

The background of the cover is a misty, atmospheric landscape. In the foreground, there is a field of tall, white, feathery grasses that appear to be blowing in the wind. In the middle ground, a large, dark tree with a thick trunk and spreading branches stands on the right side. The background is a soft, hazy green, suggesting a forest or a misty day. The overall mood is serene and natural.

signum
CLASSICS

Choral Music

by Herbert Howells

The Rodolfus Choir
Directed by Ralph Allwood

CHORAL MUSIC

BY HERBERT HOWELLS

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RODOLFUS CHOIR
RALPH ALLWOOD DIRECTOR
TOM WINPENNY ORGAN

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HERBERT HOWELLS' CHORAL MUSIC

Herbert Howells (1892-1983) was one of the greatest 20th century composers of choral music and his work is now sung and loved by choirs all over the world. While he is perhaps most well-known for his sacred works, particularly his many settings of the Magnificat and Nunc dimittis sung at evensong in the Anglican church, he also wrote a small quantity of no less fine secular settings. This recording presents a varied selection of well-known and less well-known pieces from both sides of his output, written for a variety of purposes; some commissioned, some occasional pieces and others composed simply for the love of what Howells called 'the immemorial sound of English voices' to which one might add, voices singing settings of finely wrought English words.

1 The Summer is Coming

In the latter part of his career, Howells became very much associated with church music and it is true that in his choral output, sacred works greatly outnumber settings of secular poetry. But in this part-song to words by the Irish poet Bryan Guinness (of the brewing family and later Baron Moyne) he shows his mastery of word setting

and choral texture. It is a miniature masterpiece. The title might lead us to expect something light and full of happy expectation, but the mood is actually dark and complex, full of a heavy and sorrowful sense of loss ('Dark is the turf / And grey is the stone / And sad is the sky for the wild geese gone'). Howells wrote this song in memory of Arnold Bax and there is much about it that is elegiac. Consider too, that it was written around the same time that he was composing the large scale *Stabat Mater* whose bleak pessimism was all bound up with thoughts about his long-dead son Michael, and the psychological background begins to crystallise. The word *black* recurs throughout the poem (blackthorn, black boats, black heifers) and Howells responds with sensuous bittersweet softly, sometimes sharply, dissonant harmony and sinuous and tonally ambiguous vocal lines. The composer's biographer Paul Spicer has pointed out that Howells was a supreme creator of mood in his music and this is an outstanding example of mood evocation. The soprano monodies that open and close this wonderful piece catch the poem's sense of restless, nostalgic longing perfectly. *The Summer is Coming* was composed for the Cork International Festival of 1965.

2 Sweetest of Sweets

6 Antiphon

Towards the end of Howells' composing career in the early 1970s, Sir David Willcocks suggested that he might write some unaccompanied music for the Bach Choir. Howells responded by going to the 17th century poet and divine, George Herbert, and *Sweetest of Sweets* and *Antiphon* were the result. They were first sung by the Bach Choir in 1977. Both of these motets are written in Howells' most advanced harmonic idiom, characterised by sinuously interweaving chromatic vocal lines that come together in exquisitely complex and dissonant harmonies, yet without ever losing that sure sense that Howells always has of the music's forward momentum, and often coalescing in surprising common chords. The climax of *Sweetest of Sweets* ('But if I travel in your companie') and its culmination on a soft affirming chord of F sharp major, are heart-warming and life-enhancing. By way of contrast, the affirming praise of *Antiphon* ('Let all the world in every corner sing') is all declamation and vigour, the voices ringing out bright fanfares and roulades. The middle verse provides a brief contrast (and a surprising quiet G major chord) before the fanfares propel us once more to the music's ecstatic culmination marked *fff*. Howells knew he had a big choir to work with here!

