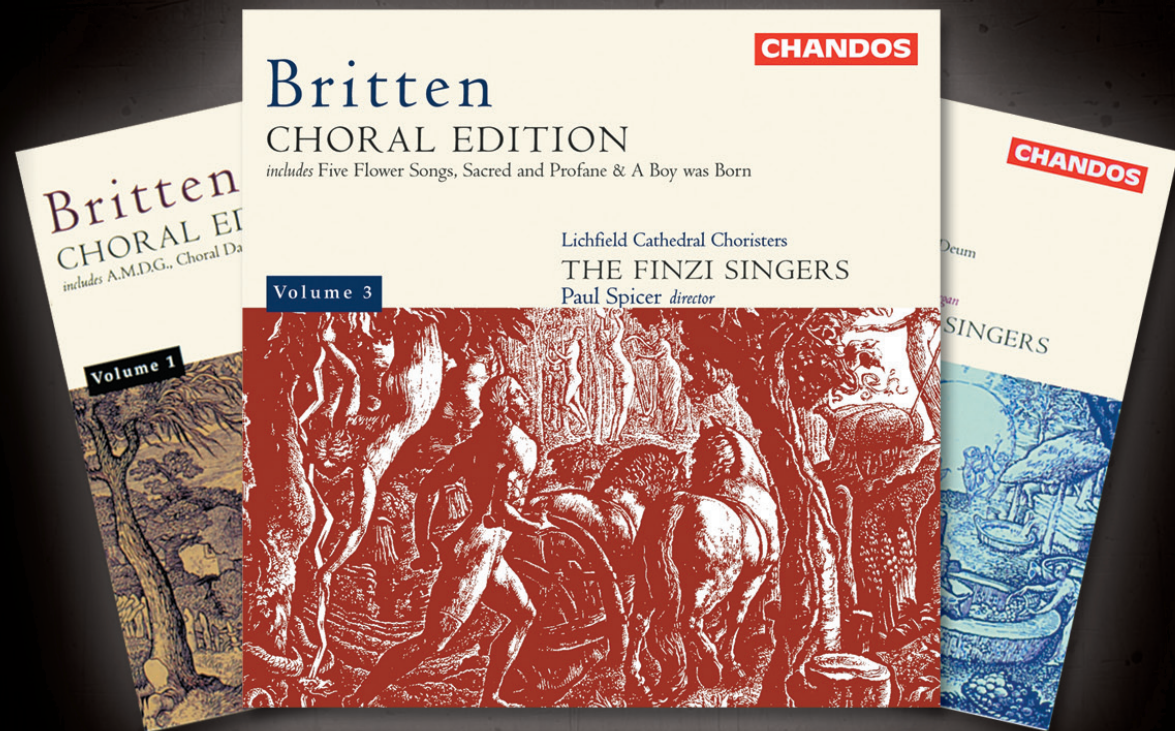


classic **CHANDOS**

BRITTEN

The Choral Edition



The Finzi Singers
Paul Spicer



Benjamin Britten, at the seashore, Aldeburgh, June 1964

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Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)

The Choral Edition

COMPACT DISC ONE

- | | | |
|----------|---|-------------|
| 1 | Hymn to St Peter, Op. 56a*
Julie Cooper soprano | 5:57 |
| 2 | A Hymn of St Columba* | 2:04 |
| 3 | A Hymn to the Virgin
Julie Cooper soprano
Stephen Carter alto
Mark Milhofer tenor
Matthew Brook bass | 2:43 |

Hymn to St Cecilia, Op. 27

10:34

Carys Lane soprano

Belinda Yates soprano

Kathryn Cook alto

Andrew Carwood tenor

Matthew Brook bass

- | | | | |
|---|-----|---|------|
| 4 | I | 'In a garden shady this holy lady' - | 2:44 |
| 5 | II | 'I cannot grow' - | 2:06 |
| 6 | III | 'O ear whose creatures cannot wish to fall' | 5:44 |

Rejoice in the Lamb, Op. 30*

17:02

Carys Lane soprano

Richard Wyn Roberts alto

James Gilchrist tenor

Simon Preece bass

- | | | | |
|----|--|--|------|
| 7 | | 'Rejoice in God, O ye Tongues' - | 1:29 |
| 8 | | 'Let Nimrod, the mighty hunter' - | 1:19 |
| 9 | | 'Hallelujah from the heart of God' - | 1:04 |
| 10 | | 'For I will consider my Cat Jeoffry' - | 2:20 |
| 11 | | 'For the Mouse is a creature of great personal valour' - | 0:58 |
| 12 | | 'For the flowers are great blessings' - | 2:05 |
| 13 | | 'For I am under the same accusation with my Saviour' - | 2:49 |
| 14 | | 'For H is a spirit and therefore he is God' - | 1:07 |
| 15 | | 'For the instruments are by their rhimes' - | 2:29 |
| 16 | | 'Hallelujah from the heart of God' | 1:18 |

	Choral Dances from 'Gloriana'	9:32
17	1 Time	1:26
18	2 Concord	2:17
19	3 Time and Concord	1:26
20	4 Country Girls -	0:58
21	5 Rustics and Fishermen -	1:00
22	6 Final Dance of Homage	2:16
	A.M.D.G.	18:33
23	1 Prayer I	2:17
24	2 Rosa Mystica	4:44
25	3 God's Grandeur	3:30
26	4 Prayer II	2:36
27	5 O Deus, ego amo Te	1:34
28	6 The Soldier	2:09
29	7 Heaven-Haven	1:26
	TT 67:10	

COMPACT DISC TWO

- | | | |
|----------|--|--------------|
| 1 | Jubilate Deo*
in E flat major • in Es-Dur • en mi bémol majeur | 2:40 |
| 2 | Te Deum*
in C major • in C-Dur • en ut majeur
Carys Lane soprano | 8:37 |
| 3 | Antiphon, Op. 56b*
Olive Simpson soprano
Rachel Wheatley soprano
Rachel Elliot soprano | 6:05 |
| | Missa brevis, Op. 63* | 10:20 |
| 4 | I Kyrie – | 1:58 |
| 5 | II Gloria –
Robert Burt intonation
Rachel Wheatley soprano
Carys Lane soprano
Lindsay Wagstaff soprano | 2:40 |
| 6 | III Sanctus – | 1:35 |
| 7 | IV Benedictus –
Carys Lane soprano
Lindsay Wagstaff soprano | 1:56 |
| 8 | V Agnus Dei | 2:09 |

9	A Wedding Anthem, Op. 46* Carys Lane soprano Mark Milhofer tenor	9:45
10	Sweet Was the Song the Virgin Sung Susanna Spicer alto	3:00
	A Ceremony of Carols, Op. 28†	21:47
11	1 Procession –	1:29
12	2 Wolcum Yole! –	1:22
13	3 There is no Rose –	2:26
14	4a That yongë child – Olive Simpson soprano	1:41
15	4b Balulalow – Carys Lane soprano	1:15
16	5 As dew in Aprille –	0:55
17	6 This little Babe –	1:25
18	7 Interlude –	3:51
19	8 In Freezing Winter Night – Carys Lane soprano Kathryn Cook alto	3:30
20	9 Spring Carol – Rachel Wheatley soprano Rachel Elliot soprano	1:07
21	10 Deo Gracias –	1:10
22	11 Recession	1:32

23 **Festival Te Deum, Op. 32*** **6:36**
Lindsay Wagstaff soprano

24 **Jubilate Deo*** **2:33**
in C major • in C-Dur • en ut majeur

TT 72:04

COMPACT DISC THREE

Five Flower Songs, Op. 47 **11:16**

- 1** 1 To Daffodils 2:10
- 2** 2 The Succession of the Four Sweet Months 1:47
- 3** 3 Marsh Flowers 2:19
- 4** 4 The Evening Primrose 2:39
- 5** 5 Ballad of Green Broom 2:02

6 **Advance Democracy** **2:53**

Sacred and Profane, Op. 91 **15:45**

- 7** 1 St Godric's Hymn 1:34
- 8** 2 I mon waxe wod 0:43
- 9** 3 Lenten is come 2:11
- 10** 4 The long night 1:21
- 11** 5 Yif ic of luve can 2:59

12	6 Carol	1:20
13	7 Ye that pasen by	2:12
14	8 A death	2:54

A Boy Was Born, Op. 3[‡]

31:16

Jonathan Cannock treble

Semi-chorus:

Helen Groves · Mhairi Lawson soprano

Kathryn Cook · Elinor Carter alto

James Gilchrist · Andrew Carwood tenor

Michael McCarthy · Charles Gibbs bass

15	Theme. A Boy Was Born –	2:04
16	Variation I. Lullay, Jesu –	4:38
17	Variation II. Herod –	2:15
18	Variation III. Jesu, As Thou Art Our Saviour –	2:56
19	Variation IV. The Three Kings	4:13
20	Variation V. In the Bleak Mid-winter –	5:29
21	Variation VI (Finale). Noel!	9:37

TT 61:42

Susan Drake harp[†]

Andrew Lumsden organ^{*}

Lichfield Cathedral Choristers[‡]

The Finzi Singers

Paul Spicer

The Finzi Singers

Paul Spicer director

COMPACT DISC ONE

soprano

Belinda Yates
Emma Brain-Gabbot
Carys Lane
Lindsay Wagstaff
Julie Cooper

alto

Richard Wyn Roberts
Kathryn Cook
Stephen Carter
Caroline Stormer

tenor

Mark Milhofer
James Gilchrist
Andrew Carwood
Nicholas Hurndall Smith

bass

Robert Hollingworth
Simon Preece
John Bernays
Charles Gibbs
Matthew Brook

COMPACT DISC TWO

soprano

Rachel Wheatley
Rachel Elliot
Olive Simpson
Carys Lane
Lindsay Wagstaff

alto

Susanna Spicer
Richard Wyn Roberts
Kathryn Cook
Stephen Carter

tenor

Mark Milhofer
Steven Harrold
Robert Burt
Vernon Kirk

bass

Robert Hollingworth
Simon Preece
John Bernays
Charles Gibbs
Stephen McCarthy

COMPACT DISC THREE

soprano

Olive Simpson
Helen Groves
Joanne Lunn
Mhairi Lawson
Lindsay Wagstaff

alto

Kathryn Cook
Richard Wyn Roberts
Elinor Carter
Stephen Carter

tenor

Andrew Carwood
Steven Harrold
Nicholas Hurndall Smith
James Gilchrist

bass

Matthew Brook
Simon Preece
Robert Hollingworth
Michael McCarthy
Charles Gibbs

Lichfield Cathedral Choristers

Andrew Lumsden director

Andrew James (head chorister)

Samuel Frankland (deputy head chorister)

Edward Bass

Jonathan Cannock

Matthew Cannock

Russell de Chernatony

Frederick Fisher

Anthony Wiles

Benjamin Beavan

Adrian Kindred

Timothy Emberson

Alexander Robinson

David Shipley

Andrew Tipple

Thomas Woltynski

Henry Saklatvala

Britten: Choral Works

COMPACT DISC ONE

Hymn to St Peter

The *Hymn to St Peter*, Op. 56a was composed in 1955 to mark the quincentenary of the Church of St Peter Mancroft, Norwich, where it received its first performance on 20 November under the direction of the church's master of music, C.J.R. Coleman, who had conducted the premiere of *A Hymn to the Virgin*, at Lowestoft, twenty-four years earlier.

The words are taken from the Gradual of the Feast of St Peter and St Paul; the music is largely based on the plainsong 'Tu es Petrus', the Alleluia and Verse for the Common of Holy Popes. An organ introduction states the first two lines of the plainsong, the second of which is then compressed into an ostinato pattern to accompany the broad, pentatonic shape of the hymn ('Thou shalt make them Princes over all the earth'). A miniature scherzo ('Instead of thy fathers'), with canonic choral entries, provides a moment of contrast before the reprise of the hymn. The return of the home tonality of B flat is marked by the intoning of the plainsong by a treble soloist, with homophonic choral responses translating the Latin text.

A Hymn of St Columba

A Hymn of St Columba (Regis regum rectissimi), for chorus and organ, was composed in December 1962 and first performed the following year by The Ulster Singers, conducted by Havelock Nelson, to mark the 1400th anniversary of Columba's missionary voyage from Ireland to Iona. The setting by Britten of the saint's words demonstrates how even in a minor composition – the *Hymn* lies, chronologically, between two major works, *War Requiem* and the Cello Symphony – the composer could respond with immense sensitivity and consummate craftsmanship.

A Hymn to the Virgin

Britten wrote *A Hymn to the Virgin* on 9 July 1930 during his final term at Gresham's School, Holt, while the sixteen-year-old composer was convalescing in the school sanatorium. It was premiered as the first of 'Two Choral Songs' at a concert in St John's Church, Lowestoft, given by the Lowestoft Musical Society, conducted by C.J.R. Coleman. The anonymous fourteenth-century text in praise of the Virgin is set with great simplicity and freshness for two contrasted groups of voices, one large, the other small.

Hymn to St Cecilia

In 1935 Britten first considered the possibility of a work inspired by the patron saint of music. His diary for 19 January reads, 'I'm having great difficulty in finding Latin words for a proposed "Hymn to St. Cecilia". Spend morning hunting', and on 25 January, 'I have the scheme but no notes yet for my St. Cecilia Hymn'. This particular 'scheme' was abandoned until the later collaboration with the poet W.H. Auden produced an appropriate text.

Although Auden and Britten first discussed the work in 1940, composition was not begun until June 1941, when a first performance was contemplated by the Elizabethan Singers (in which Peter Pears was the tenor), to take place in New York some time towards the end of that year. But Britten was unable to complete the work in time, and when he left the United States in March 1942 only the first two stanzas were ready. The sublime *Hymn to St Cecilia*, Op. 27 was eventually brought to completion during his return passage to the UK, on 2 April. The first performance, a radio broadcast, was given by the BBC Singers conducted by Leslie Woodgate on St Cecilia's Day 1942, 22 November (also Britten's twenty-ninth birthday), as part of the 'Music-Lover's Calendar'.

The refreshing diatonicism of the opening section of the *Hymn to St Cecilia* (C and E major) shows how acutely Britten was able to locate a precise musical image to match

the powerful serenity of Auden's words. The section's overlapping phrases yield material for the simple refrain, which is presented in unison at its first hearing but made progressively richer in harmonic texture at its two subsequent appearances. A delicate E major scherzo ('I cannot grow') embraces a dual sense of time by combining fast reiterations with a *canto fermo*-like element. The final stanza, with its touching, Lydian-inflected soprano solo ('O dear white children') reflecting Auden's imagery of lost innocence, culminates in a sequence of vocal cadenzas, in which instrumental sonorities are imitated (violin, timpani, flute, trumpet) before a final rendition of the refrain settles on a heavenly E major.

Rejoice in the Lamb

In March 1943 Walter Hussey, the enlightened vicar of St Matthew's, Northampton, approached Britten with a request to compose 'some music for our Jubilee celebrations next September', and concluded his letter with something of an apology for what he believed to be his impertinence:

I hope you will forgive me and put it down to
enthusiasm for a great 'bee' of mine - closer
association between the arts and the Church.

Hussey could not have found a more willing collaborator, for when Britten replied, he too declared an interest in bringing the arts and the

Church into closer contact. Britten chose as his text extracts from Christopher Smart's *Jubilate Agno*, a rambling poem of the mid-eighteenth century, composed largely in a madhouse. The poem had only been published in 1939, under the title *Rejoice in the Lamb*, when Auden brought it to Britten's attention.

The cantata, *Rejoice in the Lamb*, Op. 30, shows the influence of Purcell on Britten, whose enthusiasm for his great forebear was fuelled in the 1940s by making realisations of songs for recitals with Pears and by becoming familiar with some of the great verse anthems in performances directed by Michael Tippett at Morley College. Indeed, by its division into ten sections, with solos and choruses, and its acute response to Smart's 'mad' visions, with the organ brilliantly characterising the cat and mouse of the treble and alto solos, *Rejoice in the Lamb* is a kind of twentieth-century response to the seventeenth-century verse anthem.

Choral Dances from 'Gloriana'

The set of six 'choral dances' is taken from Act II, Scene 1 of Britten's coronation opera, the scene in which Elizabeth I is shown on a royal progress to Norwich, the loyal citizens of which present a choreographed masque in the Queen's honour. This was in fact the last scene of the opera to be written – composition of *Gloriana* occupied Britten from September 1952

until February 1953 – because of indecisions and uncertainties at Covent Garden, where The Royal Ballet wished for a much longer scene in which to make its contribution at the gala premiere. Britten, however, insisted on retaining his original structure for this scene, in which six brief tableaux are introduced by the Spirit of the Masque. These introductions are usually omitted when the *Choral Dances* are performed independently of the opera.

The first dance, 'Time', is a lively C major madrigal-inspired creation characterised by syncopations and hemiolas, with a more harmonically adventurous contrasting section in baroque dotted rhythms. 'Concord' follows, in which Britten encapsulates the Queen's calm by a total lack of harmonic discord. 'Time and Concord' is a graceful canon between the female and male voices. The fourth dance, 'Country Girls', begins antiphonally with a leaping soprano line in opposition to an earth-bound alto part, before the ideas are combined. 'Rustics and Fishermen' is a breathless scherzo for divided male chorus. The sixth dance, 'Final Dance of Homage', returns to the C major of 'Time', the canonic entries evolving a texture of great richness.

A.M.D.G.

A.M.D.G. (1939), seven unaccompanied settings of poems by Gerard Manley Hopkins, was among the first compositions Britten

wrote after his arrival in the United States in 1939. The work was intended for a professional vocal group, of which Pears was a member, to perform in London in November 1939. But the outbreak of war prevented Pears from returning to the UK, and *A.M.D.G.* remained unperformed. It was withdrawn by the composer, and its opus number (17) allocated to *Paul Bunyan*. The first performance was given by the London Sinfonietta Voices in the Purcell Room, London, on 21 August 1984.

