

THE CHOIR OF
KING'S COLLEGE
CAMBRIDGE



THE MUSIC OF KING'S

CHORAL FAVOURITES FROM CAMBRIDGE

Stephen Cleobury



THE CHOIR OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

For more than half a millennium, King's College Chapel has been the home to one of the world's most loved and renowned choirs. Since its foundation in 1441 by the 19-year-old King Henry VI, choral services in the Chapel, sung by this choir, have been a fundamental part of life in the College. Through the centuries, people from across Cambridge, the UK and, more recently, the world have listened to the Choir at these services. Today, even people who aren't able to attend services in the Chapel have heard King's Choir, thanks to its many recordings and broadcasts, and the tours that have taken it to leading international concert venues around the world. Despite its deep roots in musical history, the Choir has always been at the forefront of technological innovation, and records exclusively on its 'impeccable' own label.

THE MUSIC OF KING'S

The Choir of King's College, Cambridge
Stephen Cleobury *conductor*



CD**66:25**

1	Cantate Domino <i>Claudio Monteverdi</i>	2:09
2	Puer natus in Bethlehem <i>Samuel Scheidt</i>	2:48
3	Magnificat primi toni a8 <i>Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina</i>	5:31
4	Crucifixus a8 <i>Antonio Lotti</i>	3:10
5	Pie Jesu (Requiem) <i>Gabriel Fauré</i>	3:17
6	Ave verum corpus <i>Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart</i>	2:44
7	Panis angelicus <i>César Franck, arr. John Rutter</i>	3:35
8	My soul, there is a country <i>C. Hubert H. Parry</i>	3:50
9	Psalm 23 (The Lord is my shepherd) <i>John Goss</i>	2:34
10	Psalm 130 (Out of the deep) <i>Henry Walford Davies</i>	2:49
11	Psalm 121 (I will lift up mine eyes) <i>Henry Walford Davies</i>	2:33
12	The Lord is my shepherd <i>Lennox Berkeley</i>	4:44
13	Ubi caritas <i>Ola Gjeilo</i>	3:02
14	Agnus Dei (Mass for Double Choir) <i>Frank Martin</i>	4:06
15	O magnum mysterium <i>Morten Lauridsen</i>	5:59
16	The Road Home <i>Stephen Paulus</i>	3:27
17	Amazing Grace <i>Traditional, arr. Stephen Cleobury</i>	2:57
18	Mo Li Hua (The Jasmine Flower Song) <i>Chinese traditional, arr. Stephen Cleobury</i>	3:41
19	Shenandoah <i>American Folksong, arr. James Erb</i>	3:29



THE MUSIC OF KING'S

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) ***Cantate Domino*, SV 293 (1620)**

Claudio Monteverdi spent the last thirty years of his life directing the music at the basilica of St Mark's, Venice, and keeping very much alive the splendid musical tradition made famous by the Gabrieli family a generation earlier. The six-part motet *Cantate Domino* is among those published by his pupil Giulio Cesare Bianchi of Cremona. The text conflates words from Psalms 95 and 96 and Monteverdi's music is appropriately dance-like and joyous from the start, but at the words 'Quia mirabilia fecit' ('he hath done marvellous things') the music becomes solemn, as if struck with awe. The composer replicates the sounds of angelic harps by creating a percussive effect with the 'ps' and 'ch' consonants in the text.

Samuel Scheidt (1587-1654) ***Puer natus in Bethlehem* (1620)**

As Kapellmeister at Halle, Scheidt worked under difficult conditions, which included the Thirty

Years' War (which left him in post but without pay), disputes with the clergy (which resulted in his losing his position), and plague, which claimed the lives of his four surviving children. His music represented a new north German style resulting in large part from the effects of the Reformation, and standing in contrast to the Italian style of his contemporary, Monteverdi, whose *Cantate Domino* was published in the same year.