3 Sing Lullaby

5 A Spotless Rose

9 Here is the Little Door

These three Carol-Anthems (has any other composer used this title?) are among Howells' most famous and best-loved choral pieces. Sung widely each Christmas they are familiar to many who would not otherwise recognise much of this composer's work. They are early works, coming from a period in Howells' life when he had been forced to give up the job of sub-organist at Salisbury Cathedral because of serious illness and when both his health and his finances were far from secure. You would not realise it though, listening to these sublime settings. *Here is the Little Door* is the earliest, composed in 1918 to words by Frances Chesterton (wife of GK to whom it is dedicated). It is a beautifully poised Epiphany piece, a song sung by the mysterious Magi who visit the Christ-child with their strange gifts. The printed score says that the setting was made in September 1918, but Howells' friend Harold Darke claimed that it was composed '...in the kitchen of a friend's house one Xmas Eve, amid the bustle and excitement of preparing a Xmas dinner' which one would love to be true! Perhaps it was sketched at that kitchen table and tidied up for publication a few months later.

A Spotless Rose to anonymous 14th century words followed in 1919. Of all Howells' compositions, this falls into that category of works that 'need no introduction'. If there is perfection in choral music, this comes very close to it. The text has only two verses, but Howells turns it into a threefold structure as the full choir takes up and amplifies the words that the baritone solo has presented in the middle section. And of that heart-stopping final cadence perhaps the most eloquent admirer was Howells' fellow composer, Patrick Hadley. 'Dear Herbert' he wrote, 'that cadence to *A Spotless Rose* is not merely 'one of those things'. Brainwave it certainly is, but it is much more than that. It is a stroke of genius. I should like, when my time comes, to pass away with that magical cadence. I expect you'll say you hadn't to think, it was already there. Love Paddy'.

Sing Lullaby probably composed in or around 1920, sets words by F W Harvey, a poet who was both a fellow Gloucestershire man and a personal friend. The late Christopher Palmer likened the atmosphere of this setting to that of Vaughan Williams' *Pastoral Symphony* of a few years later. The similarity that Palmer found is that of quietly oscillating common chords surrounding and supporting rather than accompanying a simple and beautifully asymmetric melody, creating a

hypnotically peaceful soundscape, such as might lull a child to sleep. It is dedicated to Howells' pupil Harry Stevens Davis.

4 One Thing Have I Desired

It was not at all common in the 20th century for an individual churchman also to be a great patron of the arts, but an extraordinary exception to this was certainly to be found in the person of Walter Hussey (1909-1985). During a forty year career as vicar of St Matthew's Church, Northampton and then Dean of Chichester Cathedral, he was personally responsible for commissioning a large number of paintings, sculptures and musical works from prominent artists, writers and composers including W H Auden, Henry Moore, Graham Sutherland, John Piper, Marc Chagall and others in the visual and literary arts and Gerald Finzi, Benjamin Britten and Leonard Bernstein among musicians. Perhaps the two most famous musical works that resulted from this personal vision were Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb* and Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*. After Hussey moved to Chichester, St Matthew's continued his tradition of commissioning works for its annual Patronal Festival and Howells composed *One thing have I desired*, a setting of verses from Psalm 27, to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the church

in 1968. Once more, Howells proves himself to be a master of mood, skilfully manipulating texture, harmony and dynamics to express the quiet joy that the psalmist anticipates in dwelling in God's presence, protected in the 'time of trouble'.

7 Walking in the Snow

11 Long, Long Ago

These two settings make a natural pair. They were both composed in September 1950 to poems by John Buxton, both dedicated to the Lady Margaret Singers, Cambridge, the mixed adult chamber choir that George Guest had formed when he became Director of Music at St John's College, and both published by Novello in 1951 as supplements to *The Musical Times* (each issue contained a new, or newly edited piece of choral music). Both have been previously recorded yet, to the present writer's knowledge, this is the first CD to contain both of them! They differ in one respect. *Long, long ago*, the first to be composed, is a sacred piece (another carol-anthem) while *Walking in the snow* is a secular part-song (a love song), but they both inhabit the same sound-world.