The work's title is an abbreviation for *Ad majorem Dei gloriam* (To the greater glory of God), a motto that occurs throughout the writings of Ignatius de Loyola (1491 – 1556), the founder of the Jesuit order of which Hopkins was a member. Britten's response to Hopkins's evocative, often sensual, religious verse recalls and develops the virtuoso choral-writing first explored in *A Boy Was Born* (1933). While 'Prayer II' and 'Heaven-Haven' are essentially simple conceptions, many of the other settings reveal Britten's continuing predilection for instrumentally inspired textures and genres: for example, the brassy D major march of 'The Soldier', and the waltz of 'Rosa Mystica'. 'God's Grandeur' is perhaps the most ambitious of the set and makes enormous demands on the singers. It was, in fact, Britten's second attempt at setting this Hopkins poem: in 1938, in the BBC radio 'oratorio' *The World of the Spirit*, Britten

had made a quite different, though equally dramatic, setting for chorus and orchestra.

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COMPACT DISC TWO

Sweet Was the Song the Virgin Sung

In his diary entry for 12 January 1931, Britten recorded the composition of a small carol, for women's voices, *Sweet Was the Song the Virgin Sung*. The inspiration for this piece (written during Britten's second term at the Royal College of Music) was an anthology of Christmas carols given to him by his elder sister, Barbara, in November 1930, which provided most of the texts for a five-movement Christmas Suite, *Thy King's Birthday*. The Suite was never heard in its entirety during Britten's lifetime, but 'Sweet Was the Song' was revised for performance at the 1966 Aldeburgh Festival.

A Ceremony of Carols

Although one of the last projected works by Britten was a substantial Christmas sequence, his fascination with the theme of Christmas is most evident in works from early 1930s: both *A Hymn to the Virgin* and *I Saw Three Ships* (the latter revised in 1967 as *The Sycamore Tree*) were composed in the summer of 1930,

Thy King's Birthday a year later and *A Boy Was Born* in 1932 – 33. In all of these works Britten's early affinity with choral music, and in particular with music for the church, is clear. Britten's upbringing – contact with St John's Church at Lowestoft and singing in the Chapel Choir at Gresham's School – would have ensured a knowledge of, if not an affection for, the standard repertoire. It is perhaps no coincidence, then, that on his return journey from the United States in 1942, at a time when he was keenly conscious of returning to his 'roots', Britten should have been attracted once again to the idea of a Christmas choral work. The mediaeval and early English texts for *A Ceremony of Carols*, Op. 28 were selected largely from a poetry anthology purchased by the composer in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and a substantial part of the music was composed while he was aboard the MS Axel Johnson. Britten's choice of harp as accompaniment to the boys' choir – an unusual decision for a work often performed in a church – may well have been influenced by the recent commission for a harp concerto. The instrument is treated with characteristic sensitivity to timbre: one example is the minute distinction between D flat and C sharp at the opening of 'That yongè child' in an uncanny imitation of the text's 'hoarse' nightingale. The processional and recessional plainsong was added after the composer's return to England, anticipating the use of plainsong as a

framing device some twenty years later in the Church Parables. Britten had been introduced to the singing of plainsong at Gresham's: its lasting impression can be heard in many of his compositions. Unlike the tautly constructed church operas, here the derivation of motivic material from the chant is confined to the harp interlude alone.

Te Deum

The instrumental music of the early 1930s shows Britten as an earnest young composer, eager to absorb influences from the Continent (note, for instance, the echoes of Schoenberg and of the Second Viennese School in the Sinfonietta, Quartettino, and Elegy for solo viola). In contrast, his music for the church, although sounding a distinctive voice, clearly grows from the tradition of English church choral music so familiar to Britten. It is a group of works which in many senses stands apart from the rest of the composer's oeuvre, almost entirely lacking the tensions of the dramatic or instrumental music. Here Britten appears stylistically at ease, though never platitudinous, sanctimonious, or routine.

Britten's first canticle setting, the *Te Deum* in C major for choir and organ, was written in July 1934 for Maurice Vinden and the Choir of St Mark's, North Audley Street, London.

Jubilate Deo in E flat major

Three weeks later Britten composed (for the

same choir) a companion setting of *Jubilate Deo*, in E flat major, although the latter was withdrawn and not published until after the composer's death. Both works, as much at home in the parish church as in the cathedral, build on the choral foundations of Stanford and Ireland as opposed to the more grandiose settings of, say, Howells.

Festival Te Deum

A decade after his first *Te Deum* setting, Britten was commissioned to write a piece to mark the centenary of St Mark's Church, Swindon. The *Festival Te Deum*, Op. 32 is unusual for its use of independent metres in the choir and organ accompaniment: an original approach to the text which contrasts markedly with the traditional chordal textures of the earlier setting (a work memorably described by Constant Lambert as 'drab and penitential').

Jubilate Deo in C major

In 1961 Britten composed a second *Jubilate Deo*, in C major, at the request of the Duke of Edinburgh as a companion to the *Te Deum* of 1934.

Missa brevis

Britten much admired the hard-edged sound of the Westminster Cathedral choristers cultivated by their director, George Malcolm, and, on learning in 1959 of Malcolm's

forthcoming retirement, rapidly composed the *Missa brevis* in D, Op. 63. The work, remarkably concise in scope, exploits to the full the incisive timbre of the treble voices in music brimming with rhythmic vitality. Britten succeeds in creating a variety of effects – from the joyous bell-like affirmation of the 'Sanctus' to the innocent organum of the 'Benedictus' – but reserves a darker note for the 'Agnus Dei', with its disturbingly bleak plea for peace.

Antiphon

Antiphon, Op. 56b, written in 1956 for the centenary of St Michael's, Tenbury, takes its cue from the text by George Herbert. 'Praised be the God of love / Here above / And here below' is illustrated musically by a jubilant choir unison and 'swinging' organ part, an ethereal treble solo and the contrasting earthy sound of low triads from the altos, tenors, and basses. The musical symbolism (a fragmented imitative texture for 'He our foes in pieces brake' and the closing 'Who hath made of two folds one', in which the persistent treble repetition of 'one' – at first answered by the searching 'two' of the lower voices – at last finds the correct answer, the tonic chord 'one') might appear naive in description, but in performance, with the spatial separation of the heavenly and the earthly emphasised by the placing of the treble solos in a gallery

away from the choir, the result is remarkably touching.

A Wedding Anthem

A Wedding Anthem, Op. 46, rarely performed because of the occasional nature of Ronald Duncan's text, was composed for the marriage between the Earl of Harewood and Marion Stein in September 1949. It is a beautifully crafted piece for soprano and tenor soloists, choir, and organ, in which Britten once more responds playfully to the symbolism of the text.

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COMPACT DISC THREE

Advance Democracy

Advance Democracy, written in November 1938 at a time of anxiety and continued political unrest in Europe (the letters Britten wrote during this period document his disillusionment following the failed Munich Agreement), is a work for eight-part chorus to a text by Randall Swingler (1909–1967), a member of the Communist Party and editor of *Left Review*. Britten ably illustrates the somewhat crude imagery of 'Across the darkened city the frosty searchlights creep' (sharp punctuating chords against an arching wordless melody) and the forced jubilation of

'Time to arise Democracy', but also conveys the deeper sense of foreboding which infected other works from this period.

A Boy Was Born

At the time he composed his first major choral work, *A Boy Was Born*, Op. 3, Britten was a student at the Royal College of Music, the staff of which included John Ireland, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and Herbert Howells, three stalwart members of the English choral establishment. Yet in many ways the work shows the greater influence of his first teacher, Frank Bridge, who had encouraged him to look beyond his immediate horizon to new music and ideas from the Continent. The first two opus numbers which Britten produced, *Sinfonietta* (Op. 1) and *Phantasy* (Op. 2), show a preoccupation with solving formal problems, not least by the technique of variation which he had encountered in Schoenberg's music: the *Sinfonietta*'s second movement is a set of variations, while the *Phantasy* is crafted as a single, motivically integrated movement. Both works, then, provided useful experience for the ambitious decision which Britten made to structure his first large-scale choral work as a set of variations.

On 12 November 1932 Britten noted in his diary:

Go to Whiteley's in morning to have hair cut, & then on to St. Martin's Lane to Chatto

& Windus to get a copy of Ancient English Carols. I am setting some in a work for chorus soon, I expect.¹

A Boy Was Born, subtitled 'choral variations for men's, women's and boys' voices, unaccompanied', takes as its theme an anonymous sixteenth-century text set in pure, chorale-like homophony. In the following six variations, Britten's achievement lies as much in the transformation of the theme as in the skill with which the eight-part chorus is handled: the textures of the choral accompaniment are clearly informed by recent experience with writing for instruments. For example, the first variation is heard against a rocking figure ('Lullay') which builds from a pair of voices to all eight, together with the boys' chorus, and the fourth variation plots the texted voices against a wordless, quasi-instrumental ostinato. Variation V, 'In the Bleak Mid-winter', offers perhaps the most advanced response to the text – in this case a combination of Christina Rossetti's verse and the anonymous fifteenth-century Corpus Christi Carol – with the ancient carol declaimed in almost free rhythm above the modern text in the lower voices.

A Boy Was Born was first heard on 23 February 1934 as a broadcast by the BBC Wireless

¹ The quotation from the diaries of Benjamin Britten is © the Trustees of the Britten-Pears Foundation and may not be further reproduced without the written permission of the Trustees.

Chorus, conducted by Leslie Woodgate. Critical response, as might be expected when dealing with such an accomplished work from a nineteen-year-old, was divided between admiration and the well-worn criticism that while 'clever', the solving of technical problems had occupied the composer's mind to the exclusion of musical ideas. Grace Williams (1906–1977), a composer friend of Britten's, wrote soon after the first broadcast that she had found *A Boy Was Born* 'too reactionary' and 'too typically English' in places; yet Britten was never again to attempt an unaccompanied choral work in such a radical form.

Five Flower Songs

If *A Boy Was Born* was a product of his early experimental years, when Britten was most open to influences from abroad, the *Five Flower Songs*, Op. 47 can be seen as equally firmly rooted in the 'English' period of his œuvre which followed his return from the United States in 1942. Two works composed before and after the *Flower Songs* aptly demonstrate the inspiration that Britten was drawing from his national heritage at the time: *Spring Symphony* (1949) is a superb choral celebration of English poetry, and *Lachrymae* (1950) takes as its theme an ayre by the Elizabethan composer John Dowland. The *Five Flower Songs*, composed in spring 1950 as a gift for Dorothy and Leonard Elmhirst (the owners of Dartington

Hall) on the occasion of their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, fit comfortably into the tradition of the English part-song, as exemplified by the works of C.V. Stanford. The texts are further settings of poets represented in *Spring Symphony* – Robert Herrick and John Clare – with the addition of 'Marsh Flowers' by George Crabbe, the Aldeburgh poet. Contrasts abound within the set: 'To Daffodils' is characterised by the lively rhythmic interaction between voices, 'The Succession of the Four Sweet Months' introduces each month with a playful fugato, 'Marsh Flowers' is a stark answer to Crabbe's typically grim text, and 'The Evening Primrose' offers a point of radiant stillness. The concluding 'Ballad of Green Broom' tells its tale to an accompaniment reminiscent of strummed guitar chords and ends with an evocation of clanging church bells as the boy weds his 'Lady in full bloom'.

Sacred and Profane

Sacred and Profane, Op. 91, completed in January 1975 for the Wilbye Consort and its director, Peter Pears, is a cyclic setting of English verse from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. For a work which is motivically unified, it contains uneasy stylistic contrasts which stem not merely from the juxtaposition of sacred and secular. A glance at the first piece, an invocation by St Godric to the Virgin Mary, would suggest it to be the most

straightforward of the set, but its tonal ambiguities and dramatic pauses are potentially memorable. 'I mon waxe wod' is notable for the way in which Britten divides its text amongst the sections of the choir, a procedure used to still greater effect in the fifth piece, 'Yif ic of luvē can', in which the sopranos' metrically unaligned descant strikes a note of intensity rare even for Britten. This mood is countered abruptly by the ironic 'Carol', the opening folk-like phrase of which is transformed into the tenors' heartfelt cry in the passiontide motet 'Ye that pasen by'. The final piece, 'A death', is a macabre portrait which nonetheless ends in ironic fashion with the words (in modern English) 'For the whole world I don't care one jot'. From a composer who had composed *Death in Venice* (1973) and *Canticle V: The Death of St Narcissus* (1974), and was by this stage seriously ill, could this be seen as a further confrontation with the subject of mortality?

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Susan Drake is one of Europe's finest harpists, highly praised for her outstanding musicianship and technique. She is the only harpist ever to have won the coveted award of the National Federation of Music Societies, and the award of the Music Trades' Association for the best solo instrumental record of the year for her recording *Echoes of a Waterfall*. Her other

recordings have also received high critical acclaim worldwide. Her concert tours have taken her throughout the UK and continental Europe to the USA, Australia, and Singapore. Susan Drake has been professor of harp at the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain.

Born in 1962, **Andrew Lumsden** was educated at Winchester College and The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama before going up to St John's College, Cambridge as Organ Scholar, where he was an assistant to Dr George Guest. After three years as Assistant Organist at Southwark Cathedral, he was appointed Sub-Organist at Westminster Abbey. He was also a regular broadcaster on the BBC's Daily Service and Choral Evensong. In 1992 he was appointed Organist and Master of the Choristers at Lichfield Cathedral, going on to record several CDs with the Cathedral Choir and tour France, Germany, Italy, and the USA. With Robert Sharpe, he oversaw the complete rebuilding and extension of the Cathedral's Hill organ by Harrison and Harrison. In September 2002, succeeding David Hill, he took up his current appointment as Organist and Director of Music at Winchester Cathedral. The Choir has continued to record and broadcast frequently, and performed at prestigious venues both at home and abroad. As conductor of the Waynflete Singers, Andrew Lumsden works regularly with orchestras such as Florilegium,

the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, and London Mozart Players. As a soloist, he has appeared with the London Philharmonic Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall, the English Chamber Orchestra at the Barbican, and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in Symphony Hall, Birmingham. Frequently touring abroad, he has appeared at recital venues in Bergen, San Francisco, Saint-Tropez, Harare, and Sydney, among many others, and conducted choral courses in New York City, Pennsylvania, Quebec, and Delaware.

The **Lichfield Cathedral Choristers** form the top line of the Cathedral Choir, which also consists of nine Vicars Choral. Together they provide the music for the daily round of services – the Opus Dei. The boys are educated at the Cathedral School, which is partly housed in the magnificent seventeenth-century Old Bishop's Palace within the Close. The choir broadcasts regularly on radio and television, but its musical life is not all based on the Cathedral. Besides projects such as this recording, it has also appeared in concert with Sir Simon Rattle and Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and has toured the USA, Germany, France, and Italy (a tour which included a Papal Audience). Current Directors of Music are Ben and Cathy Lamb.

Founded by Paul Spicer in 1987 for a Festival of British Music given under the auspices

of The Finzi Trust, **The Finzi Singers** were for many years regarded as major exponents of British twentieth-century choral music, in which they specialised. Their discography for Chandos, including many first recordings, covered a considerable amount of rarely heard British music, demonstrating the wealth and breadth of this repertoire for the first time. They gave many concerts and broadcasts and commissioned a considerable amount of new music from composers such as Michael Berkeley, Judith Bingham, John Joubert, David Matthews, Stephen Pratt, Jeremy Dale Roberts, Sir John Tavener, and James Wishart.

A chorister at New College, Oxford, **Paul Spicer** studied composition with Herbert Howells and organ with Richard Popplewell at the Royal College of Music in London, where he himself taught between 1995 and 2008. He is best known as a choral conductor, partly through the many CDs he made with The Finzi Singers for Chandos Records. He has led Bach choirs in Chester and Leicester, became conductor of the Bach Choir in Birmingham in 1992, and also conducts the Whitehall Choir in London. He now teaches choral conducting at the Universities of Oxford and Durham and at the

Birmingham Conservatoire, where he also directs the chamber choir. He has been Artistic Director of the Lichfield International Arts Festival and the Abbotsholme Arts Society, Senior Producer for BBC Radio 3 in the Midlands, and a much sought-after recording producer. His highly acclaimed biography of Herbert Howells, published in August 1998, has been reprinted twice, and a large-scale biography of Sir George Dyson will be published in 2014. He has written a widely used volume on *English Pastoral Partsongs* for Oxford University Press and countless articles for periodicals, besides being a contributor to the *Dictionary of National Biography*. He has been commissioned by the Britten – Pears Foundation and Boosey & Hawkes to write the first practical guide to all Benjamin Britten's choral music and is producing similar guides for all James MacMillan's growing choral output. He is in considerable demand as a composer. Paul Spicer is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, an Honorary Research Fellow of the University of Birmingham, an Honorary Fellow of Birmingham Conservatoire, a Trustee of The Finzi Trust, Vice-President of The Herbert Howells Society, and Advisor to the Sir George Dyson Trust.



Susan Drake

Britten: Chorwerke

CD 1

Hymn to St Peter

Die *Hymn to St Peter* (Hymne an den Heiligen Petrus) op. 56a entstand im Jahr 1955 anlässlich der Fünfhundertjahrfeier der Kirche St. Peter Mancroft in Norwich und wurde dort am 20. November uraufgeführt. Der Dirigent war der Organist der Kirche, C.J.R. Coleman, der schon vierundzwanzig Jahre zuvor die Uraufführung der *Hymn to the Virgin* in Lowestoft geleitet hatte.

Der Text ist dem Graduale des Fests der Apostel Petrus und Paulus entnommen; die Musik beruht überwiegend auf dem Cantus planus "Tu es Petrus", dem Halleluja und Vers des Commune sanctorum für einen oder mehrere Päpste. Eine Introduction auf der Orgel bringt die beiden ersten Zeilen des Cantus planus, die zweite zu einem Ostinato komprimiert, das die geräumige pentatonische Gestalt des Hymnus ("Thou shalt make them Princes over all the earth" – "Du sollst sie erheben zu Fürsten über die Erde") begleitet. Ein winziges Scherzo ("Instead of thy Fathers" – "Statt deinen Vätern") mit kanonischen Einsätzen des Chors bildet vor der Reprise des Hymnus einen kurzen Kontrast. Die Grundtonart B-Dur kehrt mit dem Cantus

planus (Sopransolo) zurück, wobei der Chor die homophonen Responsorien des lateinischen Texts übersetzt.