The text 'Puer natus in Bethlehem' forms the introit for the Eucharist on Christmas morning. The 13th-century melody would have been as well known to Scheidt's audience as other tunes such as *In dulci jubilo* and *Resonet in laudibus*, which have remained popular to this day. Here the text has been elaborated and the lightly buoyant setting by Scheidt conveys the joy of the birth of Christ.

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525/6-1594) ***Magnificat primi toni a8* (c.1588)**

Palestrina was the Italian master of polyphony *par excellence*. Quite as admired in his own day as he is now, his influence extended across Europe and his output includes at least 104 Masses. The eight-voice *Magnificat primi toni* was written for the papal choir in the late 1580s. The Sistine Chapel's layout precluded a physical separation of the choirs, as was possible, for example, in St Mark's, Venice, so here Palestrina employs different combinations of his eight voices to express different sections of the text. The music alternates between two equal choirs until the words 'Omnes generationes' ('All generations') at which point

all eight voices are employed together. Then Mary's words 'Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est' ('For he that is mighty hath magnified me...') are sung by a quartet of the two treble lines, an alto and a tenor, drawn from both choirs, the two top lines angelically echoing each other at the words 'et sanctum nomen' ('and holy is his name'). Then the six lower voices sing the words 'Et misericordia eius a progenie in ... timentibus eus' ('And his mercy is on them that fear him...'). The remainder of the text is shared by the alternating choirs.

This Magnificat was added to the papal choir's repertoire over twenty years after the Council of Trent's injunction which directed that, 'The whole plan of singing in musical modes shall be constituted not to give empty pleasure to the ear, but in such a way that the words may be clearly understood by all, and the hearts of the listeners be drawn to the desire of heavenly harmonies, in the contemplation of the joys of the blessed'. Palestrina took this injunction on board and here makes much use of homophony, enabling the text to be heard more clearly than in complex counterpoint.

Antonio Lotti (1667-1740) **Crucifixus a8**

Lotti's famous eight-part *Crucifixus* comes from a larger work, the Credo in F for choir and orchestra, which is itself part of a complete Mass setting. The manuscript of the Mass was discovered in Dresden, although it was probably originally composed in Venice, where Lotti spent all of his

career apart from the two years (1717-1719) he spent in Dresden, where he wrote a number of operas. This excerpt from the Credo became popular in the 19th century after it was published in an 1838 collection of sacred music entitled *Sammlung vorzüglicher Gesangstücke vom Ursprung gesetzmässiger Harmonie bis auf die neue Zeit* ('Important Pieces from the Origin of Regular Harmony to Modern times').

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) **Pie Jesu (Requiem) (1888)**

Gabriel Fauré wrote his much-loved Requiem three years after the loss of his father and one year after the death of his mother. It set a completely new tone for requiem settings, and was written partly as a reaction to earlier 'apocalyptic' 19th-century settings, such as those of Berlioz (1837) and Verdi (1874). In Fauré's own version there is very little wrath, terror or judgement. The word 'requiem' – 'rest' – is repeated again and again, as it is here in the Pie Jesu, whereas the words 'dies irae' are heard only once. Himself unconventional in terms of religious belief, even agnostic, Fauré put into his Requiem what he described as 'a very human feeling of faith in eternal rest.' He said that he saw death 'as a happy deliverance, an aspiring towards the joy that lies beyond, rather than as a painful experience'.



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
Ave verum corpus, K618 (1791)

The summer and autumn of 1790 saw Constanze Mozart taking the waters at Baden, to which she returned with the couple's son, Carl, the following summer. She was in poor health and in an advanced state of pregnancy. The local choirmaster, Anton Stoll, was a great admirer of Mozart, and helped out in practical ways, including finding a small apartment for Constanze to live in. Mozart, in return, lent Stoll music and helped out with the preparation of soloists, and in late May 1791 sent the choirmaster this forty-six bar work of genius setting the 14th-century hymn, *Ave verum corpus*, in time for it to be performed at Baden on the feast of Corpus Christi. The piece was the final sacred work Mozart completed; Constanze was still in Baden when her husband died in Vienna that December.