John Buxton (1912-1989), an Oxford academic, is little known now as a writer but he produced a small quantity of verse, some of it reflecting his

years spent in a German prisoner of war camp during the Second World War. His book 'Such Liberty' had evidently come to Howells' attention sufficiently to make him want to set some of the verses. With Buxton's permission Howells combined two poems to make the text of *Walking in the snow* and the author seems to have been keen to have his poems set to music, telling Howells that some were written with musical setting in mind. These settings are full of incidental beauties of line and harmony but the impression they leave is once more of atmosphere, the creation of a perfect vehicle for the words, rather than of distinctive musical themes. There is one particularly lovely moment in *Walking in the snow* (just before the words 'Oh let the snowflakes nestle') where the music pauses after a complex chromatic passage on a harmonically ambiguous chord that could function as a dominant seventh chord in C. But after a momentary silence the pianissimo chord of B major that follows is magical.

8 A Grace for 10 Downing Street

In 1972 Edward Heath was Prime Minister. Among his extra-political activities, Heath was an enthusiastic and competent amateur musician and during his occupancy of Downing Street he hosted a number of dinner parties for prominent

figures in the musical world. One of the more glittering of these occasions was the dinner given on 29th March 1972 in honour of William Walton who celebrated his seventieth birthday that day, and the party was also graced by the presence of the Queen Mother and many other distinguished musicians. Heath and Howells were well acquainted and Howells was asked to write a choral grace to be sung before the meal was served. Robert Armstrong, Heath's private secretary (later to become Cabinet Secretary) wrote the words. With a slight amendment to the words ('May William Walton happy be, / In health and wealth and harmony.' became 'May those we welcome happy be, / In pastime with good company.') the grace was sung at most of the subsequent dinners that Heath gave, and the piece was published with Edward Heath's permission to mark Howells' centenary in 1992. At the words 'God save the Queen, preserve our host', attentive listeners may detect a musical quotation from Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*.

10 God be in my head

This simple setting was composed within the space of an hour. In 1965 Christopher Eaton Smith was a composition pupil of Howells at the Royal College of Music. One day, Smith took a setting he

had made of these well-known words to a lesson and Howells within the time available, sketched out how he would have approached the text and handed the manuscript to his pupil for his own instruction. Recently released for publication, this is a straightforward and undemanding piece but no less valuable for being a chipping from the master's workbench.

12-13 Te Deum and Jubilate (Collegium Regale)

The account of the conversation that took place between Howells, Patrick Hadley and Dean Eric Milner White, and the challenge that led to the composition of the 'Collegium Regale' Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, was one of Howells' favourite stories. In fact, the Evensong canticles were not the first fruits of this meeting. The first settings composed for the choir of King's College, Cambridge were these morning canticles, *Te Deum* and *Jubilate*, completed in November 1944 while Howells was still deputising for Robin Orr as acting organist at St John's College. They were first sung in King's College Chapel on 20th May 1945.

Unlike some of Howells' later church music, the mood of these two canticles is wholly unclouded and optimistic. Should we find this remarkable, considering that they were written in wartime, he

or are they symptomatic of the sort of communal brightness of spirit that prevails in times of national emergency? Clearly they emanate from a period in Howells' life when he was feeling happy and fulfilled, re-discovering himself as a composer after the fallow years of the late 1920s and 30s. He was also extremely happy in his new association with the University of Cambridge, where he entered fully and enthusiastically into the musical life of St John's. This was an association that was to continue for the rest of his life. Here too, he had found a renewed enthusiasm for church music and a new outlet for the sort of music he wanted to write. In cathedral and collegiate chapel choirs he also found a market eager to take whatever he was prepared to give them. In these canticle settings there is plenty of rhythmically strong, forward moving writing, often in unison (listen to the opening of both canticles), and the music is largely driven by harmonic rather than contrapuntal considerations, without the more extreme contrapuntal convolutions that characterises some of Howells' later liturgical music. In the *Te Deum*, Howells is alive to the need to create contrasts of mood and colour, and to create a convincing musical shape out of a long and somewhat disparate text. This setting has a poise and structure that he did not always achieve elsewhere. The *Te Deum* ends triumphantly with

the sort of peroration that is a characteristic Howells 'fingerprint' and the mood of optimism continues in the *Jubilate* even though the E flat major of the *Te Deum* is exchanged for the much darker E flat minor – Howells is one of a select band of composers (Mendelssohn was another) able to write joyful music in a minor key. Here the text of the canticle is despatched quickly and efficiently. Howells reserves the most expansive music for the *Gloria*, where the texture opens out magnificently and is enhanced by the use of a solo reed stop in its middle register at the very end.