A Hymn of St Columba

A Hymn of St Columba (Ein Lied von Sankt Columba) (*Regis regum rectissimi*) für Chor und Orgel, das Britten im Dezember 1962 schrieb, wurde im folgenden Jahr von den Ulster Singers unter Havelock Nelson zu Ehren von St. Columba uraufgeführt, einem gebürtigen Iren, der 1400 Jahre zuvor auf die schottische Insel Iona auswanderte und dort ein Kloster gründete. Brittens Vertonung der Worte des Heiligen beweist, daß er auch bei dieser weniger bedeutenden Komposition, die chronologisch zwischen zwei großformatigen Werken steht, nämlich dem *War Requiem* und der Sinfonie für Cello und Orchester, beträchtliche Sensibilität und eine hervorragende Satztechnik ins Spiel brachte.

A Hymn to the Virgin

Die *Hymn to the Virgin* (Hymne an die Jungfrau Maria) schrieb der sechzehnjährige Komponist am 9. Juli 1930 im letzten Schulsemester in Gresham's School, Holt, während der

Rekonvaleszenz im Krankenzimmer, und sie wurde als erstes zweier "Chorischer Lieder" in der Kirche St. John's, Lowestoft, von der dortigen Musikgesellschaft unter der Leitung von C.J.R. Coleman uraufgeführt. Die schlichte, lebendige Vertonung des anonymen Texts aus dem vierzehnten Jahrhundert zu Ehren der Jungfrau erfordert zwei kontrastierende Stimmgruppen – eine große und eine kleine.

Hymn to St Cecilia

Im Jahr 1935 befaßte sich Britten erstmals mit dem Plan einer Komposition über die Schutzheilige der Musik. In seinem Tagebuch für den 19. Januar steht: "Ein großes Problem ist die Beschaffung eines lateinischen Textes für die 'Hymn to St Cecilia', die mir vorschwebt. Verbrachte den Vormittag mit der Suche", und am 25. schrieb er: "Ich habe die Vorlage, aber noch keine Noten für meine 'Hymn to St Cecilia'." Diese "Vorlage" wurde denn auch beiseite gelegt, bis in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Dichter W.H. Auden der geeignete Text zustande kam.

Obwohl sich Auden und Britten schon 1940 über das Werk besprachen, wurde die Komposition erst im Juni 1941 in Angriff genommen; das Ensemble Elizabethan Singers, dessen Tenor Peter Pears war, plante, es gegen Jahresende in New York uraufzuführen. Indes konnte Britten den Termin nicht einhalten; als er im März 1942 die Vereinigten Staaten verließ,

waren nur die beiden ersten Strophen fertig. Schließlich wurde die erlesene *Hymn to St Cecilia* (Hymne an die Heilige Cäcilie) op. 27 am 2. April während der Heimreise an Bord vollendet und erstmals am 22. November 1942, dem Festtag der hl. Cäcilie (und Brittens neunundzwanzigsten Geburtstag), von den BBC Singers unter der Leitung von Leslie Woodgate bei einer Rundfunksendung der Reihe "Music-Lover's Calendar" gesungen.

Die erfrischende Diatonik des ersten Abschnitts in C- und E-Dur beweist, daß Britten genau den richtigen musikalischen Ausdruck für die kraftvolle Gelassenheit von Audens Text finden konnte. Der sich aus den überlappenden Phrasen entwickelnde Refrain erklingt zunächst unisono, entfaltet aber in den beiden Repriseen einen harmonisch zunehmend angereicherten Satz. Im duftigen Scherzo in E-Dur ("I cannot grow" – "Ich kann nicht wachsen"), das sich auf zwei Zeitebenen zu bewegen scheint, sind behend wiederholte Phrasen mit einer Art Cantus firmus kombiniert. Die letzte Strophe enthält ein ergreifendes, lydisch angehauchtes Sopransolo ("O dear white children" – "Ihr lieben weißen Kinder"), das Audens Vorstellungen über die verlorene Unschuld ausdrückt, und gipfelt in einer Folge von Kadenzen, die das Kolorit verschiedener Instrumente (Geige, Pauken, Flöte, Trompete) nachahmen. Dann erklingt der Refrain zum letzten Mal und schließt in himmlischem E-Dur.

Rejoice in the Lamb

Im März 1943 wandte sich Walter Hussey, der freisinnige Pfarrer der St. Matthews-Kirche in Northampton, an Britten und bat ihn, "für unser Jubiläum im September etwas zu komponieren". Der Brief schloß mit einer Abbitte für seine vermeintliche Dreistigkeit:

Ich hoffe, Sie werden mir verzeihen und es meiner Begeisterung für mein besonderes Steckenpferd zuschreiben – eine engere Verbundenheit zwischen Kunst und Kirche.

Einen bereitwilligeren Mitarbeiter hätte er gar nicht finden können. In seinem Antwortschreiben erklärte Britten, auch er sei um bessere Kontakte zwischen der Kunst und der Kirche bemüht. Für seinen Text wählte der Komponist Auszüge aus Christopher Smarts *Jubilate Agno*, einer verworrenen Dichtung aus der Mitte des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts, die zum Teil im Irrenhaus entstanden war. Als sie 1939 endlich unter dem Titel *Rejoice in the Lamb* veröffentlicht wurde, lenkte Auden Brittens Aufmerksamkeit darauf.

Die Kantate, *Rejoice in the Lamb* (Freut euch des Lamms) op. 30, bezeugt Purcells Einfluß auf Britten, der in seinem Enthusiasmus für seinen großen Vorfahren in den 1940er Jahren noch bestärkt wurde, als er dessen Lieder für Recitals mit Peter Pears aussetzte; mit Purcells großen *Verse Anthems* war er durch die von Michael Tippett geleiteten

Interpretationen an der Volkshochschule Morley College vertraut. Infolge der Gliederung in zehn Abschnitte mit Solos und Chören und der einsichtigen Reaktion auf Smarts "irre" Visionen, darunter die blendende Orgelpartie für die Charakterisierung der Katze und Maus in den Sopran- und Altsoli, ist *Rejoice in the Lamb* gewissermaßen die Antwort des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts auf das *Verse Anthem* des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts.

Choral Dances from 'Gloriana'

In der ersten Szene des zweiten Akts von Brittens Krönungsoper, in dem die sechs "Chorische Tänze" vorgetragen werden, ist Königin Elizabeth I. auf Reisen und die Bürger von Norwich führen ihr zu Ehren ein Maskenspiel auf. Britten arbeitete an der Oper von September 1952 bis Februar 1953; infolge der Unschlüssigkeit am Opernhaus Covent Garden, dessen Ballett einen ausführlicheren Beitrag zur Galapremiere zu machen bestrebt war, wurde diese Szene zu allerletzt fertig. Indes ließ sich der Komponist von seinem ursprünglichen Konzept nicht abbringen, in dem der Geist der Maske sechs kurze Bilder vorführt. Diese Einleitungen werden zumeist gestrichen, wenn die *Choral Dances* unabhängig von der Oper aufgeführt werden.

Der erste Tanz, "Time" (Zeit), in C-Dur ist ein heiteres, dem Madrigal nachgearbeitetes Gebilde mit Synkopen und Hemiolen; der

kontrastierende Mittelteil mit barocker punktierter Rhythmik ist harmonisch etwas gewagter. Der nächste Tanz, "Concord" (Eintracht), ist durch das Fehlen der geringsten Dissonanz gekennzeichnet und fängt auf diese Weise die Stimmung vollkommener Ruhe ein. "Time and Concord" (Zeit und Eintracht) ist ein anmutiger Kanon der Frauen- und Männerstimmen. Der vierte Tanz, "Country Girls" (Ländliche Mädchen), beginnt mit einer Antiphon, in der sich die hüpfende Sopranlinie dem erdgebundenen Altpart entgegenstellt; schließlich kommen die beiden Stimmen zusammen. "Rustics and Fishermen" (Bauern und Fischer) ist ein atemberaubendes Scherzo für den geteilten Männerchor. Im sechsten Stück, "Final Dance of Homage" (Huldiger Tanz zum Abschluß), dessen kanonische Einsätze sich zu einem üppigen Satz entfalten, kehrt das C-Dur von "Time" wieder.

A.M.D.G.

Unter den ersten Werken, die Britten 1939 nach der Ankunft in den Vereinigten Staaten schrieb, befanden sich *A.M.D.G.*, sieben A-Cappella-Vertonungen von Gedichten des katholischen Priesters Gerard Manley Hopkins. Sie waren für ein Ensemble von Berufssängern bestimmt, dem Peter Pears angehörte, und sollten im November 1939 in London vorgetragen werden. Da Pears aber infolge des Kriegsausbruchs nicht nach Großbritannien zurückkehren

konnte, wurde das Werk nicht aufgeführt, sondern von Britten zurückgezogen und die Opuszahl (17) der Operette *Paul Bunyan* zugeteilt. Die Uraufführung fand erst am 21. August 1984 mit dem Vokalensemble London Sinfonietta Voices in Londons Purcell Room statt.

Der Titel ist eine Abkürzung von *Ad majorem Dei gloriam* – zur größeren Ehre Gottes. Dieses Motto durchzieht die Schriften von Ignatius von Loyola (1491 – 1556), dem Begründer des Jesuitenordens, dem Hopkins angehörte. Britten's Reaktion auf Hopkins' evokative, manchmal sinnliche religiöse Lyrik greift auf den schon in *A Boy Was Born* (Ein Knabe ward geboren – 1933) ergründeten Chorsatz zurück, der hier ausgebaut wird. Die Konzeption von "Prayer II" (Gebet II) und "Heaven-Haven" (Himmelshafen) ist im Grunde genommen unkompliziert, doch in mehreren anderen Nummern gibt sich Britten's Vorliebe für den auf instrumentaler Inspiration beruhenden Vokalsatz zu erkennen, so im grellen D-Dur-Marsch "The Soldier" (Der Soldat) und dem Walzer "Rosa Mystica". Am gewagtesten ist wohl "God's Grandeur" (Gottes Hoheit), das enorme Ansprüche an die Sänger stellt. Mit dieser Dichtung hatte sich Britten schon vorher auseinandergesetzt: 1938 hatte er in der Rundfunksendung des Quasi-Oratoriums *The World of the Spirit* (Die Welt des Geistes) einen ganz anderen, freilich ebenso

dramatischen Zugang zum Text gefunden, bei dem er Chor und Orchester einsetzte.

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Übersetzung: Anne Steeb / Bernd Müller

CD 2

Sweet Was the Song the Virgin Sung

In seinem Tagebucheintrag für den 12. Januar 1931 hat Britten die Komposition eines kleinen Carol für Frauenstimmen mit dem Titel *Sweet Was the Song the Virgin Sung* (Ein reizend Lied die Jungfrau sang) vermerkt. Die Inspiration des Stücks (das Britten im zweiten Semester am Royal College of Music schrieb) war eine Anthologie von Weihnachtsliedern, die ihm seine ältere Schwester Barbara im November 1930 geschenkt hatte und das die Mehrheit der Texte für *Thy King's Birthday* lieferte, eine fünfsätzigte Weihnachtssuite. Die Suite war zu Britten's Lebzeiten nie vollständig zu hören, aber "Sweet Was the Song" wurde zur Aufführung beim Aldeburgh Festival 1966 überarbeitet.

A Ceremony of Carols

Eines von Britten's letzten geplanten Werken war eine umfangreiche Weihnachtssequenz, doch seine Faszination für das Thema Weihnachten macht sich in Werken aus den

frühen dreißiger Jahren am deutlichsten bemerkbar: Sowohl *A Hymn to the Virgin* als auch *I Saw Three Ships* (letzteres 1967 als *The Sycamore Tree* neu bearbeitet) wurden im Sommer 1930 komponiert, *Thy King's Birthday* ein Jahr später und *A Boy Was Born* 1932 / 33. In allen diesen Werken wird Britten's frühe Neigung zu Chormusik und speziell solcher für die Kirche deutlich. Britten's Vorgeschichte – Kontakt zur Kirchengemeinde St. John's in Lowestoft und Mitgliedschaft im Kirchenchor von Gresham's School – wird die Kenntnis des Standardrepertoires, wenn nicht gar ein liebevolles Verhältnis zu ihm gewährleistet haben. Darum ist es wohl auch kein Zufall, daß Britten 1942 auf der Rückreise aus den USA, zu einer Zeit, als ihm deutlich bewußt war, daß er zu seinen "Wurzeln" zurückkehrte, erneut auf den Gedanken kam, ein weihnachtliches Chorwerk zu schreiben. Die mittelalterlichen und altenglischen Texte zu *A Ceremony of Carols* (Festliche Gesänge) op. 28 entstammen hauptsächlich einer Gedichtsammlung, die der Komponist in Halifax in Nova Scotia gekauft hatte, und ein erheblicher Teil der Musik wurde komponiert, während er sich an Bord der MS Axel Johnson befand. Britten's Wahl der Harfe als Begleitinstrument des Knabenchors – eine ungewöhnliche Entscheidung für ein Stück, das oft in der Kirche aufgeführt wird – könnte von dem kurz zuvor erteilten Auftrag beeinflusst gewesen sein, ein Harfenkonzert zu schreiben.

Das Instrument wurde mit typischem Gespür für Timbre eingesetzt: Ein Beispiel ist die feine Unterscheidung zwischen Des und Cis zu Beginn von "That yongë child" (Das kleine Kind), eine gespenstische Imitation der "heiseren" Nachtigall aus dem Text. Der Cantus planus zum Ein- und Auszug wurde nach der Rückkehr des Komponisten hinzugefügt; er ist ein Vorgriff auf den zwanzig Jahre später stattfindenden Einsatz eines Cantus planus als Rahmen für die Kirchenparabeln. Britten war in Gresham's School mit dem Choralgesang bekannt gemacht worden, dessen nachhaltiger Eindruck in vielen seiner Kompositionen herauszuhören ist. Anders als bei den straff gefügten liturgischen Dramen beschränkt sich hier die Ableitung motivischen Materials aus dem Choral auf das Harfeninterludium.

Te Deum

Die Instrumentalmusik der frühen dreißiger Jahre zeigt Britten als ersten jungen Komponisten, der begierig kontinental-europäische Einflüsse aufnimmt (man beachte zum Beispiel die Anklänge an Schönberg und die Zweite Wiener Schule in der Sinfonietta, dem Quartettino und der *Elegy* für Solobratsche). Im Gegensatz dazu läßt seine Musik für die Kirche zwar eine charakteristische Stimme erklingen, geht jedoch eindeutig aus der Tradition englischer Kirchenchormusik hervor, die Britten so vertraut war. Es handelt

sich um eine Gruppe von Werken, die sich in vielerlei Hinsicht vom übrigen Schaffen des Komponisten abhebt und der fast zur Gänze die Spannungen der dramatischen oder instrumentalen Musik abgehen. Hier erscheint Britten stilistisch ungezwungen, jedoch nie platt, scheinheilig oder schablonenhaft.

Brittens erste Canticumvertonung, das *Te Deum* in C-Dur für Chor und Orgel, wurde im Juli 1934 für Maurice Vinden und den Chor von St. Mark's in der Londoner North Audley Street geschaffen.

Jubilata Deo in Es-Dur

Drei Wochen später komponierte Britten (für denselben Chor) mit *Jubilata Deo* in Es-Dur das passende Gegenstück, das jedoch zurückgezogen und erst nach dem Tod des Komponisten veröffentlicht wurde. Beide Werke, die in der Gemeindekirche und in der Kathedrale gleichermaßen heimisch sind, bauen auf den chorischen Grundfesten Stanfords und Irelands auf, nicht auf den prunkvollen Vertonungen, wie sie beispielsweise Howells hervorgebracht hat.

Festival Te Deum

Ein Jahrzehnt nach seiner ersten *Te-Deum*-Vertonung wurde Britten damit beauftragt, zur Hundertjahrfeier von St. Mark's Church in Swindon ein Stück zu schreiben. Das *Festival Te Deum* op. 32 ist insofern

ungewöhnlich, als es für den Chor und die Orgelbegleitung voneinander unabhängige Taktarten einsetzt: ein originelles Herangehen an den Text, der sich erheblich von den herkömmlichen akkordischen Strukturen der älteren Vertonung unterscheidet (einem Werk, das Constant Lambert treffend als "trist und bußfertig" beschrieben hat).

Jubilata Deo in C-Dur

1961 komponierte Britten auf Wunsch des Herzogs von Edinburgh nach einem Gegenstück zum Te Deum von 1934 ein zweites Jubilata Deo, diesmal in C-Dur.

Missa brevis

Britten empfand große Bewunderung für den glasklaren Klang der Choristen von Westminster Cathedral, den deren Leiter George Malcolm kultivierte, und als er 1959 erfuhr, daß Malcolm demnächst in den Ruhestand treten würde, komponierte er rasch die Missa brevis in D op. 63. Das Werk, das vom Umfang her bemerkenswert kurz gefaßt ist, schöpft mit Musik, die vor rhythmischer Vitalität überschäumt, das schneidende Timbre der Sopranstimmen voll aus. Es gelingt Britten, eine Vielzahl von Effekten zu erzeugen – von der freudig glockenhellen Bekräftigung des "Sanctus" bis hin zum keuschen Organum des "Benedictus". Eine düstere Note hebt er allerdings für das "Agnus Dei" mit seinem beunruhigend trostlosen Friedensappell auf.

Antiphon

Antiphon op. 56b, 1956 zur Hundertjahrfeier von St. Michael's in Tenbury entstanden, lehnt sich an einen Text von George Herbert an. "Praised by the God of love / Here below / And here above" (Gepriesen sei der Gott der Liebe / Hier drunten / Und hier droben) wird musikalisch durch ein jubelndes Unisono des Chors und eine "swingende" Orgelstimme, ein vergeistigtes Sopransolo und den damit kontrastierenden robusten Dreiklängen von Alt-, Tenor- und Baßstimmen. Der musikalische Symbolismus einer gebrochen imitativen Struktur für "He our foe in pieces brake" (Bricht unsern Gegnern das Genick) und "Who hath made of two folds one" (Der aus zwei Herden eine hat gemacht) (dort findet das unablässig wiederholte "eine" der Sopranstimmen – dem zunächst das forschende "zwei" der tieferen Stimmen antwortet – abschließend die richtige Antwort, den Tonikaakkord "eins"), mag so beschrieben naiv erscheinen. Bei Aufführungen ist jedoch das Ergebnis, da die räumliche Trennung des Himmlischen und des Irdischen durch Aufstellen der Sopransolisten in einigem Abstand zum Chor auf einer Empore betont wird, erstaunlich ergreifend.