César Franck (1822-1890)
Panis angelicus (1872)

With *Panis angelicus* we stay with music appropriate to Corpus Christi Day, since the words are from the penultimate strophe of the matins hymn *Sacris Solemni*, written by St Thomas Aquinas specifically for the feast of Corpus Christi. Franck set these words as a duet in 1872 and interpolated his *Panis angelicus* as a communion anthem between the Sanctus and the Agnus Dei of the *Messe à trois voix*, which he had written twelve years earlier.

Hubert Parry (1848-1918)
My soul, there is a country (1914)

Parry's boyhood love of the music of Bach, Mendelssohn and Brahms found expression at the very end of his life in his *Songs of Farewell*. By the time he set himself to the task he was Principal of the Royal College of Music and his country was at war with Germany, a tragedy that he felt on a personal artistic level. As he said to his students at Christmas 1914:

'I have been a quarter of a century and more a pro-Teuton. I owed too much to their music and their philosophers and authors of former times to believe it possible that the nation at large could be imbued with the teaching of a few advocates of mere brutal violence and material aggression.'

Even as he spoke, many of his most brilliant students were leaving to serve with the British Army, and Parry was all too aware that prodigious talent would be wasted on the battlefields of northern France: E. J. Moeran, Arthur Benjamin, Ivor Gurney, George Butterworth, R. O. Morris, George Dyson, Arthur Bliss and Ralph Vaughan Williams were among those who joined up. By April 1915, Parry was so upset about news of deaths that he almost broke down as he once again addressed the RCM students.

Parry, who like many other composers of the period had taken leave of religion, found inspiration in the words of the King James Bible and in

17th-century English literature, both of which he drew upon for his motets. The first of the set, *My soul, there is a country*, is a setting of words by the Welsh metaphysical poet Henry Vaughan. Before Parry completed the set he began to feel that the *Songs of Farewell* would literally be his goodbye to the world, or, in the words of his pupil Herbert Howells, 'a magnificent codicil ... his spiritually unorthodox farewell to a world in turmoil and distress'. When the set was eventually performed it was at a memorial concert for the composer in Oxford in 1919.

Psalm 23 (The Lord is my shepherd)

Psalm 130 (Out of the deep)

Psalm 121 (I will lift up mine eyes)

Every experience of the human heart is richly expressed within the Psalter: hope, despair, love, hate, even violence, find expression in these 150 sacred songs or poems. All who have passed through King's Choir or, indeed, any cathedral or collegiate choir that has a daily tradition of choral Evensong and maintains an adherence to the Book of Common Prayer (and therefore the Coverdale Psalter) will have many of these beautiful words embedded in their memories for life.

The three psalms chosen for this set are particularly fine and well known. The 23rd Psalm, *The Lord is my shepherd*, is the great psalm of consolation, the words of which are familiar from its various metrical settings as a hymn; the penitential Psalm 130, *Out of the deep (De Profundis)*, is a cry to God of one in the deepest

anguish of despair. Psalm 121, *I will lift up mine eyes*, is a 'song of ascent', sung originally by pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem, the hills being the mountains of Judea, and has powerful resonances for travellers and those who find inspiration in the landscape around them. (David Livingstone said the psalm with his family on the dockside before he departed for Africa.)

Lennox Berkeley (1903-1989)

The Lord is my shepherd (Op. 91, No. 1) (1975)

Lennox Berkeley is among the many composers from Bach to Bernstein who have set the 23rd Psalm to music. His version for solo treble and SATB choir was written for the 900th anniversary of the Foundation of Chichester Cathedral and is dedicated to the Dean, Walter Hussey, who throughout his career was a great commissioner both of music and of works of art.

Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978)

Ubi caritas (2001)

The first piece Ola Gjeilo encountered in his school choir in Norway was Maurice Duruflé's 1960 setting of *Ubi caritas*, which made a lasting impression – as he put it, 'the perfect *a cappella* piece'. Like Duruflé, Gjeilo is strongly influenced by plainsong, although, as he explains, 'while Duruflé used an existing, traditional chant ... I used chant more as a general inspiration, while also echoing the form and dynamic range of his incomparable setting of the text'.

Frank Martin (1890-1974)
Agnus Dei (Mass for Double Choir) (1926)

Whereas composers such as Fauré and Parry sat lightly to institutional religion, Frank Martin, the son of a Calvinist minister in Geneva, felt differently. 'To my mind', he wrote, 'when dealing with a religious work of art, everything ... ought to be subordinated to the inner compulsion to express one's faith convincingly'. For Martin, the composer's own genius in itself detracted from a religious composition. That Martin's music is not better known even today is due to his intense hyper-critical self-scrutiny. The first four movements of the *Mass for Double Choir* were completed in 1922, the *Agnus Dei* being added four years later, but Martin did not allow the work to be performed until 1963, explaining that he 'considered it to be a matter between God and myself ... I felt that a personal expression of religious belief should remain secret and hidden from public opinion'.

Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943)
O magnum mysterium (1994)

Morten Lauridsen's *O magnum mysterium* was commissioned by the Los Angeles Master Chorale and overnight launched its composer's career. At its premiere the music director Paul Salamunovich told his audience 'Until now, Vittoria's *O magnum mysterium* has been the most beautiful and well-recognised setting of this text. I predict that will change after tonight'. The popularity of the piece in the UK is in no small way due to its

many performances at *Carols from King's*, the annual televised service broadcast by the BBC.

Stephen Paulus (1949-2014)
The Road Home (2001)

The Road Home was written in response to a commission from the Dale Warland Singers who specifically asked for 'a short folk-type choral arrangement'. The simple pentatonic tune that Paulus found was published originally in *The Southern Harmony Songbook* of 1835 under the name 'The Lone Wild Bird'. Paulus commissioned new words from the poet Michael Dennis Browne, whose text conjures up the universal theme of returning home. Stephen Paulus is the only American composer as yet to have written a carol in response to a commission from Stephen Cleobury for *The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols* at King's (*Pilgrim Jesus* in 1996).

Traditional, arr. Stephen Cleobury (b. 1948)
Amazing Grace

Amazing Grace was first published in 1779 with words by the Englishman John Newton (1725-1807). His back story was a remarkable one: a pressed sailor in the Royal Navy, a deserter, and subsequently a sailor on board a slaver, his writing career began with the obscene poems he wrote about the captain for the crew to sing (the captain thought him the most profane man he had ever encountered). During a near encounter with death during a storm at sea, he uttered the words

'Lord have mercy upon us'. Having survived, he underwent a conversion. He continued in the slave trade (about which he never changed his views) and eventually turned to a career on land. The Archbishop of York refused to ordain him, but the Bishop of Lincoln took an interest and Newton was appointed Curate of Olney, where he befriended the poet William Cowper. Together they started to write hymns, including *Amazing Grace*, which they eventually published as *Olney Hymns* in 1779. *Amazing Grace* remained an obscure hymn in England, but became popular in the United States during the Protestant revival of the early 19th century. It was sung to many different tunes until 1835, when it was set to the now familiar tune named 'New Britain'.

**Chinese traditional,
arr. Stephen Cleobury (b. 1948)
Mo Li Hua (The Jasmine Flower Song)**

The popular Chinese folk song *Mo Li Hua* ('Jasmine Flower Song') dates back to the Qianlong era of the Qing dynasty in the 18th century. It has been associated with the custom in the southern-Yangtze delta of giving Jasmine flowers. As is typically the case with Chinese music, it uses the pentatonic (five-note) scale.