14-15 Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis (Dallas Service)

In a sequence of settings of the evensong canticles, the majority of which were written for the great English choral foundations, one is somewhat surprised, nonplussed even, to find a set called the *Dallas Canticles*. This slight sense of incongruity is hardly helped by the fact that for many British listeners the name Dallas conjures up memories of a popular American TV soap opera, or of the city where John F Kennedy was assassinated. The prosaic truth is that Howells wrote this set because he was asked to do so by a former pupil, Larry Palmer who was a distinguished American organist and director of

music at St Luke's Episcopal Church, Dallas. The commission fee was put up by a wealthy local philanthropist. There was by the mid 1970s, a growing number of Howells devotees among Anglican Episcopalians (the Anglican Church in the USA), and his music often graced their liturgy. This was to be the last of over 20 settings of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis that Howells composed, and there is even some evidence to suggest that Dallas poached the setting that he was planning to write for Durham Cathedral! The work was composed at a time of sadness for Howells. His wife Dorothy was gravely ill and she died a few weeks after its completion.

An innovation in the Magnificat, found nowhere else in Howells' many settings is the repetition of the opening words, sung by a solo soprano just before the Gloria. At the other end of Howells' musical spectrum, the 'blues' chord on D, juxtaposing F sharp and F natural, that leads into the Gloria is identical with the chord that closes the Nunc Dimittis of Howells' first post-war setting, the Collegium Regale of 1945.

16 A Hymn For St Cecilia

The Worshipful Company of Musicians, one of the livery companies of the City of London, is

an ancient body with its roots in the London Fellowship of Minstrels, accorded guild status in 1500. Originally a powerful organisation akin to a modern trades union which controlled musical activity in London, its present day functions are chiefly awarding prizes, scholarships and medals. Howells was Master of the company in 1959-60 and *A Hymn for St Cecilia* was commissioned by the Company's Livery Club to commemorate his term of office. The poem was also newly commissioned from Ursula Vaughan Williams, the composer's widow. Her description of the Hymn encapsulates its mood:

"My St Cecilia is a girl in one of those magical gardens from Pompeian frescoes, a romantic figure among colonnades and fountains; Herbert's tune takes her briskly towards martyrdom."

The delightful descant for the final verse was a musical afterthought, added at the suggestion of Cedric Thorpe Davie (for the Company) and John Dykes Bower, organist of St Paul's Cathedral where the first performance took place at a Company Festival on St Cecilia's Day, 22nd November 1961.

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St Neots, February 2010

TEXTS

1 The Summer is Coming

The summer is coming over the hills.
The milk of the blackthorn is bursting and spills;
All day the cuckoo in County Mayo
Breathes like a flute as he flits high and low.

Dark is the turf and grey is the stone,
And sad is the sky for the wild geese gone,
But the gleaming coat of the grass begins
Under the golden brooch of the whins.

The black boats walk on the silver strand,
Like beetles that go on the edge of the land;
The black boats tilt on the western waves;
Black heifers stand over the old green graves.

The summer is coming over the sea,
And lights with soft kisses on you and on me.
All day the cuckoo in County Mayo
Breathes like a flute as he flits high and low.

The summer is coming over the hills.
The milk of the blackthorn is bursting and spills;
All day the cuckoo in County Mayo
Breathes like a flute as he flits high and low.

Bryan Guinness (1905-1992)
Used with kind permission of Rosaleen Mulji.

2 Sweetest of Sweets

Sweetest of sweets, I thank you: when displeasure
Did through my body wound my mind,
You took me thence, and in your house of pleasure
A dainty lodging me assigned.

Now I in you without a body move,
Rising and falling with your wings:
We both together sweetly live and love,
Yet say sometimes, "God help poor Kings".

Comfort, I'll die; for if you post from me
Sure I shall do so, and much more:
But if I travel in your company,
You know the way to heaven's door.