A Wedding Anthem

A Wedding Anthem (Ein Hochzeitsanthem) op. 46, das selten aufgeführt wird, weil Ronald Duncans Text auf einen bestimmten

Anlaß zugeschnitten ist, wurde zur Hochzeit des Grafen Harewood mit Marion Stein im September 1949 komponiert. Es ist ein schön gefügtes Stück für Sopran- und Tenorsolisten, Chor und Orgel, in dem Britten wieder einmal spielerisch auf den Symbolismus des Textes eingeht.

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Übersetzung: Anne Steeb / Bernd Müller

CD 3

Advance Democracy

Advance Democracy (Vorwärts mit der Demokratie), entstanden im November 1938 in einer Zeit der Angst und fortgesetzten politischen Unruhe in Europa (Britten's Briefe aus der Zeit belegen seine Enttäuschung über das Scheitern des Münchner Abkommens), ist ein Werk für achtstimmigen Chor geschrieben, auf einen Text von Randall Swingler (1909 – 1967), Mitglied der Kommunistischen Partei und Herausgeber der Zeitschrift *Left Review*. Britten gelang eine gute Umsetzung der etwas groben Metaphorik von "Across the darkened city the frosty searchlights creep" (Über die verdunkelte Stadt kriechen die frostigen Suchscheinwerfer) (hart pulsierende Akkorde kombiniert mit einer geschwungenen wortlosen Melodie) sowie des forcierten

Jubilierens von "Time to arise Democracy" (Zeit, aufzuwachen, Demokratie); zugleich vermittelt die Komposition ein tieferliegendes Gefühl düsterer Vorahnung, das auch andere Werke dieser Zeit durchdringt.

A Boy Was Born

Zu der Zeit, als er sein erstes größeres Chorwerk, *A Boy Was Born* (Ein Knabe ward geboren) op. 3 komponierte, studierte Britten am Royal College of Music, zu dessen Dozenten John Ireland, Ralph Vaughan Williams und Herbert Howells gehörten, drei eifrige Verfechter des englischen Chorwesens. In vieler Hinsicht jedoch zeigt die Komposition den Einfluß seines ersten Lehrers Frank Bridge, der ihn ermutigt hatte, über seinen unmittelbaren Horizont hinaus den Blick auf neue Musik und Konzepte vom europäischen Festland zu richten. Die ersten beiden Werksnummern Britten's, die Sinfonietta (op. 1) und die *Phantasy* (op. 2), zeigen seine Beschäftigung mit formalen Problemen, die er häufig mit Hilfe der Variationstechnik löste, der er in Schönberg's Musik begegnet war: Der zweite Satz der Sinfonietta ist ein Variationszyklus, während die *Phantasy* als ein motivisch einheitlicher Einzelsatz gestaltet ist. Diese beiden Werke lieferten ihm somit wertvolle Erfahrungen bei seinem Entschluß, sein erstes großangelegtes Chorwerk in Form eines Variationszyklus zu strukturieren.

Am 12. November 1932 schrieb Britten in sein Tagebuch:

Morgens zu Whiteley's zum Haareschneiden,
& dann weiter in die St. Martin's Lane zu
Chatto & Windus, um einen Band mit Ancient
English Carols zu kaufen. Ich denke, ich
werde einige davon bald für ein Chorwerk
verwenden.¹

A Boy Was Born, mit dem Untertitel
"Chorvariationen für unbegleitete Männer-,
Frauen- und Knabenstimmen", verarbeitet
einen anonymen Text aus dem sechzehnten
Jahrhundert, der in reiner, choralhafter
Homophonie vertont ist. Bei den sich
anschließenden sechs Variationen zeigt sich
Britten's Geschick sowohl in der Transformation
des Themas als auch in der Behandlung des
achtstimmigen Chores; die Satztechniken
der chorischen Begleitung zeugen eindeutig
von kurz zuvor gesammelten Erfahrungen
im Komponieren für Instrumente. Die erste
Variation zum Beispiel erklingt zu einer
wiegenden Figur ("Lullay"), die sich von
zwei Stimmen zu sämtlichen acht Stimmen
gemeinsam mit dem Knabenchor aufbaut,
und die vierte Variation setzt die textierten
Stimmen vor dem Hintergrund eines wortlosen,

¹ Das Copyright für das Zitat aus Benjamin Britten's
Tagebüchern liegt bei den Treuhändern der Britten - Pears
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quasi instrumentalen Ostinato ab. Variation V "In
the Bleak Mid-winter" (Im trostlosen Mittwinter)
behandelt den Text – eine Kombination der
Dichtung Christina Rossettis und des anonymen
Corpus-Christi-Carols aus dem fünfzehnten
Jahrhundert – auf besonders innovative Weise:
Das altertümliche Carol wird hier in nahezu freien
Rhythmen über dem in den tieferen Stimmen
gesungenen modernen Text deklamiert.

A Boy Was Born wurde erstmals am
23. Februar 1934 vom BBC Wireless Chorus
unter Leslie Woodgate im Rundfunk aufgeführt.
Wie bei einem so ambitionierten Werk eines
Neunzehnjährigen nicht anders zu erwarten,
reichte die Reaktion der Kritik von Bewunderung
bis zu dem üblichen Einwand, die Musik sei
zwar clever, das Lösen technischer Probleme
habe den Komponisten jedoch dazu verleitet,
den musikalischen Gehalt zu vernachlässigen.
Die mit Britten befreundete Komponistin Grace
Williams (1906 – 1977) schrieb kurz nach der
ersten Radioaufführung, sie habe *A Boy Was
Born* stellenweise "zu reaktionär" und "zu
typisch englisch" gefunden; tatsächlich jedoch
sollte Britten nie wieder ein unbegleitetes
Chorwerk von solch radikaler Form schreiben.

Five Flower Songs

Während *A Boy Was Born* das Produkt von
Britten's frühen experimentellen Jahren ist,
in denen er für Einflüsse aus dem Ausland
am empfänglichsten war, sind die *Five Flower*

Songs (Fünf Blumenlieder) op. 47 ebenso eindeutig in seiner "englischen" Schaffensphase verankert, die sich an seine Rückkehr aus den Vereinigten Staaten 1942 angeschlossen. Zwei Werke, die vor und nach den *Flower Songs* komponiert wurden, illustrieren treffend, welche Inspiration Britten zu der Zeit aus seinem kulturellen Erbe bezog: *Spring Symphony* (1949) ist eine exzellente chorische Umsetzung englischer Dichtkunst, und *Lachrymae* (1950) verwendet ein Ayre des elisabethanischen Komponisten John Dowland. Die im Frühjahr 1950 als Geschenk für Dorothy und Leonhard Elmhirst (die Besitzer von Dartington Hall) anlässlich ihres fünfundzwanzigsten Hochzeitstages komponierten *Five Flower Songs* gehören, wie C.V. Stanford dargelegt hat, eindeutig in die Tradition des englischen Ensembleliedes. Für die Texte griff Britten auf Robert Herrick und John Clare zurück – die gleichen Dichter, die er auch für *Spring Symphony* heranzog; außerdem vertonte er "Marsh Flowers" (Sumpflumen) des Aldeburgher Poeten George Crabbe. Der Zyklus ist voller Kontraste: "To Daffodils" (An die Narzissen) ist durch seinen lebhaften rhythmischen Austausch zwischen den Stimmen charakterisiert, "The Succession of the Four Sweet Months" (Die Abfolge der vier lieblichen Monate) stellt jeden Monat mit einem spielerischen Fugato vor, "Marsh Flowers" ist eine kraftvolle Antwort auf Crabbes charakteristisch düsteren Text, und "The Evening

Primrose" (Die Nachtkerze) bietet einen Moment strahlender Ruhe. Die abschließende "Ballad of Green Broom" (Die Ballade vom grünen Ginster) erzählt ihre Geschichte zu einer Begleitung, die an gebrochene Gitarrenakkorde erinnert, und endet mit einer Reminiszenz an läutende Kirchenglocken, zu denen der Junge sein "in voller Blüte stehende Dame" heiratet.

Sacred and Profane

Sacred and Profane (Kirchliche und weltliche Stücke) op. 91, eine zyklische Vertonung englischer Dichtung aus dem zwölften bis vierzehnten Jahrhundert, wurde im Januar 1975 für das Wilbye Consort und dessen Leiter Peter Pears fertiggestellt. Für ein motivisch einheitliches Werk enthält die Komposition eine Reihe eigenwilliger stilistischer Kontraste, die sich nicht nur aus der Gegenüberstellung von geistlich und weltlich begründen lassen. Das erste Stück, eine Invokation St. Godrichs, gerichtet an die Jungfrau Maria, scheint auf den ersten Blick die unkomplizierteste Komposition des Zyklus zu sein, ihre tonale Ambivalenz und dramatischen Pausen jedoch sind nicht leicht zu vergessen. "I mon waxe wod" (Ich muß wahnsinnig werden) ist bemerkenswert für die Art, in der der Komponist den Text im Chor verteilt – eine Methode, die er mit noch größerem Effekt im fünften Stück, "Yif ic of luve can" (Wenn ich von Liebe weiß), anwendet, wo der metrisch ungebundene

Diskant der Soprane eine selbst für Britten ungewöhnliche Intensität erreicht. Einen Kontrast zu der hier vermittelten Stimmung bildet das ironische "Carol" (Weihnachtslied), dessen anfänglich volksliedhafte Setzweise sich in der Passionsmotette "Ye that pasen by" (Ihr, die ihr des Weges kommt) in einen tiefempfundenen Aufschrei der Tenöre wandelt. Das abschließende Stück, "A death" (Ein Tod), ist ein makabres Porträt, das sich zum Ende hin bei den Worten "For the whole world I don't care one jot" (Um die Welt schere ich mich dann nicht) ins Ironische wandelt. Sollte dies, aus der Feder eines Komponisten stammend, der zuvor schon *Death in Venice* (1973) und *Canticle V: The Death of St Narcissus* (1974) geschrieben hatte und zu diesem Zeitpunkt bereits ernsthaft erkrankt war, eine weitere Auseinandersetzung mit der menschlichen Sterblichkeit darstellen?

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Übersetzung: Stephanie Wollny

Die für ihre außergewöhnliche Musikalität und Spieltechnik gerühmte **Susan Drake** ist eine der hervorragendsten europäischen Harfenistinnen. Als bisher einzige Meisterin ihres Instruments hat sie die begehrte Auszeichnung der National Federation of Music Societies sowie für ihre CD *Echoes of a Waterfall* den Preis der Music Trades' Association für die beste Soloeinspielung des Jahres erhalten.

Auch ihre übrigen Einspielungen wurden von der Kritik überaus positiv aufgenommen. Konzerttourneen führten sie durch England und Europa sowie in die USA, nach Australien und nach Singapur. Sie ist Dozentin für Harfe am National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain gewesen.

Andrew Lumsden wurde 1962 geboren und besuchte die Privatschule Winchester College und die Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (heute: Royal Conservatoire of Scotland) in Glasgow, bevor er am St. John's College der Universität Cambridge als Orgel-Stipendiat studierte und dort Dr. George Guest assistierte. Nach drei Jahren als Assistant Organist an der Southwark Cathedral wurde er zum Sub-Organist an der Westminster Abbey ernannt. Zugleich wirkte er regelmäßig an den BBC-Gottesdienstsendungen Daily Service und Choral Evensong mit. Nachdem er 1992 zum Organist und Master of the Choristers an der Lichfield Cathedral ernannt worden war, nahm er mehrere CDs mit dem dortigen Kathedralchor auf und ging auf Gastspielreisen nach Frankreich, Deutschland, Italien und in die USA. Gemeinsam mit Robert Sharpe beaufsichtigte er die tiefgreifenden Umbau- und Erweiterungsarbeiten an der Hill-Orgel der Kathedrale durch die Firma Harrison and Harrison. Im September 2002 übernahm er in der Nachfolge von David Hill seine derzeitige

Aufgabe als Organist und Director of Music an der Winchester Cathedral. Der Chor hat seine lebhafteste Aufnahme- und Konzerttätigkeit an namhaften Adressen des In- und Auslands fortgesetzt. Als Dirigent der Waynflete Singers arbeitet Andrew Lumsden regelmäßig mit Orchestern wie Florilegium, dem Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra und den London Mozart Payers zusammen. Solistisch ist er mit dem London Philharmonic Orchestra in der Royal Festival Hall London, dem English Chamber Orchestra im Londoner Barbican und dem City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in der Symphony Hall Birmingham aufgetreten. Im Rahmen seiner häufigen Auslandstourneen hat er Recitals u.a. in Bergen, San Francisco, Saint-Tropez, Harare und Sydney gegeben und Chorseminare in New York City, Pennsylvania, Quebec und Delaware geleitet.

Die **Lichfield Cathedral Choristers** singen die Oberstimmen im Cathedralchor, dem außerdem neun Chorvikare angehören; gemeinsam liefern sie die Musik für die Tagesliturgie – das Opus Dei. Die Knaben werden in der angeschlossenen Schule unterrichtet, die zum Teil noch in dem prachtvollen alten Bischofspalast aus dem siebzehnten Jahrhundert auf dem Gelände der Kathedrale untergebracht ist. Der Chor ist regelmäßig in Funk und Fernsehen zu erleben, aber sein musikalisches Dasein beschränkt sich nicht auf die Kathedrale. Neben Projekten

wie der vorliegenden Aufnahme ist der Chor im Konzertsaal mit Sir Simon Rattle und Dame Kiri Te Kanawa und auf Tournee in den USA, Deutschland, Frankreich und Italien (samt päpstlicher Audienz) aufgetreten. Die musikalische Leitung liegt derzeit bei Ben und Cathy Lamb.

Die **Finzi Singers**, 1987 von Paul Spicer für ein Festival britischer Musik unter dem Patronat des Finzi Trust gegründet, galten jahrelang als führende Exponenten britischer Chormusik des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts. In Zusammenarbeit mit Chandos baute der Chor eine umfangreiche Diskographie mit zahlreichen Erstaufnahmen auf, in der die ganze Fülle und Breite dieses oft vernachlässigten Repertoires zum Ausdruck kam. In vielen Konzerten und Rundfunksendungen führten die Finzi Singers auch eigene Auftragskompositionen von Komponisten wie Michael Berkeley, Judith Bingham, John Joubert, David Matthews, Stephen Pratt, Jeremy Dale Roberts, Sir John Tavener und James Wishart auf.

Paul Spicer begann seine musikalische Ausbildung als Chorist am New College Oxford. Er studierte Komposition bei Herbert Howells und Orgel bei Richard Popplewell am Royal College of Music in London, wo er dann von 1995 bis 2008 selber unterrichtete. Man kennt ihn vor allem als Chordirigenten, nicht zuletzt

durch die zahlreichen CDs, die er mit den Finzi Singers für Chandos Records aufgenommen hat. Er hat Bach-Chöre in Chester und Leicester dirigiert, 1992 die Leitung des Birmingham Bach Choir übernommen und dirigiert auch den Whitehall Choir in London. Derzeit unterrichtet er Chordirigieren an den Universitäten Oxford und Durham sowie am Birmingham Conservatoire, wo er auch den Kammerchor leitet. Paul Spicer hatte die künstlerische Leitung des Lichfield International Arts Festivals und der Abbotsholme Arts Society, war leitender Redakteur beim Kultursender BBC Radio 3 in der Region Midlands und gefragter Tonmeister. Im August 1998 erschien seine vielbeachtete, inzwischen zweimal neuaufgelegte Biographie von Herbert Howells, und eine umfangreiche Biographie von Sir George Dyson ist für 2014 geplant. Er hat

ein weit verbreitetes Buch über *English Pastoral Partsongs* für die Oxford University Press verfasst, zahllose Beiträge für Zeitschriften geschrieben und am *Dictionary of National Biography* mitgearbeitet. Von der Britten – Pears Foundation und dem Verlag Boosey & Hawkes erhielt Paul Spicer den Auftrag, einen ersten praktischen Leitfaden für die gesamte Chormusik Benjamin Brittens zu verfassen; ein ähnliches Projekt verfolgt er im Hinblick auf das wachsende Chorschaffen von James MacMillan. Auch er selber ist als Komponist vielgefragt. Paul Spicer ist Fellow der Royal Society of Arts, Honorary Research Fellow der Universität Birmingham, Honorary Fellow des Birmingham Conservatoire, Treuhänder des Finzi Trust, Vizepräsident der Herbert Howells Society und Berater des Sir George Dyson Trust.



Jim Pascoe

Andrew Lumsden

Britten: Œuvres pour chœur

DISQUE COMPACT UN

Hymn to St Peter

L'*Hymn to St Peter* (Hymne à Saint Pierre), op. 56a, a été composé en 1955 pour le cinquantième centenaire de l'église St Peter Mancroft à Norwich, où il a été créé le 20 novembre sous la direction du maître de chapelle de l'église, C.J.R. Coleman, qui avait dirigé la création de l'*Hymn to the Virgin*, à Lowestoft, vingt-quatre ans plus tôt.

Les paroles sont empruntées au graduel de la fête de Saint Pierre et Saint Paul; la musique repose essentiellement sur le plain-chant "Tu es Petrus", sur l'Alléluia et sur les versets du Commun des Souverains Pontifs. Une introduction confiée à l'orgue expose les deux premières lignes du plain-chant, dont la deuxième se condense ensuite en un ostinato pour accompagner la large forme pentatonique de l'hymne ("Thou shalt make them Princes over all the earth"; "Tu les feras Princes de toute la terre"). Un scherzo miniature ("Instead of thy fathers"; "À la place de tes pères"), avec des entrées chorales en canon, offre un moment de contraste avant la reprise de l'hymne. Le retour à la tonalité d'origine de si bémol est marqué

par une intonation du plain-chant confiée à un solo de soprano, tandis que des réponses chorales homophoniques reprennent, en le traduisant en anglais, le texte latin.