This has long been the most recognised Chinese song throughout the world. In his book, *Travels in China* of 1804, the British diplomat Sir John Barrow described it as one of the most popular songs in China. In 1926, Puccini used it in *Turandot*, and more recently it has been sung at

many occasions, including the Beijing Olympics in 2008, and, more controversially, played on protesters' mobile phones during the 2011 pro-democracy protests in China, known as the Jasmine Revolution, which resulted in the song being censored in China.

**American Folksong, arr. James Erb (1926-2014)
Shenandoah**

The American folksong 'Oh Shenandoah' or 'Across the Wide Missouri' dates from the early 18th century, when it was sung by Canadian and American fur traders who negotiated the Missouri river in canoes. In the words 'O Shenandoah, I love your daughter', there is a possible association with Skenandoa (1710-1816), the long-lived chief of the Oneida tribe of the Iroquois Confederacy of upstate New York, who is sometimes called 'Oskanondonha'. The song also has an association with the sea, spread internationally as sailors moved between crews, and by the 1870s it was being included in books of sea shanties. In 1892 the Englishman Alfred Mason Williams included it in his *Studies in Folk Song and Popular Song* as 'a good specimen of a bowline chant'.

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CONDUCTOR'S NOTES

The pieces we have chosen for this album reflect something, though not all, of the breadth of the Choir's repertoire. That they should be chiefly liturgical is natural, since the Choir's main work consists of singing at the daily chapel services in term time. The new ecumenical understanding which has grown up during my working life permits now the singing of the Mass and canticles in Latin, anthems in that language having found their way into service lists even earlier. This enables us to look to the continent of Europe to add to the great inherited tradition of British music. We have also included some of our more rare excursions into non-liturgical and secular repertoire, here represented by American and Chinese items.

We begin with Monteverdi, a favourite composer of mine ever since a childhood meeting with the 1610 Vespers. We recently toured this great work in France. Happily, there exists a number of shorter motets which can be sung at evensong, of which *Cantate Domino* is a sparkling example. We stay with 'early music' in the opening group, taking in Christmas and the Passion as well as the song of the Virgin Mary, this latter apt because of the

College's dedication to the Blessed Virgin.

Three of the best-loved pieces of choral music take us, through Mozart, to the 19th century, and the second group concludes, appropriately enough, in the year 2018, with one of Parry's *Songs of Farewell*, written a hundred years ago, towards the end of World War 1.

We then spend some time with the psalms sung to Anglican chants. Not only are these great works of poetry, especially for Anglicans accustomed to Coverdale's superb translation; but, at the centre of the daily office of Evensong, they also afford to the Choir great opportunities to hone skills in ensemble singing, blend and intonation, which support much else of what is sung here.

Before concluding with the non-liturgical group, we present an eclectic mix of more-modern pieces. Berkeley's setting of Psalm 23 is perhaps best known for the beautiful passages for treble solo which open and close this piece, while Martin's *Mass for Double Choir* gives us in the Agnus Dei music whose solemnity at the start and finish draws us deeply into the text, and which rises to a shattering climax at the central point. Lauridsen's Christmas piece has found great popularity in various guises (I have even conducted a version for brass band), and, like the Gjeilo piece (with its unavoidable shades of Duruflé), is more in the 'minimalist' idiom. I have found, also with Górecki and others, that this style is best served by taking careful notice of how repeated material is subtly varied in tempo and dynamic.

In the final group I have myself made arrangements of two of the items; something I greatly enjoy doing.

STEPHEN CLEOBURY

Conductor



Stephen Cleobury has for over 35 years been associated with one of the world's most famous choirs, that of King's College, Cambridge. His work at King's has brought him into fruitful relationships with many leading orchestras and soloists, among them the Philharmonia Orchestra, the AAM, Britten Sinfonia, the OAE, and the BBC Concert Orchestra. He complements and refreshes his work in Cambridge through the many other musical activities in which he engages throughout the world.