George Herbert (1593-1633)

3 Sing Lullaby

Sing lullaby, while snow doth gently fall,
Sing lullaby to Jesus born in an oxen-stall.
Sing lullaby to Jesus born now in Bethlehem,
The naked blackthorn's growing to weave his diadem.
Sing lullaby to Jesus. While thickly snow doth fall,
Sing lullaby to Jesus the Saviour of all.

Frederick William Harvey (1888-1957)
Used with kind permission of Eileen Griffiths.

4 One Thing Have I Desired

One thing have I desired of the Lord,
which I will require:
Even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to behold the fair beauty of the Lord,
and to visit his temple.

For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in
his tabernacle:
yea, in the secret place of his dwelling shall
he hide me,
and set me up upon a rock of stone.

And now, shall he lift up mine head,
above mine enemies round about me:
therefore will I offer in his dwelling
an oblation with great gladness;
I will sing and speak praises unto the Lord in
his dwelling.

Psalm 27, VV 4-6

5 A Spotless Rose

A Spotless Rose is blowing,
Sprung from a tender root,
Of ancient seers' foreshowing,

Of Jesse promised fruit;
Its fairest bud unfolds to light
Amid the cold, cold winter,
And in the dark midnight.
The Rose which I am singing,
Whereof Isaiah said,
Is from its sweet root springing
In Mary, purest Maid;
For through our God's great love and might
The Blessed Babe she bare us
In a cold, cold winter's night.

*Anonymous: 'Es ist ein Ros entsprungen' (14th century),
translated by Catherine Winkworth (1827–1878)*

6 Antiphon

Let all the world in every corner sing,
'My God and King!'
The heavens are not too high,
His praise may thither fly;
The earth is not too low,
His praises there may grow.
The Church with Psalms must shout,
No door can keep them out.
But, above all, the heart
must bear the longest part.
Let all the world in every corner sing,
'My God and King!'

George Herbert

7 Walking in the Snow

*Text taken from "Such Liberty" by John Buxton (1912-1989)
Poem not reproduced here due to rights reasons.*

8 A Grace for 10 Downing Street

Bless this house, O Lord we pray,
bless the food we eat this day.
God save The Queen, preserve our host,
And hearken to our festal toast:
May those we welcome happy be
In pastime with good company
Benedictus, Dominum nostrum.
Amen.

Used with kind permission of Lord Robert Armstrong

9 Here is the Little Door

Here is the little door, lift up the latch, oh lift!
We need not wander more but enter with our gift;
Our gift of finest gold,
Gold that was never bought nor sold;
Myrrh to be strewn about His Bed;
Incense in clouds about His Head;
All for the Child that stirs not in His sleep,
But holy slumber holds with ass and sheep.
Bend low about His Bed, for each He has a gift;
See how His eyes awake, lift up your hands, O lift!

For Gold, He gives a keen-edged sword
(Defend with it Thy little Lord!)
For incense, smoke of battle red
Myrrh for the honoured happy dead;
Gifts for His children, terrible and sweet,
Touched by such tiny hands and Oh such tiny feet.

Frances Chesterton (1869-1938)

10 God be in my Head

God be in my head, and in my understanding;
God be in mine eyes, and in my looking;
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;
God be in my heart, and in my thinking;
God be at mine end, and at my departing.

Sarum Primer, 1558

11 Long, Long ago

*Text taken from "Such Liberty" by John Buxton.
Poem not reproduced here due to rights reasons.*

12 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 Cherubin and Seraphin continually do cry,
Holy, Holy, Holy:
Lord God of Sabbaoth;
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 throughout all the world
doth acknowledge thee;
The Father of an infi nite 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 took'st upon thee to deliver man:
Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.
When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death:
Thou didst open the Kingdom of 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 numbered with thy Saints in
glory everlasting.
O Lord, save thy people, and bless thine heritage.

Govern them and lift them up for ever.
Day by day we magnify thee;
And we worship thy Name ever world without end.
Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin.
O Lord, have mercy upon us.
O Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us:
As our trust is in thee.
O Lord, in thee have I trusted,
Let me never be confounded.