A Hymn of St Columba

A *Hymn of St Columba* (Un hymne de Saint Columba) (*Regis regum rectissimi*) pour chœur et orgue a été composé en décembre 1962 et créé l'année suivante par The Ulster Singers, sous la direction de Havelock Nelson, pour célébrer le 1400^e anniversaire du voyage de Columba, missionnaire irlandais, à l'île d'Iona. La façon dont Britten met en musique les paroles de Saint Columba montre comment, même dans une œuvre mineure - l'*Hymn* se situe chronologiquement entre deux œuvres majeures, le *War Requiem* (Requiem de guerre) et la Symphonie concertante pour violoncelle et orchestre -, le compositeur sait faire preuve d'une immense sensibilité et d'un art consommé.

A Hymn to the Virgin

Britten écrit l'*Hymn to the Virgin* (Hymne à la Vierge) le 9 juillet 1930 à la fin de ses études à la Gresham's School de Holt; le compositeur

alors âgé de seize ans était en convalescence au sanatorium de cette école. L'œuvre fut créée comme le premier de "Two Choral Songs" (Deux Chants choraux) à un concert de l'église Saint-Jean de Lowestoft, concert donné par la Musical Society de Lowestoft, sous la direction de C.J.R. Coleman. Le texte anonyme du quatorzième siècle à la louange de la Vierge est mis en musique avec beaucoup de simplicité et de fraîcheur pour deux groupes contrastés de voix, l'un étoffé, l'autre réduit.

Hymn to St Cecilia

En 1935, Britten commença à penser pour la première fois à une œuvre inspirée par la Sainte patronne de la musique. Son journal indique à la date du 19 janvier: "J'ai beaucoup de mal à trouver des mots latins pour l'"Hymn to St Cecilia" que je me propose d'écrire. J'ai passé la matinée en chasse." Et à celle du 25: "J'ai le plan, mais pas encore les notes, pour mon l'"Hymn to St Cecilia"." Il renoncera à ce "plan" spécifique lorsque sa collaboration ultérieure avec le poète W.H. Auden aura donné naissance à un texte approprié.

Bien qu'Auden et Britten aient commencé à parler de cette œuvre en 1940, sa composition ne fut entreprise qu'en juin 1941, lorsqu'une création fut projetée à New York pour la fin de l'année, par les Elizabethan Singers (dont Peter Pears était le ténor). Mais Britten ne parvint pas à achever l'œuvre en temps voulu et lorsqu'il

quitta les États-Unis en mars 1942, seules les deux premières strophes étaient prêtes. Britten acheva finalement le sublime *Hymn to St Cecilia* (Hymne à Sainte Cécile) le 2 avril, au cours de la traversée de retour vers la Grande-Bretagne. La création, radio-diffusée, fut confiée aux BBC Singers sous la direction de Leslie Woodgate, le jour de la Sainte-Cécile, le 22 novembre 1942 (également jour du vingt-neuvième anniversaire de Britten), dans le cadre du "Music-Lover's Calendar".

Le diatonisme rafraîchissant de la section initiale de l'*Hymn to St Cecilia* (ut et mi majeur) montre avec quelle finesse Britten sait situer une image musicale précise pour qu'elle corresponde à la puissante sérénité des paroles d'Auden. Dans cette section, les phrases qui se chevauchent produisent le matériau du refrain simple, qui est présenté à l'unisson lors de sa première exposition, mais dont la texture harmonique s'enrichit progressivement aux deux apparitions suivantes. Un délicat scherzo en mi majeur ("I cannot grow"; "Je ne peux grandir") donne l'impression d'une dualité de tempo, mêlant de rapides réitérations à une sorte de cantus firmus. La strophe finale, avec son touchant solo de soprano aux inflexions lydiennes ("O dear white children"; "Ô chers blancs enfants"), qui reflète le style imagé d'Auden sur l'innocence perdue, culmine dans une série de cadences vocales, où sont imitées des

sonorités instrumentales (violon, timbales, flûte, trompette), avant l'ultime retour du refrain qui s'installe sur un mi majeur céleste.

Rejoice in the Lamb

En mars 1943, le Révérend Walter Hussey, curé éclairé de l'église Saint-Mathieu de Northampton, demanda à Britten de composer "de la musique pour les célébrations du cinquantième anniversaire de la consécration de l'église en septembre prochain" et conclut sa lettre en faisant, en quelque sorte, amende honorable pour ce qu'il croyait être de l'impertinence de sa part:

J'espère que vous me pardonneriez et
que vous attribueriez cette démarche à
l'enthousiasme pour ce qui est chez moi
une grande "marotte", une association plus
étroite entre les arts et l'Église.

Hussey n'aurait pas pu trouver de collaborateur mieux disposé, car lorsque Britten lui répondit, il déclara s'intéresser également à un rapprochement plus étroit entre les arts et l'Église. Britten tira son texte du *Jubilate Agno* de Christopher Smart, poème décousu du milieu du dix-huitième siècle composé en grande partie dans un asile. Le poème n'avait été publié qu'en 1939 sous le titre *Rejoice in the Lamb* lorsqu'Auden le porta à l'attention de Britten.

La cantate, *Rejoice in the Lamb* (Réjouissez-vous en l'Agneau), op. 30, montre l'influence

de Purcell sur Britten; l'enthousiasme suscité en lui par son grand ancêtre avait été alimenté, dans les années quarante, par la réalisation de chants pour des récitals qu'il donnait avec Peter Pears et par la découverte de certains des grands *verse anthems* lors d'exécutions dirigées par Michael Tippett à Morley College. En fait, la cantate *Rejoice in the Lamb* est une sorte de réponse du vingtième siècle au *verse anthem* du dix-septième par sa division en dix sections, avec solos et chœurs, et par la perspicacité avec laquelle elle traduit les visions "folles" de Smart, l'orgue caractérisant brillamment les parties du chat et de la souris confiées respectivement à des solos de soprano et d'alto.

Choral Dances from "Gloriana"

Les six "dances chorales" sont tirées de la première scène de l'acte II de l'opéra de Britten composé pour le couronnement de la reine Elisabeth II; cette scène retrace une visite royale d'Elisabeth I à Norwich, dont les fidèles citoyens présentent un masque dansé en l'honneur de la reine. C'est en fait la scène de l'opéra que Britten a écrite en dernier – la composition de *Gloriana* l'a occupé de septembre 1952 à février 1953 – en raison d'indécisions et d'incertitudes émanant de Covent Garden, car le Royal Ballet désirait apporter sa contribution au gala de la première avec une scène beaucoup plus longue. Britten

insista toutefois pour conserver la structure originelle de cette scène, dans laquelle six brefs tableaux sont annoncés par l'Esprit du Masque. Ces introductions sont généralement omises lorsque l'on donne les *Choral Dances* séparément.

La première danse, "Time" (Temps), est une création animée en ut majeur inspirée du madrigal et caractérisée par des syncopes et des hémioles, avec une section contrastante plus aventureuse sur le plan harmonique, en rythmes pointés baroques. Vient ensuite "Concord" (Concorde), où Britten traduit le calme de la reine par une absence totale de dissonance harmonique. "Time and Concord" (Temps et Concorde) est un gracieux canon entre les voix de femmes et les voix d'hommes. La quatrième danse, "Country girls" (Jeunes campagnardes) commence de manière antiphonale par une ligne de soprano bondissante qui contraste avec une partie d'alto plus terre à terre, avant la fusion de ces deux éléments. "Rustics and Fishermen" (Paysans et pêcheurs) est un scherzo haletant pour chœur d'hommes divisé. La sixième danse, "Final Dance of Homage" (Danse finale d'hommage), revient à la tonalité d'ut majeur de "Temps", les entrées en canon créant une texture d'une grande richesse.

A.M.D.G.

A.M.D.G. se compose de sept chants sans

accompagnement sur des poèmes de Gerard Manley Hopkins. Cette œuvre figure parmi les premières composées par Britten après son arrivée aux États-Unis en 1939. Destinée à un ensemble vocal professionnel dont faisait partie Pears, elle devait être créée à Londres en novembre 1939. Mais la déclaration de guerre empêcha Pears de retourner en Grande-Bretagne et *A.M.D.G.* ne fut pas exécuté. Le compositeur retira cette œuvre et attribua son numéro d'opus (17) à *Paul Bunyan*. Elle fut créée par les London Sinfonietta Voices le 21 août 1984, à la Purcell Room de Londres.

Le titre de l'œuvre est une abréviation d'*Ad majorem Dei gloriam* (À la plus grande gloire de Dieu), épigraphe omniprésente dans les écrits d'Ignace de Loyola (1491 – 1556), fondateur de l'ordre des Jésuites dont faisait partie Hopkins. La réponse de Britten aux poèmes religieux évocateurs et souvent sensuels de Hopkins rappelle et développe l'écriture chorale virtuose tout d'abord explorée dans *A Boy Was Born* (Un enfant est né) (1933). Alors que "Prayer II" (Prière II) et "Heaven-Haven" (Havre céleste) sont des conceptions essentiellement simples, un grand nombre des autres poèmes mis en musique par Britten révèlent sa prédilection permanente pour les textures et les genres d'inspiration instrumentale: par exemple, la marche en ré majeur de "The Soldier" (Le Soldat), aux sons cuivrés, et la valse de "Rosa Mystica". "God's Grandeur" (Grandeur de

Dieu) est peut-être la plus ambitieuse et exige énormément des chanteurs. Il s'agit, en fait, de la seconde tentative de Britten pour mettre en musique ce poème de Hopkins: en 1938, dans l'oratorio radiodiffusé à la BBC *The World of the Spirit* (Le Monde de l'esprit), Britten avait écrit une musique totalement différente, quoique tout aussi dramatique, pour chœur et orchestre.

© Philip Reed

Traduction: Marie-Stella Pâris

DISQUE COMPACT DEUX

Sweet Was the Song the Virgin Sung

Dans son journal, à la date du 12 janvier 1931, Britten note la composition d'un petit chant de Noël pour voix de femmes, *Sweet Was the Song the Virgin Sung* (Douce était la chanson de la Vierge). Cette pièce (écrite au cours de son deuxième trimestre au Royal College of Music) lui avait été inspirée par une anthologie de chants de Noël que lui avait offerte sa sœur aînée, Barbara, en novembre 1930. C'est dans ce recueil que fut puisée la plupart des textes d'une Suite de Noël en cinq mouvements intitulée, *Thy King's Birthday*. La Suite ne fut jamais interprétée dans son entièreté au cours de la vie de Britten, mais "Sweet Was the Song" fut remaniée pour être exécutée au Festival d'Aldeburgh en 1966.

A Ceremony of Carols

Bien que l'une des dernières œuvres que Britten ait eue en projet fut une importante suite de Noël, sa fascination pour le thème de Noël transparait très nettement déjà au travers de certaines pièces datant du début des années trente. En effet, tant *A Hymn to the Virgin* que *I Saw Three Ships*, remanié en 1967 et devenu *The Sycamore Tree*, furent composés au cours de l'été 1930. *Thy King's Birthday* vit le jour un an plus tard et *A Boy Was Born*, en 1932 - 1933. Dans ces diverses œuvres, les affinités que Britten avait montrées comme jeune compositeur pour la musique chorale, et en particulier pour la musique sacrée, sont manifestes. L'éducation de Britten - les contacts avec St John's Church à Lowestoft et le fait d'avoir chanté dans le Chapel Choir à la Gresham's School - ont sans doute été à l'origine de sa connaissance du répertoire classique et de sa prédilection pour celui-ci. Ce n'est peut-être pas par hasard, qu'au retour des États-Unis en 1942, à une époque où il était profondément conscient de retourner vers ses "racines", Britten fut attiré une fois encore par la composition d'une œuvre réunissant des chants de Noël. Les textes anglais anciens, médiévaux pour certaines, de *A Ceremony of Carols* (Un festival de chants de Noël) furent sélectionnés en grande partie dans une anthologie poétique acquise par le compositeur à Halifax en Nouvelle-Écosse. C'est alors qu'il

était à bord du MS Axel Johnson que Britten en composa en grande partie la musique. Britten choisit la harpe pour accompagner le chœur de jeunes garçons – choix inhabituel pour une œuvre souvent exécutée dans une église – sous l'influence probable d'une récente commande d'un concerto pour harpe. L'instrument est traité avec une particulière sensibilité pour son timbre. La distinction infime entre le ré bémol et le ut dièse au début de "That yongë child" (Le Petit Enfant) qui imite étrangement le "chant rauque" du rossignol en est un exemple. Le plain-chant dans la "Procession" et la "Récession" ont été ajoutés par Britten après son retour en Angleterre. Il anticipe ainsi le recours au plain-chant comme élément de structure, quelque vingt ans plus tard, dans les Church Parables (paraboles destinées à être mise en scène à l'église). Britten avait été initié à l'interprétation du plain-chant à Gresham: son empreinte est manifeste dans plusieurs de ses compositions. Contrairement aux "opéras d'église" de construction rigide, seul l'interlude à la harpe est émaillé, ici, de motifs empruntés au chant.

Te Deum

La musique instrumentale du début des années trente donne de Britten l'image d'un compositeur jeune et sérieux, avide de se laisser imprégner par les tendances continentales: des échos de Schoenberg et de

la Seconde École viennoise sont manifestes, par exemple, dans la Sinfonietta, le Quartettino et dans l'*Élégie* pour alto solo. Par contre, sa musique sacrée, si elle paraît originale, est issue, de toute évidence, de la tradition de musique sacrée chorale en Angleterre, si familière à Britten. Il s'agit d'une série de pièces qui, à bien des égards, est isolée de l'ensemble de l'œuvre du compositeur et qui est presque entièrement dépourvue des tensions inhérentes à la musique dramatique ou instrumentale. Ici, Britten semble à l'aise, stylistiquement parlant, sans jamais manquer d'originalité ou se montrer moralisateur ou routinier.

Le premier cantique mis en musique par Britten, le Te Deum en ut majeur pour chœur et orgue, fut composé en juillet 1934 pour Maurice Vinden et le chœur de St Mark's, North Audley Street à Londres.

Jubilate Deo en mi bémol majeur

Trois semaines plus tard, Britten composa, pour le même chœur, son pendant, le Jubilate Deo en mi bémol majeur, qui fut retiré et ne fut publié qu'après le décès du compositeur. Les deux œuvres, qui se prêtent aussi bien à être exécutées dans une église paroissiale que dans une cathédrale, sont construites sur les éléments de la tradition chorale de Stanford et d'Irland, et contrastent avec les mises en musique plus grandioses de Howells, par exemple.

Festival Te Deum

Dix ans après ce premier Te Deum, Britten reçoit en commande une pièce pour marquer le centenaire de St Mark's Church à Swindon. Le *Festival Te Deum*, op. 32, est inhabituel par l'indépendance métrique dans les parties chorales et dans l'accompagnement à l'orgue. Il s'agit d'une approche originale du texte qui contraste nettement avec les textures traditionnelles tissées d'accords du premier Te Deum (œuvre dont Constant Lambert donne une description mémorable et qualifie de "terne et contrite").

Jubilate Deo en ut majeur

En 1961, Britten compose un second Jubilate Deo, cette fois en ut majeur, à la demande du duc d'Édimbourg, pour faire pendant au Te Deum de 1934.

Missa brevis

Britten admirait beaucoup les sonorités acérées propres aux choristes de la cathédrale de Westminster, cultivées par leur directeur, George Malcolm. Et lorsqu'il apprend, en 1959, le prochain départ de Malcolm à la retraite, Britten compose rapidement la Missa brevis en ré majeur, op. 63. L'œuvre, remarquablement concise, fait abondamment appel au timbre incisif des sopranos dans une musique d'une vivacité rythmique débordante. Britten réussit à créer une variété d'effets – de la

joie retentissante du "Sanctus", pareille au son d'une cloche, à l'organum candide du "Benedictus" –, mais il réserve une note plus austère pour l'"Agnus Dei" qui implore la paix sur un ton d'une inquiétante désolation.

Antiphon

Antiphon (Refrain), op. 56b, composé en 1956 pour le centenaire de St Michael's à Tenbury, s'inspire du texte de George Herbert. "Praised by the God of love / Here above / And here below" (Que sur la terre / Et dans les cieux / Le Dieu d'Amour soit loué) est illustré par un unisson radieux exécuté par le chœur et une intervention "dynamique" de l'orgue, un solo aérien des sopranos contrastant avec les accords parfaits dans les graves, chantés par les altos, les ténors et les basses. La description du symbolisme musical (une texture partiellement imitative pour "He our foes in pieces brake" – Il a anéanti nos ennemis – et le vers final "Who hath made of two folds one" – Qui de deux troupeaux en fit un – où la répétition constante par les sopranos de "un", avec en réponse dans un premier temps le "deux" pénétrant des voix basses, trouve enfin la réplique adéquate, l'accord sur la note fondamentale sur le mot "un") peut apparaître naïve. Toutefois, l'effet produit, avec cette distanciation dans l'espace entre "ciel" et "terre", accentuée par le placement des sopranos solos dans une galerie éloignée du chœur, est particulièrement émouvant.

A Wedding Anthem

A Wedding Anthem (Un psaume nuptial), op. 46, rarement exécuté du fait que le texte de Ronald Duncan est un texte de circonstance, fut composé pour le mariage du comte de Harewood avec Marion Stein en septembre 1949. C'est une pièce magnifiquement écrite pour soprano et ténor solos, chœur et orgue, dans laquelle Britten, une fois de plus, donne joyeusement la réplique au symbolisme du texte.

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Traduction: Marie-Françoise de Meeûs

DISQUE COMPACT TROIS

Advance Democracy

Advance Democracy (Progresse Démocratie), composé en novembre 1938 à l'époque où, en Europe, régnaient l'inquiétude et une instabilité politique constante (les lettres de Britten datant de cette période témoignent de sa désillusion suite à l'échec des accords de Munich), est une œuvre pour chœur à huit voix d'après un texte de Randall Swingler (1909 – 1967), membre du parti communiste et éditeur de la *Left Review*. Britten illustre habilement les images assez crues de "Across the darkened city the frosty searchlights creep" (Au travers des ténèbres de la ville

les torches glaciales promènent leurs lueurs fureteuses) – par des accords ponctuant énergiquement une ondoyante mélodie sans paroles – et la jubilation contrainte de "Time to arise Democracy" (Le temps de la Démocratie est venu), mais il lui imprime aussi le caractère d'un présage comme il le fait pour d'autres œuvres datant de la même période.