At King's, he has sought to enhance the reputation of the world-famous Choir, broadening considerably the daily service repertoire, commissioning new music from leading composers and developing its activities in broadcasting, recording and touring. He introduced the highly successful annual festival, *Easter at King's*, from which the BBC regularly broadcasts, and, in its wake, a series of high-profile performances throughout the year, *Concerts at King's*.

From 1995 to 2007 he was Chief Conductor of the BBC Singers and since then has been Conductor Laureate. Since 1983 he has been

closely involved in the Cambridge University Musical Society, one of the UK's oldest music societies, where he has nurtured generations of young talent. He retired from CUMS in 2016, becoming Conductor Laureate.

Beyond Cambridge he continues to be in demand as a conductor, organist, adjudicator and leader of choral workshops. Until 2008 he was a member of the Royal College of Organists, of which he is a past President. He has been Warden of the Solo Performers' section of the Incorporated Society of Musicians and President of the Incorporated Association of Organists; he is currently Chairman of the IAO Benevolent Fund, which seeks to support organists and church musicians in need. He is President of the Friends of Cathedral Music and of the Herbert Howells Society. He was appointed CBE in the 2009 Queen's Birthday Honours. King's College announced in 2018 that Stephen would retire in September 2019 after 37 years in post.

www.stephencleobury.com



THE CHOIR OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

King's College was founded in 1441 with six 'singing men' and 16 choristers, who were to be poor boys 'of a strong constitution and an honest conversation'. Five centuries later, the Choir comprises 16 boys (Choristers) and 16 men (Choral and Organ Scholars).

The boys, aged between nine and thirteen, are educated across the river at King's College School, a thriving and famously happy school now comprising some 420 girls and boys. The Choristers are selected at audition based on musical potential and, of course, a love of singing. When they join, they spend up to two years in training as 'probationers', after which they join the full Choir.

The men are all undergraduates at the University, who have attained the necessary academic requirements to become undergraduates at Cambridge. Known either as Choral or Organ Scholars, they study many different academic subjects, from music to modern languages to natural sciences. Find out more by searching "King's College Choir".

Choristers

Year 8 (ages 12-13) Thomas Alban, Joseph Hall, Alfred Hopkins, George Sheldon

Year 7 (ages 11-12) Jack Bowley, Samuel Cates, Lev Godar, George Hill, Samuel Trueman

Year 6 (ages 10-11) Aiken Anderson-Jané, Philip Curtis, Elliot Hasler, Leo McNiff, Charlie Nicholson, Joshua O'Neill, Julius Sirringhaus

Altos

George Gibbon, Daniel Henderson, Salim Jaffar, Jacob Partington, Joseph Zubier

Tenors

Jack Goulder, Julius Haswell, James Micklethwaite, Protik Moulik, Christopher Nehaul

Basses

Charlie Baigent, Will Crane, Jimmy Holliday, Zac Moxon, Timothy Murphy, Trojan Nakade, Stephen Whitford, Barney Wolstenholme

Organ Scholars

Henry Websdale (*tr. 2, 6, 7, 10, 12*)

Dónal McCann (*tr. 1, 4, 5, 9, 17*)

Richard Gowers (*tr. 18*)

Director of Music

Stephen Cleobury

Track 5 soloist Joseph Hall

Track 11 soloists George Hill and James Micklethwaite

Track 12 soloist Thomas Alban

Track 16 soloist Marcus McDevitt

Track 17 soloist James Micklethwaite

All tracks recorded at 96kHz 24-bit PCM in the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge, by kind permission of the Provost and Scholars, 25 April & 28 July 2017, and 10-11 January & 23-24 April 2018.

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Engineers Benjamin Sheen, Jonathan Allen *

Assistant Engineer Stefano Civetta *

Mastering Benjamin Sheen

Language Coach Gao Zhang *

* Track 18

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