13 Jubilate

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.

Psalm 100

14 Magnificat (Dallas Canticles)

My soul doth magnify the Lord:
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my saviour.
For he hath regarded the lowliness of his
handmaiden.
For behold, from henceforth
all generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath magnified me:
and holy is his name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him
throughout all generations.
He hath shewed [shewn] strength with his arm:
he hath scattered the proud
in the imagination of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat,
and hath exalted the humble and meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things:
and the rich he hath sent empty away.
He remembering his mercy
hath holpen his servant Israel.
As he promised to our forefathers,
Abraham and his seed for ever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,

and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

15 Nunc Dimittis (Dallas Canticles)

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace:
according to thy word.
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
which thou hast prepared before the face of
all people;
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles:
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

16 A Hymn for St Cecilia

Sing for the morning's joy, Cecilia, sing,
in words of youth and praises of the Spring,
walk the bright colonnades by fountains' spray,
and sing as sunlight fills the waking day;
till angels, voyaging in upper air,
pause on a wing and gather the clear sound
into celestial joy, wound and unwound,
a silver chain, or golden as your hair.
Sing for your loves of heaven and of earth,

in words of music, and each word a truth;
 marriage of heart and longings that aspire,
 a bond of roses, and a ring of fire.
 Your summertime grows short and fades away,
 terror must gather to a martyr's death;
 but never tremble, the last indrawn breath
 remembers music as an echo may.
 Through the cold aftermath of centuries,
 Cecilia's music dances in the skies;
 lend us a fragment of the immortal air,
 that with your choiring angels we may share,
 a word to light us thro' time-fettered night,
 water of life, or rose of paradise,
 so from the earth another song shall rise
 to meet your own in heaven's long delight.

Ursula Vaughan Williams (1911-2007)

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BIOGRAPHIES



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Soprano

Danielle Green
 Rebecca Hardwick
 Dorothea Harris
 Emily Kirby-Ashmore
 Georgie Lyon
 Imogen Ogilvie
 Bethan Thomas
 1, 2, 4 - 6, 11, 13 - 15
 Margaret Walker
 Charlotte Walters
 Isobel White
 1, 2, 4 - 6, 8, 9, 11, 13 - 15

Alto

Emily Hunter
 1 - 3, 5, 7, 10, 12 - 16
 Anna Leon
 Edward McMullan
 Helen Roche
 Angela Waters
 Claire Eadington
 1 - 7, 9 - 11, 13 - 16

Tenor

Matthew Harraghy
 Simon Lee
 Chris Palmer
 Marcus Roberts
 James Way
 1 - 12, 16

Bass

Thomas Chevis
 Alex Jones
 1 - 6, 11
 Robert Jeffrey
 Jack Lawrence-Jones
 Oliver Longland
 Fergus McIntosh
 Fraser Moyle
 Chris Webb
 Anthony Woodman

THE RODOLFUS CHOIR

The Rodolfus Choir is made up of singers aged from 16 to 25 who have been chosen from past and present members of the Eton Choral Courses for prospective choral scholars. Many members of the Choir are choral scholars, some are at music college, and most hope to make a career in music.

Since its foundation by Ralph Allwood in 1984, the Choir has appeared throughout the United Kingdom at venues great and small, including St John's, Smith Square and some of the country's most glorious cathedrals.

In 2009 the choir performed a cappella repertoire from Tallis to Gottwald in Bath, Eton, and Richmond, and performed Bach's B Minor Mass to sell out audiences in London's Cadogan Hall, and in Tewkesbury Abbey as part of the summer's Three Choirs Festival.

The choir has also toured extensively in Europe, performing to an audience of thousands at the international *Night of the Choirs* festival in Belgium in 2008.

The Rodolfus Choir and Ralph Allwood are well known for imaginative programming, and for presenting new music. The Rodolfus Choir's recent CD recordings include music as diverse as Monteverdi, Grier, Tallis and the German Romantics.