A Boy Was Born

À l'époque où il compose sa première œuvre chorale majeure, *A Boy Was Born* (Un garçon est né), op. 3, Britten est étudiant au Royal College of Music et John Ireland, Ralph Vaughan Williams ainsi que Herbert Howells, trois piliers de la musique chorale anglaise, font partie de son équipe. Cependant, à divers égards, l'œuvre témoigne de l'influence prédominante de son premier professeur, Frank Bridge, qui l'avait encouragé à regarder au-delà de son horizon immédiat dans la direction de la musique nouvelle et des conceptions du continent. Les deux premiers opus de Britten, la *Sinfonietta* (op. 1) et la *Phantasy* (op. 2), font montre du souci du compositeur de résoudre des problèmes de forme en ne négligeant certes pas la technique de la variation qu'il avait rencontrée dans la musique de Schoenberg: le deuxième mouvement de la *Sinfonietta* est un ensemble de variations tandis que la *Phantasy* est conçu comme un mouvement unique, intégré quant au motif.

Ces deux œuvres sont, dès lors, pour Britten, une expérience utile quant à son ambitieuse décision de structurer sa première œuvre chorale de grande envergure sous forme d'une série de variations.

Le 12 novembre 1932, Britten note dans son journal:

Me suis rendu chez Whiteley's ce matin pour me faire couper les cheveux puis à St. Martin's Lane chez Chatto & Windus pour y chercher une copie de Ancient English Carols [Chansons anglaises anciennes]. Je pense inclure bientôt des arrangements de certaines d'entre elles dans une œuvre pour chœur.¹

A Boy Was Born, sous-titré "variations chorales pour voix d'hommes, de femmes et de jeunes garçons, sans accompagnement", a pour thème un texte anonyme du seizième siècle que l'auteur a conçu en homophonie pure, selon le procédé choral. Dans les six variations successives, l'art de Britten réside tout autant dans la transformation du thème que dans l'habileté avec laquelle il traite le chœur à huit voix: les textures de l'accompagnement choral sont manifestement inspirées par ses récentes expériences d'écriture instrumentale.

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La première variation, par exemple, se détache sur un motif de berceuse ("Lullay") qui se développe au départ de deux voix pour s'étendre à l'ensemble des huit voix, incluant le chœur de jeunes garçons, et dans la quatrième variation, le texte des différentes voix se détache sur un ostinato sans paroles, presque instrumental. C'est peut-être la cinquième variation, "In the Bleak Mid-winter" (Au cœur de l'hiver glacial), qui répond le mieux au texte – en ce cas une combinaison de la poésie de Christina Rossetti et du Corpus Christi Carol, une chanson anonyme datant du quinzième siècle: les paroles de la chanson sont déclamées en rythme presque libre et se superposent au texte moderne aux voix graves.

A Boy Was Born fut diffusé pour la première fois le 23 février 1934 par la BBC Wireless Chorus sous la direction de Leslie Woodgate. L'accueil de la critique, comme on pouvait s'y attendre dans le cas d'une œuvre aussi accomplie écrite par un jeune homme de dix-neuf ans, est partagé entre l'admiration et le reproche quelque peu coutumier selon lequel, dans cette pièce néanmoins "ingénieuse", la résolution de problèmes techniques a occupé l'esprit du compositeur à l'exclusion de toute idée musicale. Grace Williams (1906 – 1977), amie compositeur de Britten, écrit peu après cette première diffusion qu'elle a trouvé *A Boy Was Born* "trop réactionnaire" et "trop typiquement anglais" par endroits. Britten

n'allait jamais plus s'essayer à une approche aussi radicale d'une œuvre chorale sans accompagnement.

Five Flower Songs

Si l'on peut considérer que *A Boy Was Born* est le fruit de la période expérimentale de Britten marquée par sa grande ouverture aux influences étrangères, la pièce *Five Flower Songs* (Cinq Chants de fleur), op. 47, s'enracine, elle, tout aussi fermement, dans sa période "anglaise" qui suit son retour des États-Unis en 1942. Deux œuvres composées, l'une avant et l'autre après *Flower Songs*, témoignent de la manière dont Britten s'inspirait à l'époque de son héritage national: *Spring Symphony*, écrite en 1949, est une superbe célébration chorale de la poésie anglaise et *Lachrymae* (1950) a pour thème un "ayre" du compositeur élisabéthain John Dowland. Les *Five Flower Songs*, composés au printemps de 1950 pour Dorothy et Leonard Elmhirst (les propriétaires de Dartington Hall) à l'occasion de leurs noces d'argent, s'inscrivent certes dans la tradition du chant polyphonique anglais dont l'exemple fut donné par C.V. Stanford. Il s'agit d'arrangements de textes de poètes représentés dans la *Spring Symphony*, Robert Herrick et John Clare, auxquels s'ajoute "Marsh Flowers" (Fleurs des marécages) de George Crabbe, le poète d'Aldeburgh. Les contrastes abondent dans la pièce: "To Daffodils" (Aux jonquilles) se distingue par l'interaction

rythmique animée des différentes voix tandis que dans "The Succession of the Four Sweet Months" (La Succession des quatre mois exquis), un fugato enjoué introduit chacun des mois. "Marsh Flowers" est une réponse austère au texte très lugubre de Crabbe et "The Evening Primrose" (La Primevère vespérale) est imprégné d'une radieuse sérénité. Le dernier morceau, "Ballad of Green Broom" (Ballade du vert genêt) conte sa propre histoire sur un accompagnement qui rappelle le raclement des cordes de la guitare et se termine par une évocation de sonneries de cloches célébrant les épousailles du jeune homme et de la "Lady in full bloom" (Jeune fille à la fleur de sa beauté).

Sacred and Profane

Sacred and Profane (Sacré et profane) est achevé en janvier 1975 et destiné au Wilbye Consort et à son chef, Peter Pears. Il s'agit d'une mise en musique cyclique de poèmes anglais des douzième, treizième et quatorzième siècles. Pour une œuvre au motif unique, elle contient des contrastes stylistiques perturbants qui ne proviennent pas seulement de la juxtaposition des éléments sacrés et profanes. Un rapide aperçu de la première pièce, une invocation de St Godric à la Sainte Vierge, donne à penser qu'il s'agit de la plus limpide du recueil, mais ses ambiguïtés tonales et ses silences dramatiques sont impressionnants. "I mon waxe wod" (Je dois devenir fou) est remarquable par

la manière dont Britten répartit les textes entre les différentes sections du chœur, procédé utilisé avec plus d'effet encore dans la cinquième pièce, "Yif ic of luve can" (Si j'ai de l'amour quelque science) où le déchant des sopranos, métriquement non aligné, crée une impression d'intensité, rare même chez Britten. Ce climat est brusquement contrarié par le "Carol" (Chanson) ironique dont la phrase introductive de caractère folklorique se métamorphose en une exclamation tout en sincérité lorsque les ténors chantent le motet pour la semaine de la Passion, "Ye that pasen by" (Vous qui passez). La pièce finale, "A death" (Une mort), est un portrait macabre qui termine ironiquement néanmoins sur les mots (en anglais moderne) "For the whole world I don't care one jot" (Du monde entier, je n'ai que faire). De la part d'un compositeur qui avait écrit *Death in Venice* en 1973 et *Canticle V: The Death of St Narcissus* en 1974, et qui était gravement malade à ce moment, ceci peut-il être considéré comme une nouvelle confrontation avec le thème de la mortalité?

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Traduction: Marie-Françoise de Meeûs

Susan Drake compte parmi les meilleures harpistes européennes; elle est vivement appréciée pour sa musicalité et sa technique remarquables. Elle est la seule harpiste au

monde à avoir remporté le prix très recherché que décerne la National Federation of Music Societies et celui de la Music Trades' Association pour le meilleur enregistrement de musique instrumentale soliste de l'année avec son disque *Echos of a Waterfall*. Ses autres enregistrements lui ont également valu les louanges de la critique dans le monde entier. Les tournées de concerts de Susan Drake l'ont menée dans toute la Grande-Bretagne, en Europe, aux États-Unis, en Australie et à Singapour. Elle a été professeur de harpe au National Youth Orchestra de Grande-Bretagne.

Né en 1962, **Andrew Lumsden** fait ses études au Collège de Winchester et à la Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama avant d'entrer au St John's College de Cambridge comme spécialiste de l'orgue; il y est assistant du Dr George Guest. Pendant trois ans, il est organiste assistant à la cathédrale de Southwark, puis est nommé organiste suppléant à l'abbaye de Westminster. Il participe en outre régulièrement aux programmes du BBC's Daily Service et Choral Evensong (Service quotidien et Office choral du soir diffusés à la BBC). En 1992, il est nommé organiste et chef des Choristes à la cathédrale de Lichfield; il enregistre plusieurs CD avec le chœur de la cathédrale et fait des tournées en France, en Allemagne, en Italie et aux États-Unis. Avec Robert Sharpe, il supervise la

reconstruction et l'agrandissement de l'orgue Hill de la cathédrale construit par Harrison and Harrison. En septembre 2002, il succède à David Hill et reprend ses fonctions d'organiste et directeur de la musique à la cathédrale de Winchester. Le chœur continue à enregistrer et à participer souvent à des émissions de radio; il se produit dans des endroits prestigieux au Royaume-Uni comme à l'étranger. Comme chef des Waynflete Singers, Andrew Lumsden travaille régulièrement avec des orchestres tels le Florilegium, le Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra et les London Mozart Players. En soliste, il s'est produit avec le London Philharmonic Orchestra au Royal Festival Hall, l'English Chamber Orchestra au Barbican et le City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra au Symphony Hall de Birmingham. Ses fréquentes tournées à l'étranger l'amènent à donner des récitals à Bergen, San Francisco, Saint-Tropez, Harare et Sydney, notamment, et à diriger des cours de musique chorale à New York, en Pennsylvanie, au Québec et dans le Delaware.

Les Choristes de la cathédrale de Lichfield sont les voix les plus aiguës du chœur de la cathédrale, qui se compose aussi de neuf chantres. Ensemble, ils assurent la contribution musicale pendant les services quotidiens – l'Opus Dei. Les garçons suivent leur scolarité à l'École de la cathédrale située au sein de l'ancien et magnifique palais épiscopal du dix-

septième siècle, dans l'enceinte même de cette cathédrale. Le chœur passe régulièrement à la radio et à la télévision, mais sa vie musicale ne repose pas entièrement sur la cathédrale. Outre des projets comme cet enregistrement, il s'est produit en concert avec Sir Simon Rattle et Dame Kiri Te Kanawa et a fait des tournées aux États Unis, en Allemagne, en France et en Italie (cette tournée comprenait une audience papale). Les directeurs de la musique actuels sont Ben et Cathy Lamb.

Fondés par Paul Spicer en 1987 pour un festival de musique britannique donné sous les auspices du Finzi Trust, **The Finzi Singers** sont considérés depuis de nombreuses années comme de grands défenseurs de la musique chorale britannique du vingtième siècle, dans laquelle ils se sont spécialisés. Leur discographie pour Chandos, qui comprend de nombreuses œuvres enregistrées pour la première fois, couvre une somme considérable de musique britannique rarement exécutée, montrant pour la première fois la richesse et l'étendue de ce répertoire. Ils ont donné une multitude de concerts et participé à de nombreuses émissions radio; ils ont aussi commandé beaucoup de musique nouvelle à des compositeurs tels Michael Berkeley, Judith Bingham, John Joubert, David Matthews, Stephen Pratt, Jeremy Dale Roberts, Sir John Tavener et James Wishart.

Choriste au New College d'Oxford, **Paul Spicer** étudie la composition avec Herbert Howells et l'orgue avec Richard Popplewell au Royal College of Music de Londres, où il enseigne lui-même de 1995 à 2008. Il est surtout connu comme chef de chœur, en partie par le nombreux CD enregistrés avec les Finzi Singers pour Chandos Records. Il dirige les chœurs Bach à Chester et Leicester, devient chef du Bach Choir de Birmingham en 1992 et dirige aussi le Chœur de Whitehall à Londres. Il enseigne maintenant la direction chorale aux universités d'Oxford et de Durham et au Conservatoire de Birmingham, où il dirige en outre le chœur de chambre. Directeur artistique du Festival international des arts de Lichfield et de l'Abbotsholme Arts Society, producteur en chef de BBC Radio 3 dans les Midlands, c'est un producteur très recherché dans le domaine phonographique. Sa biographie de Herbert Howells, publiée en août 1998, a connu un grand succès et a fait

l'objet de deux réimpressions; une importante biographie de Sir George Dyson sera publiée en 2014. Il est l'auteur d'un ouvrage que l'on utilise beaucoup sur les *English Pastoral Partsongs* (Chants pastoraux anglais) chez Oxford University Press et d'innombrables articles pour des périodiques; il participe en outre au *Dictionary of National Biography*. La Fondation Britten – Pears et Boosey & Hawkes lui ont commandé le premier guide pratique de toute la musique chorale de Benjamin Britten et il travaille à un guide analogue consacré à l'ensemble de l'œuvre chorale (très fournie) de James MacMillan. Paul Spicer est un compositeur très recherché. Il est membre de la Royal Society of Arts et chercheur honoraire à l'Université de Birmingham, chargé de cours honoraire au Conservatoire de Birmingham, membre du conseil d'administration du Finzi Trust, vice-président de la Herbert Howells Society et conseiller du Sir George Dyson Trust.

COMPACT DISC ONE

1 **Hymn to St Peter**

Thou shalt make them Princes over all the
earth,
They shall remember thy name, O Lord,
Thou shalt make them Princes.
Instead of thy fathers,
Sons are born to thee:
Therefore shall the people praise thee, Alleluia.
Tu es Petrus...
Thou art Peter.
Et super hanc petram...
And upon this rock
Aedificabo Ecclesiam...
I will build my church.
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

*Extract from Gradual of the Feast
of St Peter and St Paul*

2 **A Hymn of St Columba**

Regis regum rectissimi
Prope est dies domini,
Dies irae et vindictae,
Tenebrarum et nebulae,
Regis regum rectissimi.

Diesque mirabilium
Tonitruorum fortium,
Dies quoque angustiae,
Maeroris ac tristitiae.
Regis regum rectissimi.

King of kings and of lords most high,
Comes his day of judgement nigh:
Day of wrath and vengeance stark,
Day of shadows and cloudy dark.
King of kings and of lords most high.

Thunder shall rend that day apart,
Wonder amaze each fearful heart.
Anguish and pain and deep distress
Shall mark that day of bitterness.
King of kings and of lords most high.

In quo cessabit mulierum
Amor et desiderium,
Nominumque contentio
Mundi hujus et cupido,
Regis regum rectissimi.

St Columba (521 – 597)

That day the pangs of lust will cease,
Man's questing heart shall be at peace;
Then shall the great no more contend
And worldly fame be at an end.
King of kings and of lords most high.

3 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 born
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:

Like the star of the sea

Mother and maiden;

So Holy,

Because of Eve's sin,

Of you his mother.

Of salvation;

Goodness.

Rose without thorn,

Grace divine:

Of all thou bear'st the prize,
Lady, queen of paradise
Electa:
Maid mild, mother es
Effecta.

Anonymous

Chosen one

You

Became.

Hymn to St Cecilia

4 I

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.

5 II

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 of 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.

6 III

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 weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain.

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.

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Rejoice in the Lamb

Chorus

- 7 Rejoice in God, O ye Tongues; give the glory
to the Lord, and the Lamb.
Nations, and languages, and every Creature,
in which is the breath of Life.

Let man and beast appear before him,
and magnify his name together.

- 8 Let Nimrod, the mighty hunter, bind a Leopard
to the altar, and consecrate his spear
to the Lord.

Let Ishmael dedicate a Tyger, and give praise
for the liberty in which the Lord has let him
at large.

Let Balaam appear with an Ass, and bless the
Lord his people and his creatures for a
reward eternal.

Let Daniel come forth with a Lion, and praise
God with all his might through faith in
Christ Jesus.

Let Ithamar minister with a Chamois, and
bless the name of Him, that cloatheth the
naked.

Let Jakim with the Satyr bless God in the
dance.

Let David bless with the Bear – The beginning
of victory to the Lord – to the Lord the
perfection of excellence –

- 9 Hallelujah from the heart of God, and
from the hand of the artist inimitable,
and from the echo of the heavenly harp in
sweetness magnifical and mighty.

Soprano

- 10 For I will consider my Cat Jeoffry.
For he is the servant of the Living God, duly
and daily serving him.
For at the first glance of the glory of God in
the East he worships in his way.

For this is done by wreathing his body
seven times round with elegant quickness.

For he knows that God is his Saviour.
For God has blessed him in the variety of his
movements.

For there is nothing sweeter than his peace
when at rest.

For I am possessed of a cat, surpassing in
beauty, from whom I take occasion to
bless Almighty God.

Alto

- 11 For the Mouse is a creature of great personal
valour.

For – this is a true case – Cat takes female mouse –
male mouse will not depart, but stands
threat'ning and daring.

...If you will let her go, I will engage you,
as prodigious a creature as you are.

For the Mouse is a creature of great personal
valour.
For the Mouse is of an hospitable disposition.

Tenor

¹² For the flowers are great blessings.
For the flowers have their angels even the
words of God's Creation.
For the flower glorifies God and the root
parries the adversary.
For there is a language of flowers.
For flowers are peculiarly the poetry of Christ.

Chorus

¹³ For I am under the same accusation with
my Saviour –
For they said, he is besides himself.
For the officers of the peace are at variance
with me, and the watchman smites me
with his staff.
For Silly fellow! Silly fellow! is against me
and belongeth neither to me nor to my
family.
For I am in twelve HARDSHIPS, but he that
was born of a virgin shall deliver me out of
all.

Recitative (bass) and Chorus

¹⁴ For H is a spirit and therefore he is God.
For K is king and therefore he is God.

For L is love and therefore he is God.
For M is musick and therefore he is God.