The Choir is a regular contributor to BBC Radio 3's Choral Evensong, and has featured on Classic FM, as well as appearing on BBC TV's Songs of Praise and in the documentary Alex: A Passion for Life which followed preparations for the choir's performance at Cadogan Hall earlier this year and aired on Channel 4 on October 2009 with a further hour of concert highlights featured on MoreFour.

Details of forthcoming events and an online CD shop, as well as information about how you can support the choir can be found at www.rodolfuschoir.co.uk.

RALPH ALLWOOD

Ralph Allwood is Precentor and Director of Music at Eton College. He was a pupil at Tiffin School and graduated from Durham University in 1972 with the Eve Myra Kysh prize for music, conducting the University Chamber Choir from 1970-1972. He was later a member of the Choir of King's College, Cambridge under Sir David Willcocks and then became Director of Music at Pangbourne College.

While Director of Music at Uppingham he founded the annual Choral Courses for prospective choral scholars. There are now seven Eton Choral Courses attended each year by four hundred singers aged between 16 and 20, and 100 have now been held. Next summer is the 30th Anniversary of the courses.

He is a judge for the Llangollen International Eisteddfod and is a regular visitor to several Welsh choirs, including the National Youth Choir of Wales. Most recent choral travels have taken him to Nantes, Philadelphia, Canberra, Beijing and Minneapolis.



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TOM WINPENNY

Eton College Chapel Choir, which he directs, has toured Israel, the Arabian Gulf, America, France, England, Ireland, Japan, Hong Kong, the Czech Republic, South Africa, China and Italy. It has appeared in the Bruges Festival, and has released eight recordings, most recently with Signum. He also directs the Windsor and Eton Choral Society. He is a choral advisor for Novello and Co, for the National Youth Choir of Great Britain and for the Voices Foundation.

www.ralphallwood.com

Tom Winpenny took up the post of Assistant Master of the Music at St Albans Cathedral in September 2008, where his duties include accompanying the daily choral services and directing the acclaimed Abbey Girls' Choir. Previously, he was Sub-Organist at St Paul's Cathedral, and during this time he performed with the Cathedral Choir at the American Guild of Organists National Convention, performed in Mahler's Symphony no. 8 with Valery Gergiev and the LSO, and played for many great state occasions. He has also broadcast regularly on BBC Radio and been featured on American Public Media's Pipedreams.

He began organ lessons under John Scott Whiteley while a chorister at York Minster, and continued as a Music Scholar at Eton College under Alastair Sampson. After holding the post of Organ Scholar at Worcester Cathedral and then St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, he was for three years Organ Scholar at King's College, Cambridge, where he graduated with a degree in music. With the Choir of King's College, he gave concerts in the USA, Hong Kong and throughout Europe, in addition to appearing as their accompanist on several CD releases.



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He has taken part in the first performance of works by Sir John Tavener, Judith Bingham, Jonathan Dove, David Bednall, Francis Grier, Sir David Willcocks, and gave the premiere of an organ work by Francis Pott to conclude the 2005 Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols from King's. He has studied with Thomas Trotter and Johannes Geffert, and won First Prize and the Audience Prize at the 2008 Miami International Organ Competition.



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WWW.RODOLFUSCHOIR.COM

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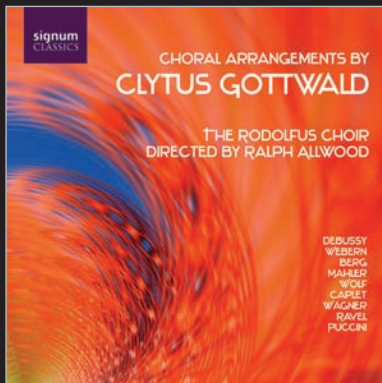
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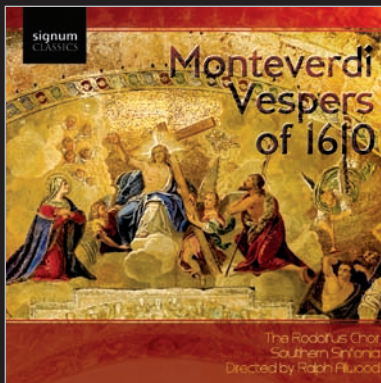


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