¹⁵ For the instruments are by their rhimes.
For the Shawm rhimes are lawn, fawn,
moon, boon, and the like.
For the harp rhimes are sing, ring, string
and the like.
For the cymbal rhimes are bell, well, toll, soul
and the like.
For the flute rhimes are tooth, youth, suit,
mute and the like.
For the Bassoon rhimes are pass, class and
the like.
For the dulcimer rhimes are grace, place,
beat, heat and the like.
For the Clarinet rhimes are clean, seen and
the like.
For the trumpet rhimes are sound, bound,
soar, more and the like.
For the TRUMPET of God is blessed
intelligence and so are all the instruments
in HEAVEN.
For GOD the father Almighty plays upon
the HARP of stupendous magnitude and
melody.
For at that time malignity ceases and the
devils themselves are at peace.
For this time is perceptible to man by
a remarkable stillness and serenity of soul.

Chorus

¹⁶ Hallelujah from the heart of God, and from
the hand of the artist inimitable, and from
the echo of the heavenly harp in sweetness
magnifical and mighty.

Christopher Smart (1722–1771)
from Jubilate Agno

Choral Dances from 'Gloriana'

¹⁷ 1. Time

Yes he is Time,
Lusty and blithe!
Time is at his apogee!
Although you thought to see
A bearded ancient with a scythe,
No reaper he
That cries 'Take heed!
Time is at his apogee!
Young and strong in his prime!
Behold the sower of the seed!

¹⁸ 2. Concord

Concord is here
Our days to bless
And this our land to endure
With plenty, peace and happiness.

Concord and Time,
Each needeth each:
The ripest fruit hangs where
Not one, but only two can reach.

¹⁹ 3. Time and Concord

From springs of bounty,
Through this county,
Streams abundant,
Of thanks shall flow.

Where life was scanty,
Fruits of plenty,
Swell resplendent
From earth below!

No Greek nor Roman,
Queenly woman
Knew such favour,
From Heav'n above.

As she whose presence,
Is our pleasance,
Gloriana, Gloriana,
Hath all our love!

²⁰ 4. Country Girls

Sweet flag and cuckoo flower,
Cowslip and columbine,
Kingcups and sops in wine,
Flower deluce,
And calaminth,
Harebell and hyacinth,
Myrtle and bay, and with rosemary between,
Norfolk's own garlands for her Queen.

²¹ 5. Rustics and Fishermen

From fen and meadow
In rushy baskets

They bring ensamples of all they grow.
In earthen dishes
Their deep-sea fishes;
Yearly fleeces,
Woven blankets;
New cream junkets,
And rustic trinkets
On wicker flaskets,
Their country largess,
The best they know.

22 6. Final Dance of Homage

These tokens of our love receiving,
O take them, Princess great and dear,
From Norwich city you are leaving,
That you afar may feel us near.

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Estate of William Plomer (1903 - 1973)

A.M.D.G.

23 1. Prayer I

Jesu that dost in Mary dwell,
Be in thy servants' hearts as well,
In the spirit of thy holiness,
In the fulness of thy force and stress,
In the very ways that thy life goes,
And virtues that thy pattern shows,
In the sharing of thy mysteries;
And every power in us that is,
Against thy power put under feet
In the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete
To the glory of the Father. Amen.

24 2. Rosa Mystica

In the gardens of God, in the daylight divine,
Find me a place by thee, mother of mine.

The Rose in a Mystery, where is it found?
Is it anything true? Does it grow upon ground? -
It was made of earth's mould, but it went
from men's eyes,
And its place is a secret, and shut in the skies.

In the gardens of God, daylight divine,
I shall look on thy loveliness, mother of mine.

But where was it formerly? Which is the spot
That was blest in it once, though now it is
not? -
It is Galilee's growth; it grew at God's will
And broke into bloom upon Nazareth Hill.

Mother of mine, I shall keep time with thee,

Tell me the name now, tell me its name.
The heart guesses easily, is it the same? -
Mary, the Virgin, well the heart knows,
She is the Mystery, she is that Rose.

Mother of mine, I shall come home to thee.

Is Mary that Rose then? Mary the Tree?
But the Blossom, the Blossom there, who
can it be? -
Who can her Rose be? It could be but One:
Christ Jesus our Lord, her God and her Son.

In the gardens of God, daylight divine
Shew me thy son, mother, O mother of mine.

Does it smell sweet, too, in that holy place?
Sweet unto God, and the sweetness is grace;
The breath of it bathes the great heaven above,
In grace that is charity, grace that is love.

To thy breast, to thy breast, to thy glory divine,
Draw me by charity, mother of mine.

25 3. God's Grandeur

The world is charged with the grandeur of God,
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil.

Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his
rod?

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared,
smeared with toil;

And wears man's smudge and shares
man's smell: the soil

Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

And, for all this, nature is never spent;

There lives the dearest freshness
deep down things;

And though the last lights of the
black West went

Oh, morning, at the brown brink
eastward, springs –

Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with
ah! bright wings.

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

26 4. Prayer II

Thee, God, I come from, to thee go,
All day long I like a fountain flow,
From thy hand out, swayed about
Mote-like in thy mighty glow.

What I know of thee I bless,
As acknowledging thy stress
On my being and as seeing
Something of thy holiness.

Once I turned from thee and hid,
Bound on what thou hadst forbid;
Sow the wind I would, I sinn'd:
I repent of what I did.

Bad I am, but yet thy child.
Father, be thou reconciled.
Spare thou me, since I see
With thy might that thou art mild.

I have life before me still
And thy purpose to fulfill;
Yea a debt to pay thee yet:
Help me, sir, and so I will.

27 **5. O Deus, ego amo Te**
(O God, I love thee)
O God, I love thee, I love thee –
Not out of hope of heaven for me
Nor fearing not to love and be
 In the everlasting burning.
Thou, thou, my Jesus, after me
 Didst reach thine arms out dying,
For my sake suffer'dst nails and lance,
Mocked and marrèd countenance,
 Sorrows passing number,
 Sweat and care and cumber,
Yea and death, and this for me,
 And thou couldst see me sinning:
Then I, why should not I love thee,
Jesu, so much in love with me?
Not for heaven's sake; not to be
Out of hell by loving thee;
Not for any gains I see;
But just the way thou didst me
I do love and I will love thee:
What must I love thee, Lord, for then? –
For being my king and God. Amen.

28 **6. The Soldier**
Yes. Why do we all, seeing of a soldier,
 bless him? Bless,
Our redcoats, our tars? Both of these being, the
 greater part,
But frail clay, nay but foul clay. Here it is: the
 heart,
Since, proud, it calls the calling manly, gives a
 guess
That, hopes that, makes-believe, the men
 must be no less,

60

It fancies, feigns, deems the artist after his art;
And fain will find as sterling all as all is smart
And scarlet wear the spirit of war there express.
Mark Christ our King. He knows war, served this
 soldiering through;
He of all can handle a rope best. There he bides
 in bliss
Now, and seeing somewhere some do all that
 man can do,
For love he leans forth, needs his neck must fall
 on, kiss,
And cry 'O Christ-done deed! So God-made-
 flesh does too:'
"Were I come o'er again' cries Christ 'it should
 be this".

29 **7. Heaven-Haven**
I have desired to go
 Where springs not fail,
To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail
 And a few lilies blow.

And I have asked to be
 Where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb,
 And out of the swing of the sea.

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844 – 1889)
from *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*,
edited by W.H. Gardner and N.H. Mackenzie,
fourth edition © 1967 The Society of Jesus
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COMPACT DISC TWO

1 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, his mercy is
everlasting: and his truth endureth from
generation to generation.

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.

2 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 Heav'ns and
all the Pow'rs therein.

To Thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually
do cry,

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth!

Heav'n 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 thro'out 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 Thee to deliver man,
thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.

When Thou had'st overcome the sharpness of
death, thou did'st open the Kingdom of
Heav'n to all believers.

Christ!

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 number'd with Thy Saints in
glory everlasting.

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine
heritage: govern them and lift them up
forever.

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 Antiphon

Praised be the God of Love,
Here below
And here above,
Who hath dealt his mercies so
To his friend
And to his foe:
That both grace and glory tend,
Us of old
And us in th' end.
The great shepherd of the fold
Us did make, for us was sold.

He our foes in pieces brake,
Him we touch
And he we take.
Wherefore since that he is such
We adore
And we do crouch,
Lord, thy praises should be more,
We have none
And we not store.
Praised be the God alone
Who hath made of two folds one.

George Herbert (1593 – 1633)

Missa brevis

4 I. Kyrie

Kyrie eleison,
Christe eleison,
Kyrie eleison.

Lord have mercy,
Christ have mercy,
Lord have mercy.

5 II. 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 coelestis, Deus Pater
omnipotens.
Domini Fili unigenite Jesu Christe.
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.
Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe
deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.

Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus,
tu solus Altissimus, tu solus Jesu Christe,

Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris.

Amen.

Glory to God in the highest.
And on earth peace to men of good will.
We praise you, we bless you, we adore you,
we glorify you.
We give you thanks for your great glory.

Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father
almighty.
Lord, only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
You take away the sins of the world, have
mercy on us.
You take away the sins of the world, receive
our prayer.
You sit at the right hand of the Father, have
mercy on us.
For you alone are holy, you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, you alone are
Jesus Christ.
With the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the
Father.
Amen.

<p>6 III. Sanctus Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis.</p>	<p>Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of power. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Osanna in the highest.</p>
<p>7 IV. Benedictus Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis.</p>	<p>Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Osanna in the highest.</p>
<p>8 V. Agnus Dei Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi: miserere nobis. Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi: miserere nobis. Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi: dona nobis pacem.</p>	<p>Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace.</p>

9 A Wedding Anthem
 Now let us sing gaily
 Ave Maria!
 And may the Holy Virgin
 Who was the Mother of Jesus
 Grant that these two children
 May live together happily
 For Faith releases Gaiety
 As marriage does true Chastity!
 Ave Maria!

See how the scarlet sun
 Overthrows the heavy night

And where black shadows hung
There reveals a rose, a rose so pure and white,
 Thus did Jesus bring
 To the blind world of man
That faith which is their sight
And Love that is their light.
 Ave Maria!

As mountain streams
 find one another
Till they are both merged
 there - in a broad, peaceful river
As it flows to the sea
 and in it
 are lost forever,
So those who love
 seek one another
But when they are joined
 here - to Christ's Love, oh so tender
Though their years may be brief
 yet through Him
 they love forever!

Now let us sing gaily
These two they are not two
Love has made them one
 Amo Ergo Sum!
And by its mystery
Each is no less but more
 Amo Ergo Sum!
For to love is to be
And in loving Him, I love Thee!
 Amo Ergo Sum!

I love and so I live!

I love and so I live!

I love and so I live!

Per vitam Domini
Spes nobis cantavit.
Per fidem Domini
Lux diem novavit.
Per mortem Domini,
Mors mortem fugavit,
Amen!

Ronald Duncan (1914–1982)
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Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd

Through the life of our Lord
Hope has sung to us.
Through the faith of our Lord
Light has renewed the day.
Through the death of our Lord
Death has cast aside death.
Amen!

**10 Sweet Was the Song the Virgin
Sung**

Sweet was the song the Virgin sung,
When she to Bethlem Juda came,
And was delivered of a Son,
That blessed Jesus hath to name.
Lulla, lulla, lulla, lullaby,
Lulla, lulla, lulla, lullaby,
Sweet Babe, sang she.
My Son and eke a Saviour born,
Who hast vouchsafed from on high
To visit us that were forlorn.
Lalula, lalula, lalulaby,
Sweet Babe, sang she,
And rocked Him sweetly on her knee.

From *William Ballet's Lute Book*
in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin

A Ceremony of Carols

11 1. Procession

Hodie Christus natus est:
Hodie Salvator apparuit:
Hodie in terra canunt angeli laetantur
archangeli:
Hodie exsultant justi dicentes:
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Alleluia!

Today Christ is born:
Today our Saviour has appeared:
Today angels sing on earth and archangels
rejoice:
Today the righteous speaking are overjoyed:
Glory to God in the Highest.
Alleluia!

12 2. Wolcum Yole!

Wolcum be thou hevenè king, Wolcum Yole!
Wolcum, born in one morning,
Wolcum for whom wesall sing!
Wolcum be ye, Steven and Jon,
Wolcum, Innocentes every one,
Wolcum, Thomas marter one,
Wolcum be ye good Newe Yere,
Wolcum, Twelfthe Day both infere,
Wolcum, seintes lefe and dere,
Wolcum Yole, Wolcum!
Candelmesse, Quene of bliss,
Wolcum bothe to more and lesse.
Wolcum be ye that are here,
Wolcum Yole, Wolcum alle and make good
cheer.
Wolcum alle another yere,
Wolcum Yole, Wolcum!

13 3. There is no Rose

There is no rose of such vertu
As is the rose that bare Jesu.
Alleluia,

For in this rose containèd was
Heaven and earth in litel space,
Res miranda.
By that rose we may well see
There be one God in persons three,
Pares forma.
The aungels sungen the shepherds to:
Gloria in excelsis, Deo!
Gaudeamus,
Leave we all this werldly mirth,
And follow we this joyful birth.
Transeamus.
Alleluia,
Res miranda,
Pares forma,
Gaudeamus,
Transeamus.

A wondrous event.

Equal in form.

Glory to God in the highest.
Let us rejoice,

Let us follow thee.

A wondrous event,
Equal in form,
Let us rejoice,
Let us follow thee.

14 4a. That yongē child

That yongē child when it gan weep
With song she lulled him asleep:
That was so sweet a melody
It passèd alle minstrelsy.
The nightingalē sang also:
Her song is hoarse and nought thereto:
Whoso attendeth to her song
And leaveth the first then doth he wrong.

15 4b. Balulalow

O my deare hert, young Jesu sweit,
Prepare they creddil in my spreit,
And I sall rock thee to my hert,
And never mair from thee depart.

But I sall praise thee evermoir
With sanges sweit unto thy gloir;
The knees of my hert sall I bow,
And sing that richt Balulalow!

16 5. As dew in Aprille

I sing of a maiden that is makèles:
King of all kings
To her son she ches.
He came al so stille
There his moder was,
As dew in Aprille
That falleth on the grass.
He came al so stille
To his mother's bour,
As dew in Aprille
That falleth on the flour.
He came al so stille
There his moder lay,
As dew in Aprille
That falleth on the spray.
Moder and mayden was never none but she:
Well may such a lady Goddes moder be.

17 6. This little Babe

This little Babe so few days old,
Is come to rifle Satan's fold;
All hell doth at his presence quake,
Though he himself for cold do shake;
For in his weak unarmèd wise
The gates of hell he will surprise.

With tears he fights and wins the field,
His naked breast stands for a shield;

His battering shot are babish cries,
His arrows looks of weeping eyes,
His martial ensigns Cold and Need,
And feeble Flesh his warrior's steed.

His camp is pitchèd in a stall,
His bulwark but a broken wall;
The crib his trench, haystalks his stakes;
Of shepherds he his muster makes;
And thus, as sure his foe to wound,
The angels' trumps alarum sound.

My soul, with Christ join thou in fight;
Stick to the tents that he hath pight.
Within his crib is surest ward;
This little Babe will be thy guard.
If thou wilt foil thy foes with joy,
Then flit not from this heavenly Boy.

18 7. Interlude

19 8. In Freezing Winter Night

Behold, a silly tender babe, in freezing winter
night,
In homely manger trembling lies
Alas, a piteous sight!
The inns are full; no man will yield
This little pilgrim bed.
But forced he is with silly beasts
In crib to shroud his head.
This stable is a Prince's court,
This crib his chair of State;
The beasts are parcel of his pomp,
The wooden dish his plate.

The persons in that poor attire
His royal livries wear;
The Prince himself is come from heav'n;
This pomp is prizèd there.
With joy approach, O Christian wight,
Do homage to thy King,
And highly praise his humble pomp,
Which he from Heav'n doth bring.

20 9. Spring Carol

Pleasure it is to hear iwis, the Birdès sing,
The deer in the dale, the sheep in the vale, the
corn springing,
God's purvayance for sustenance.
It is for man.
Then we always to him give praise,
And thank him than.

21 10. Deo Gracias

Deo gracias!
Adam lay ibounden, bounden in a bond;
Four thousand winter thought he not to long.
Deo gracias!
And all was for an appil, an appil that he tok,
As clerkès finden written in their book.
Deo gracias!
Ne had the appil takè ben,
The appil takè ben,
Ne haddè never our lady
A ben havenè quene.
Blessed be the time
That appil takè was.
Therefore we moun singen.
Deo gracias!

Thanks be to God!

Thanks be to God!

Thanks be to God!

Thanks be to God!

22

11. Recession

Hodie Christus natus est:
Hodie Salvator apparuit:
Hodie in terra canunt angeli laetantur
archangeli:
Hodie exsultant justi dicentes:
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Alleluia!

Today Christ is born:
Today our Saviour has appeared:
Today angels sing on earth and archangels
rejoice:
Today the righteous speaking are overjoyed:
Glory to God in the Highest.
Alleluia!

23

Festival 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 Heav'ns and all
the Pow'rs therein.
To Thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually
do cry,
Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth!
Heav'n 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 thro'out 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 Thee to deliver man,
thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.
When Thou had'st overcome the sharpness of
death, thou did'st open the Kingdom of
Heav'n 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 number'd with Thy Saints in
glory everlasting.
O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine
heritage: govern them and lift them up
forever.
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.

24 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, his mercy is
everlasting; and his truth endureth from
generation to generation.
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.

COMPACT DISC THREE

Five Flower Songs

1 1. To Daffodils

Fair daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early rising sun
Has not attained his noon.
Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to evensong;
And, having prayed together,
We will go with you along.
Fair daffodils
We have short time to stay; as you.
We have as short a Spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay,

As you, or anything.
You haste away so soon.
We die,
As your hours do, and dry away
Like to the Summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew
Ne'er to be found again.

Robert Herrick (1591 – 1634)

In ev'ry chink delights the fern to grow
With glossy leaf and tawny bloom below;
The few dull flowers that o'er the place are
spread
Partake the nature of their fenny bed,
These, with our seaweeds rolling up and down,
Form the contracted Flora of our town.

George Crabbe (1754 – 1832)

2. The Succession of the Four Sweet Months

First, April, she with mellow showers
Opens the way for early flowers,
Then after her comes smiling May
In a more rich and sweet array,
Next enters June and brings us more
Gems than those two that went before,
Then (lastly), July comes and she more
Wealth brings in than all those three.

Robert Herrick

3. Marsh Flowers

Here the strong mallow strikes her slimy root,
Here the dull nightshade hangs her deadly
fruit,
On hills of dust the henbane's faded green,
And pencil'd flower of sickly scent is seen,
Here on its wiry stem, in rigid bloom,
Grows the salt lavender that lacks perfume,
At the wall's base the fiery nettle springs
With fruite globose and fierce with poison'd
stings;

4. The Evening Primrose

When once the sun sinks in the west,
And dewdrops pearl the evening's breast;
Almost as pale as moonbeams are,
Or its companionable star,
The evening primrose opes anew
Its delicate blossoms to the dew
And, hermitlike, shunning the light,
Wastes its fair bloom upon the night;
Who, blindfold to its fond caresses,
Knows not the beauty he possesses.
Thus it blooms on while night is by;
When day looks out with open eye,
'Bashed at the gaze it cannot shun,
It faints and withers and is gone.

John Clare (1793 – 1864)

5. Ballad of Green Broom

There was an old man liv'd out in the wood,
And his trade was a-cutting of Broom, green
Broom,

He had but one son without thought, without
good,
Who lay in his bed till 'twas noon, bright noon.

The old man awoke one morning and spoke,
He swore he would fire the room, that room,
If his John would not rise and open his eyes
And away to the wood to cut the Broom, green
Broom.

So Johnny arose and slipp'd on his clothes
And away to the wood to cut Broom, green
Broom,
He sharpen'd his knives, and for once he
contrives
To cut a bundle of Broom, green Broom.

When Johnny pass'd under a Lady's fine house,
Pass'd under a Lady's fine room, fine room,
She call'd to her maid: 'Go fetch me', she said,
'Go fetch me the boy that sells Broom, green
Broom.'

When Johnny came in to the Lady's fine house,
And stood in the Lady's fine room, fine room,
'Young Johnny,' she said, 'Will you give up your
Trade
And marry a Lady in bloom, full bloom?'

Johnny gave his consent, and to church they
both went,
And he married the Lady in bloom, full bloom.

At market and fair, all folks do declare,
There's none like the Boy that sold Broom,
green Broom.

Anonymous

8 Advance Democracy

Across the darkened city
The frosty searchlights creep
Alert for the first marauder
To steal upon our sleep.
We see the sudden headlines
Float on the muttering tide,
We hear them warm and threaten
And wonder what they hide.
There are whispers across tables,
Talks in a shutter'd room.
The price on which they bargain
Will be a people's doom.
There's a roar of war in the factories,
And idle hands on the street,
And Europe held in nightmare
By the thud of marching feet.
Now sinks the sun of surety,
The shadows growing tall
Of the big bosses plotting
Their biggest coup of all.
Is there no strength to save us?
No power we can trust,
Before our lives and liberties
Are powder'd into dust.

Time to arise Democracy,
Time to rise up and cry
That what our fathers fought for
We'll not allow to die.
Time to decide.
Time to resolve divisions,
Time to renew our pride,
Time to burst our house of glass.
Rise as a single being
In one resolve arrayed:
Life shall be for the people
That's by the people made.

Randall Swingler (1909 – 1967)
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Sacred and Profane

7 1. St Godric's Hymn

Sainte Marye Virgine,
Moder Jesu Christes Nazarene,
Onfo, schild, help thin Godric,
Onfang, bring heyilich with thee in Godes
Riche.

Sainte Marye, Christes bur,
Maidenes clenhad, moderes flur,
Dilie min sinne, rix in min mod,
Bring me to winne with the self God.

Mid-twelfth century

Sacred and Profane

1. St Godric's Hymn

St Mary, the Virgin,
Mother of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,
Receive, defend and help thy Godric,
(and,) having received (him,) bring (him) on
high with thee in God's Kingdom.

St Mary, Christ's bower,
Virgin among maidens, flower of motherhood,
Blot out my sin, reign in my heart,
(and) bring me to bliss with that selfsame God.

8

2. I mon waxe wod

Foweles in the frith,
The fisses in the flod,
And I mon waxe wod:
Mulch sorw I walke with
For beste of bon and blod.

Later-thirteenth century

9

3. Lenten is come

Lenten is come with love to toun,
With blosmen and with briddes roun,
That all this blisse bringeth.
Dayeseyes in this dales,
Notes swete of nightegales,
Uch fowl song singeth.
The threstelcok him threteth oo.
Away is huere winter wo
When woderofe springeth.
This fowles singeth ferly fele.
The wilteth on huere wynne wele,
That all the wode ringeth.

The rose railleth hire rode,
The leves on the lighte wode
Waxen all with wille.
The mone mandeth hire ble,
The lilye is lossom to se,
The fennel and the fille.
Wowes this wilde drakes,
Miles murgeth huere makes,
Ase strem that striketh stille.

2. I must go mad

Birds in the wood,
The fish in the river,
And I must go mad:
Much sorrow I live with
For the best of creatures alive.

3. Spring has come

Spring has come with love among us,
With flowers and with the songs of birds,
That brings all this happiness.
Daisies in these valleys,
The sweet notes of nightingales,
Each bird sings a song.
The thrush wrangles all the time.
Gone is their winter woe
When the woodruff springs.
These birds sing, wonderfully merry,
And warble in their abounding joy,
So that all the wood rings.

The rose puts on her rosy face,
The leaves in the bright wood
All grow with pleasure.
The moon sends out her radiance,
The lily is lovely to see,
The fennel and the wild thyme.
These wild drakes make love,
Animals (?) cheer their mates,
Like a stream that flows softly.

Mody meneth, so doth mo;
Ichot ich am on of tho
For love that likes ille.

The mone mandeth hire light,
So doth the semly sonne bright,
When briddes singeth breme.
Deawes donketh the dounes,
Deores with huere derne rounes
Domes for to deme.
Wormes woweth under cloude,
Wimmen waxeth wounder proude,
So well it wol hem seme.
Yef me shall wonte ville of on,
This wunne wele I wole forgon,
And wiht in wode be fleme.

Late-thirteenth / early-fourteenth century

10 4. The long night

Mirie it is, while sumer ilast,
With fugheles song.
Oc nu necheth windes blast,
And weder strong.
Ey! Ey! What this night is long!
And ich, with well michel wrong,
Soregh and murne and fast.

Early-thirteenth century

11 5. Yif ic of luve can

Whanne ic se on Rode
Jesu, my lemman,

The passionate man complains, as do more:
I know that I am one of those
That is unhappy for love.

The moon sends out her light,
So does the fair, bright sun,
When birds sing gloriously.
Dews wet the downs,
Animals with their secret cries
For telling their tales.
Worms make love under ground,
Women grow exceedingly proud,
So well it will suit them.
If I don't have what I want of one,
All this happiness I will abandon,
And quickly in the woods be a fugitive.

4. The long night

Pleasant it is, while summer lasts,
With the birds' song.
But now the blast of the wind draws nigh
And severe weather.
Alas! How long this night is,
And I, with very great wrong,
Sorrow and mourn and fast.

5. If I know of love

When I see on the Cross
Jesu, my lover,

And besiden him stonden
Marye and Johan,
And his rig iswongen,
And his side istungen,
For the luve of man;
Well ou ic to wepen,
And sinnes for to leten,
Yif ic of luve can,
Yif ic of luve can,
Yif ic of luve can.

Early-fourteenth century

6. Carol

Maiden in the mor lay,
In the mor lay;
Sevenight fulle,
Sevenight fulle,
Maiden in the mor lay;
In the mor lay,
Sevenightes fulle and a day.

Welle was hire mete.
What was hire mete?
The primerole and the –
The primerole and the –
Welle was hire mete.
What was hire mete?
The primerole and the violet.

Welle was hire dring,
What was hire dring?
The chelde water of the –
The chelde water of the –

And beside him stand
Mary and John,
And his back scourged,
And his side pierced,
For the love of man,
Well ought I to weep
And sins to abandon,
If I know of love,
If I know of love,
If I know of love.

6. Carol

A maiden lay on the moor,
Lay on the moor;
A full week,
A full week,
A maiden lay on the moor;
Lay on the moor,
A full week and a day.

Good was her food.
What was her food?
The primrose and the –
The primrose and the –
Good was her food.
What was her food?
The primrose and the violet.

Good was her drink.
What was her drink?
The cold water of the –
The cold water of the –

Welle was hire dring.
What was hire dring?
The chelde water of the welle-spring.

Welle was hire bowr.
What was hire bowr?
The rede rose and the –
The rede rose and the –
Welle was hire bowr.
What was hire bowr?
The rede rose and the lilye flour.

Early-fourteenth century

13 7. Ye that pasen by

Ye that pasen by the weiye,
Abidet a little stounde.
Beholdet, all my felawes,
Yef any me lik is founde.
To the Tre with nailes thre
Wol fast I hange bounde;
With a spere all thoru my side
To mine herte is mad a wounde.

Mid-fourteenth century

14 8. A death

Wanne mine eyhnen misten,
And mine heren sissen,
And my nose coldet,
And my tunge foldet,
And my rude slaket,
And mine lippes blaken,
And my muth grennet,

Good was her drink.
What was her drink?
The cold water of the well-spring.

Good was her bower.
What was her bower?
The red rose and the –
The red rose and the –
Good was her bower.
What was her bower?
The red rose and the lilyflower.

7. You that pass by

You that pass by the way,
Stay a little while.
Behold, all my fellows,
If any like me is found.
To the Tree with three nails
Most fast I hand bound;
With a spear all through my side
To my heart is made a wound.

8. A death

When my eyes get misty,
And my ear full of hissing,
And my nose gets cold,
And my tongue folds,
And my face goes slack,
And my lips blacken,
And my mouth grins,

And my spotel rennet,
And mine her riset,
And mine herte grisiet,
And mine honden bivien,
And mine fet stivien –
Al to late! Al to late!
Wanne the bere is ate gate.

Thanne I schel flutte
From bedde to flore,
From flore to here,
From here to bere,
From bere to putte,
And te putt fordut.
Thanne lyd mine hus uppe mine nose.
Of al this world ne give I it a pese!

Thirteenth century

And my spittle runs,
And my hair rises,
And my heart trembles,
And my hands shake,
And my feet stiffen –
All too late! All too late!
When the bier is at the gate.

Then I shall pass
From bed to floor,
From floor to shroud,
From shroud to bier,
From bier to grave,
And the grave will be closed up.
Then rests my house upon my nose.
For the whole world I don't care one jot.

Translation: R.T. Davies

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A Boy Was Born

15 **Theme. A Boy Was Born**

A boy was born in Bethlehem;
Rejoice for that, Jerusalem!

Alleluya.

He let himself a servant be,
That all mankind he might set free:

Alleluya.

Then praise the Word of God who came
To dwell within a human frame:

Alleluia.

Sixteenth-century German carol

16 Variation I. Lullay, Jesu

Lullay, Jesu, lullay, lullay!

So blessed a sight it was to see,
How Mary rocked her Son so free;
So fair she rocked and sang 'by-by'.

Mine own dear mother, sing lullay!
Lullay, Jesu, lullay, lullay!

'Mine own dear Son, why weepest Thou thus?
Is not Thy father King of bliss?
Have I not done that in me is?
Your grievance, tell me what it is.'

Lullay, Jesu, lullay, lullay!
Mine own dear mother, sing lullay!

'Therefore, mother, weep I nought,
But for the woe that shall be wrought
To me, ere I mankind have bought.'

Lullay, Jesu, lullay, lullay!

'Ah, dear mother! Yet shall a spear
My heart in sunder all to-tear;
No wonder though I careful were.'

Lullay, Jesu, lullay, lullay!
Mine own dear mother, sing lullay!

'Now, dear mother, sing lullay,
And put away all heaviness;
Into this world I took the way,
Again to (heaven) I shall me dress,
Where joy is without end ay.'

Mine own dear mother, sing lullay!
Lullay, Jesu, lullay, lullay!

Anonymous (before 1536)

17 Variation II. Herod

Noel!

(A boy was born in Bethlehem.)

Noel!

Herod that was both wild and wode,
Full much he shed of Christian blood,
To slay the Child so meek of mood,
That Mary bare, that clean may [maid].

Noel!

Herod slow with pride and sin
Thousands of two year and within;
The body of Christ he thought to win
And to destroy the Christian fay [faith].

Noel!

Mary with Jesu forth yfraught [laden],
As the angel her taught,
To flee the land till it were sought,
To Egypt she took her way.

Noe!!

Now Jesus that didst die for us on the Rood,
And didst christen innocents in their blood,
By the prauer of Thy mother good,
Bring us to bliss that lasteth ay.

Noe!!

Anonymous (before 1536)

18 Variation III. Jesu, As Thou Art Our Saviour

Jesu, Jesu, Jesu, Jesu,
Save us all through Thy virtue.

Jesu, as Thou art our Saviour
That Thou save us fro dolour!
Jesu is mine paramour.
Blessed be Thy name, Jesu.

Jesu was born of a may [maid],
Upon Christêmas Day,
She was may befor and ay [after],
Blessed be Thy name, Jesu.

Jesu, Jesu, Jesu, Jesu,
Save us all through Thy virtue.

Anonymous (fifteenth century)

19 Variation IV. The Three Kings

Three kings there came fro Galilee
Into Bethlehem, that fair city,
To seek Him that should ever be by right-a,
Lord and king and knight-a.

They took their leave, both old and ying,
Of Herod (Noe!), that moody king;
They went forth with their offering by light-a,
By the star that shone so bright-a.

Till they came into the place
Where Jesus and His mother was,
Offered they up with great solace in fere-a
[together]
Gold, incense, and myrrh-a.

Forth then went these kingês three,
Till they came home to their country;
Glad and blithe they were all three
Of the sight that they had see bydene-a
[together].

Anonymous (fifteenth century)

20 Variation V. In the Bleak Mid-winter

In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen,
Snow on snow...

He bare him up, he bare him down,
He bare him into an orchard brown.

Lully, lulley, lully, lulley,
The falcon hath borne my make [mate] away.

...Frosty wind made moan,
Snow on snow...

In that orchard there was an hall
That was hangèd with purple and pall.

And in that hall there was a bed,
It was hangèd with gold so red.

Lully, lulley, lully, lulley,
The falcon hath borne my make [mate] away.

...In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.
Snow on snow...

In that bed there lieth a knight,
His woundès bleeding, day and night.

By that bedside kneeleth a may [maid],
And she weepeth both night and day.

Lully, lulley, lully, lulley,
The falcon hath borne my make [mate] away.

And by that bedside there standeth a stone,
Corpus Christi written thereon.

Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830–1894)
and Anonymous (fifteenth century)

21 Variation VI (Finale). Noel!

Noel! Wassail!
Good day, good day,
My Lord Sir Christèmas, good day!

Good day, Sir Christèmas our King,
For every man, both old and ying,
Is glad of your coming.

Good day, good day,
My Lord Sir Christèmas, good day!

Godès Son so much of might
From heaven to earth down is light
And born is of a maid so bright.

Good day, good day,
My Lord Sir Christèmas, good day!
Our King! Noel!

Hosanna!
This night a Child is born.

Get ivy and hull [Holly], woman, deck up thine
house,
And take this same brawn for to see the and
to souse;
Provide us good cheer, for thou knowest the
old guise,
Old customs that good be, let no man despise.
At Christmas be merry and thank God of all,
And feast thy poor neighbours, the great and
the small.

Yea, all the year long have an eye to the poor,
And God shall send luck to keep open thy door.
Good fruit and good plenty do well in thy loft,
Then lay for an orchard and cherish it oft.
The profit is mickle, the pleasure is much;
At pleasure with profit few wise men will
grutch.
For plants and for stocks lay aforehand to cast,
But set or remove them, while Twelve-tide
do last.

Noel!

Welcome be Thou, heaven-king,
Welcome born in one morning,
Welcome for whom we shall sing,
Welcome Yule.

Noel!

Welcome be ye that are here,
Welcome all, and make good cheer,
Welcome all another year!
Welcome Yule!
Noel! Our King! Noel!

(Wassail! Wassail!
Lully, lullely, lully, lulley!
Noel! Noel!
Herod that was both wild and wode!
Mine own dear mother, Jesu, Jesu!)

Glory to God on high, and jolly mirth
Twixt man and man, and peace on earth!

This night a Child is born;
This night a Son is given;
This Son, this Child
Hath reconciled
Poor man that was forlorn,
And the angry God of heaven.
Hosanna, sing Hosanna!

Now, now that joyful day,
That blessed hour is come,
That was foretold
In days of old,
Wherein all nations may
Bless the virgin's womb.
Hosanna, sing Hosanna!

Let heaven triumph above,
Let earth rejoice below;
Let heaven and earth
Be filled with mirth,
For peace and lasting love
Atones your God and you.
Hosanna, sing Hosanna!

Sing Noel!

Thomas Tusser (1524 - 1580) /
Francis Quarles (1592 - 1644) /
Anonymous (fifteenth century)



Emotion Studios

Paul Spicer

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BRITTEN: THE CHORAL EDITION – The Finzi Singers / Spicer

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Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)

The Choral Edition

COMPACT DISC ONE

TT 67:10

Hymn to St Peter* • A Hymn of St Columba* • A Hymn to the Virgin • Hymn to St Cecilia • Rejoice in the Lamb*
Choral Dances from 'Gloriana' • A.M.D.G.

COMPACT DISC TWO

TT 72:04

Jubilate Deo in E flat major* • Te Deum* • Antiphon*
Missa brevis* • A Wedding Anthem* • Sweet Was the Song the Virgin Sung • A Ceremony of Carols† • Festival Te Deum*
Jubilate Deo in C major*

COMPACT DISC THREE

TT 61:42

Five Flower Songs • Advance Democracy • Sacred and Profane
A Boy Was Born‡

Susan Drake harp†

Andrew Lumsden organ*

Lichfield Cathedral Choristers‡

The Finzi Singers

Paul Spicer

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